

**DEPARTMENT OF PERFORMING ARTS****PLAY ANALYSIS 1  
(THAR 052)**

Fall Term 2005  
Tuesday and Thursday 3:50 – 5:00 PM – LL384

Instructor: John Schneider  
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION*****Required texts:***

- Aeschylus. *The Oresteia*, translator: Ted Hughes
- Shakespeare. *King Lear*
- Racine. *Phedre*, translator: Ted Hughes
- Ibsen. *Peer Gynt*, translator: Gerry Bamman and Irene Berman
- O'Neill. *Long Day's Journey Into Night*
- Brecht. *Mother Courage and Her Children*, translator: Eric Bentley
- Ionesco. *The Bald Soprano* (instructor will provide)
- Albee. *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*
- Parks. *Topdog/Underdog*

***Course focus:***

As an actor, director or designer, you will have to translate plays from words on paper into living stage productions in informed and defensible interpretations. You will be expected to interpret scripts from different times and cultures. To realize these scripts in performance, you will have to analyze them on many levels, identify the playwright's probable intentions, and understand the historical conditions and cultural traditions that helped shape the work. Together, we will analyze and interpret seven representative works that cover a broad spectrum of styles from the beginning of theatre in ancient Greece to post-war absurdist abstraction and two relatively new plays from this country. We will use these as examples on which to practice analytical and interpretive techniques. Finally, you will use the techniques we have practiced to produce an original analysis and interpretation of a major play.

**Course objectives:****At the conclusion of this course students will be able to:**

1. Produce a valid, systematic, and original analysis and interpretation of a major dramatic text.
2. Effectively employ the vocabulary of play analysis in discussion and writing.
3. Analyze and interpret plays from a broad range of periods and styles.
4. Articulate the human experience reflected in a play.
5. Describe, with insight, sensitivity and imagination, the value of a play for an audience today and the reasons for producing it.

**Course requirements:**

Grades in this course will be determined by student performance on 1) eleven quizzes; 2) a written analysis of a section of *King Lear*; 3) a mid-term paper, 6 - 7 pages; 4) a written analysis of a section of *Mother Courage and Her Children*; 5) a final paper, 8 -10 pages, in which you will give a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of a play of your choice subject to my approval; and 6) class participation.

A more complete description of each requirement, along with the allocation of points, follows.

**Quizzes (25%)** -- On the day that we begin discussion of a play, there will be a short quiz about that play which may consist of true/false, multiple choice, short answers or essay-type questions. Each play of *The Oresteia* will be the subject of a separate quiz. Each quiz will count toward 2.5% of the final grade. Each student's lowest quiz score will be dropped, so that the remaining ten quizzes, in sum, will count toward 25% of the final grade.

**Scene breakdowns (10%)** – Each student will analyze a section of *King Lear* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*, following an outline which I will provide. The student will write an analysis of the scene and interpret its function in the play, using the appropriate vocabulary to communicate these ideas clearly. The student will then lead the class discussion of that section of the play. The first paper will be due at the beginning of class on September 28, and the second on November 4. The paper should be of whatever length is necessary to answer the questions in the outline. Each of the two projects will count toward 5% of the final grade.

**Mid-term paper (20%)** – The plays of the classical Greek playwrights and of William Shakespeare are the foundation on which the modern theatre is built. This paper will provide an opportunity for you to bring your analysis of *The Oresteia* and *King Lear* to a deeper level. I will give you the subject for the paper when we begin the class analysis of *King Lear*. The paper will be due at the beginning of class on October 13. It will be 6 - 7 pages long and will count toward 20% of your grade.

**Final paper (30%)** – You will write a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of a play of your choosing subject to my approval. Submit the play for approval on or by class time on November 8. *The final paper will be due at my office by 5:00 PM on December 13*. It will be 8 – 10 pages long and will count toward 30% of your grade.

**Class participation (15%)** – There is a strong emphasis placed on learning through class discussion. Your verbal contributions are an important part of this class. During the term, I will call on each of you frequently for responses that are insightful or in some way assist in deepening the discussion. Preparation is essential. I may ask you to write out your thoughts and bring them to class as preparation for discussion, in which case I will collect them. I won't grade them, but they will count as part of your participation. Class participation necessarily incorporates attendance. It will contribute 15% toward the final grade.

<u>Course Requirement</u>	<u>Possible Points</u>	<u>Grading Scale</u>	
Quizzes (10 @ 2.5 pts each)	25	95-100	A
<i>King Lear</i> assignment	5	89-94	A/B
<i>Mother Courage</i> assignment	5	83-88	B
Mid-term Paper	20	77-82	B/C
Final Paper	30	71-76	C
Class Participation	<u>15</u>	65-70	C/D
	100	60-64	D
		00-59	F

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance** – Attendance is extremely important. You will find it difficult to pass this course unless you attend regularly, take notes, and remain current on the assigned readings. In fact, you will fail in the quizzes unless you have read the assigned play prior to the class at which we begin discussion of that play. You will also find it hard to comprehend and participate during class if you have failed to read the assigned play carefully.

**Late assignments** – Each assignment is to be turned in at the beginning of the class period it is due. If a student knows that s/he will not be able to attend that

particular class, arrangements should be made with the professor to turn in the assignment at an earlier date. Late assignments will be marked down 5% for each day (not class period) late. The most any assignment will be marked down for being late is 35%.

**Style** -- Papers should be typed/word processed, double-spaced, using one inch margins and a standard font in 10 or 12 point, and be free of errors in spelling and grammar. Write personally and clearly. Style is important.

**Academic dishonesty** – In accordance with the high standards of excellence set forth by, and for, all members of the Marquette University community, the College of Communication finds it imperative that each student understand that the responsibilities associated with high standards of excellence include ensuring that all class work undertaken in this College is performed in an environment that promotes serious scholarship and moral rectitude. Therefore, the College herein delineates a zero-tolerance policy for acts of academic dishonesty. All acts of suspected academic dishonesty will be thoroughly investigated in a manner that is fair, timely, and efficient and done so in a manner that protects the rights of both the faculty member and the student. Any individual that is found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty may receive a penalty up to and including expulsion from Marquette University.

#### Tentative schedule

<u>Week</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>General Topic</u>	<u>Assignments Due</u>
Week 1	Aug. 30	Introduction to class	
	Sept. 1	Introduction to play analysis	
Week 2	Sept. 6	<i>Agamemnon</i>	Quiz #1
	Sept. 8	<i>Agamemnon</i>	
Week 3	Sept. 13	<i>Libation Bearers</i>	Quiz #2
	Sept. 15	<i>Libation Bearers</i>	
Week 4	Sept. 20	<i>Eumenides</i>	Quiz #3
	Sept. 22	<i>Eumenides / Oresteia</i>	
Week 5	Sept. 27	<i>King Lear</i>	Quiz #4; scene analysis
	Sept. 29	<i>King Lear</i>	

Week 6	Oct. 4	<i>King Lear</i>	
	Oct. 6	<i>King Lear</i>	
Week 7	Oct. 11	<i>Phedre</i>	Quiz #5
	Oct. 13	<i>Phedre</i>	Mid-term paper
Week 8	Oct. 18	<i>Peer Gynt</i>	Quiz #6
	Oct. 20	MIDTERM BREAK	
Week 9	Oct. 25	<i>Peer Gynt</i>	
	Oct. 27	<i>Peer Gynt</i>	
Week 10	Nov. 1	<i>Long Day's Journey</i>	Quiz #7
	Nov. 3	<i>Long Day's Journey</i>	
Week 11	Nov. 8	<i>Long Day's Journey</i>	Submit choice of play for final paper for approval
	Nov. 10	<i>Mother Courage</i>	Quiz #8
Week 12	Nov. 15	<i>Mother Courage</i>	
	Nov. 17	<i>Mother Courage</i>	
Week 13	Nov. 22	<i>The Bald Soprano</i>	Quiz #9
	Nov. 24	THANKSGIVING	
Week 14	Nov. 29	<i>Virginia Woolf</i>	Quiz #10
	Dec. 1	<i>Virginia Woolf</i>	
Week 15	Dec. 6	<i>Topdog/Underdog</i>	Quiz #11
	Dec. 8	<i>Topdog/Underdog</i>	
Week 16	Dec. 13	(finals week)	Final paper due