



# THE 232 - Play Structure & Analysis

**Instructor:** Stacey Tweedlie Willis

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Phone:** [REDACTED]

**Class Meetings:** T/TR 8:45 – 10:15 AM

**Required Texts:** Script Analysis for Actors, Directors & Designers (6<sup>th</sup> Edition) – James Thomas

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**Course Catalog Description:** This course is designed to introduce the student to the skills of dramatic analysis, theatrical research, writing, and critical thinking which are vital to the work of all artists in the theatre. Using the techniques of the Production Dramaturg, the course teaches close reading of play texts and demonstrates ways in which play analysis contributes to the realization of theatrical productions.

**Communication:** Email or text is the best way to contact me, I will usually respond within 24 hours. I am available for office hours by appointment. I am also directing the Spring musical and will be on campus for rehearsals in the evenings. **You may also text me, before 8 pm.**

**Late Work:** Late work will be accepted, however the highest grade possible for any late work will be a B. The later the work is turned in, the lower the grade will be.

**Recording of class sessions** without the prior express written permission of the instructor is prohibited. Any permission granted shall include the requirements that a recording may only be used for content study purposes only and sharing a recording with anyone outside of the course and/or posting on social media are strictly prohibited. This course policy is in alignment with Student Handbook and the Standard of Student Conduct. Refer to Student Handbook policies 15.6, 15.7, and 15.8 for more information.

## Student Learning Outcomes & Course Objectives:

- 1. Identify, integrate, and evaluate a personal worldview, as well as Biblical principles, in the creation of theatrical works. (USO: 1)**
  - **OBJECTIVE 1.1:** Students will be encouraged to explore theatre history and script analysis through a Christian worldview.
- 2. Analyze and assess the historical development of world theatre and movements, and the principles of dramatic structure. (USO: 2, 3)**
  - **OBJECTIVE 2.1:** The students will demonstrate technical proficiency with the theories and techniques of Action Analysis.
  - **OBJECTIVE 2.2:** The student will further appreciate the basic structure of good playwriting and learn how to leverage that structure to make bold choices in performance, directing, and design.
  - **OBJECTIVE 2.3:** Students will demonstrate critical analysis and response skills through written critiques of various plays.
  - **OBJECTIVE 2.4:** Through the reading of plays students will develop a basic knowledge of western dramatic writing, along with its major playwrights, historical highpoints, and the cultural influences that created the various genres and the influences that these genres have had on the development of theatre as a whole.
- 3. Discover and create real world techniques for analysis that students may take with them into their future careers. (USO: 2, 5, 6)**
  - **OBJECTIVE 3.1:** Students will develop and perfect their own unique analysis technique to take with them into the world of theater.
  - **OBJECTIVE 3.2:** Students will discuss various social and religious implications of the plays we analyze and how they might produce or perform in them.



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## Assignments & Grading Scale:

**Attendance/Participation Points (200 points total):** Attendance, along with your participation in class will contribute to your participation points each class meeting. Reading is required and class discussions will surround the readings.

**In Class Assignments (150 pts.):** Assignments/exercises we will do in class together.

**Playwright Profile & Presentation (30 pts.):** A one-page handout detailing the life and contributions of any playwright that is important and/or influential to you or that you would like to know more about. You will present your handout to the class.

**Play/Musical Analysis' (35 - 70 pts):** You will analyze various plays throughout the semester using the techniques we have learned in class. One play and one musical will be chosen by you, the rest will be assigned to you.

**Theatre Production Attendance/Critique (40 pts. each):** Students are required to attend/work both CBU productions. Along with this, you will also attend one additional theatrical performance. You will turn in your ticket, along with a one-page, single spaced, justified, review of each production.

**American Theatre Magazine (55 pts):** You will find an edition of American Theatre Magazine via the library with a short play which you will read and analyze.

**DIY Analysis (75 pts.):** Taking everything we learned this semester you will design your own ideal analysis focusing on what's important and inspiring to you as a designer, actor, director, etc.

**Monologue Analysis/Performance (75 pts.):** You will choose, analyze & perform a monologue.

**Terms Test (10 – 30 pts):** A test given multiple times throughout the semester to help cement key terms used in play analysis.

**Extra Credit Opportunities (5 pts.):** Attend or view ANY live performance and receive 5 pts.

**Choose Your Own Adventure Assignments (50 - 60 pts):** Below are 4 assignments designed for various learning types. Choose whatever 2 assignments seem most interesting to you.

**1. Create Your Own In-Class Assignment** – Design an in-class assignment relevant to a portion of the course. You will then teach and implement your assignment during a class period.

**2. Research Paper** – Your research paper can be on anything pertaining to this class. That could be a deep dive into one of the chapters from the book, you could research another book entirely (directors could read *Backwards & Forwards*, actors could research a particular acting method). The choice is yours, but your topic must be approved by me.

**3. Additional Analysis** – Choose any play/musical of interest to you and do a full analysis using the techniques learned from the text.

**4. Create your own assignment** – If you have a particular idea you'd like to explore this is where to do it. Do you want to analyze from a stage manager's perspective? Or do you want to research making a living via play analysis? Do you want to go further and explore dramaturgy? Your choice must be approved by me, but I'm open to any ideas.



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All homework assignments **MUST** be turned in via Blackboard, unless otherwise discussed in class. Handwritten/mailed assignments will result in a loss of points.

<b>Grading Breakdown: (Subject to change at professor's discretion)</b>	
In Class Assignments	<b>150</b>
Playwright Profile & Presentation	<b>30</b>
CBU Critique #1	<b>40</b>
CBU Critique #2	<b>40</b>
Other Critique #3	<b>40</b>
Play Analysis #1: Pilgrims	<b>35</b>
Play Analysis #2: All My Sons	<b>40</b>
Play Analysis #3: Camp Comedy	<b>45</b>
Play Analysis #4: August/Earnest	<b>55</b>
Play Analysis #5: Choose your own	<b>60</b>
Musical Theatre Analysis	<b>70</b>
ATM Assignment	<b>55</b>
Choose Your Own Adventure #1	<b>50</b>
Choose Your Own Adventure #2	<b>60</b>
<b>Total Assignments Points Possible</b>	<b>550 Pts.</b>
<b>Terms Tests: 10%</b>	<b>100 Pts.</b>
Terms Test 1	<b>10</b>
Terms Test 2	<b>15</b>
Terms Test 3	<b>20</b>
Terms Test 4	<b>25</b>
Terms Test 5	<b>30</b>
<b>Attendance/Participation: 20%</b>	<b>200 Pts.</b>
<b>Final: 15%</b>	<b>150 Pts.</b>
DIY Analysis	<b>75</b>
Monologue Performance/Analysis	<b>75</b>
<b>Total Points Possible for Semester</b>	<b>1000 Pts.</b>



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## TENTATIVE CLASS ITINERARY

January 2022

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### Week One

Jan. 18 Introduction, Class Expectations, Syllabus Review.  
**Homework:** [Get your book! Read Introduction \(xvii\) on BlackBoard](#)

Jan. 20 Class Discussion: Introduction  
**In Class Assignment:** [Describe/demo introduction term. \(10 pts.\)](#)  
[Oedipus Rex - Hamlet Exercise \(10 pts.\)](#)  
**Homework:** [Read Chapter 1 – Action Analysis.](#)  
[Playwright Profile \(30 pts.\)](#)

### Week Two

Jan. 25 **Playwright Profile Presentations Due (30 pts.)**  
Class Discussion: Chapter 1  
**In Class Assignment:** [Short Play Assignment \(10 pts.\)](#)  
*Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World – Yussef El Guindi*  
**Homework:** [Read Chapter 2 – Given Circumstances](#)

Jan. 27 Continue Short Play Assignment  
**Homework:** [Read Chapter 2 – Given Circumstances](#)

### Week Three

Feb. 1 **Play Analysis: Pilgrims Due (35 pts.)**  
Class Discussion: Chapter 2  
**In Class Assignment:** [Tartuffe \(10 pts.\)](#)  
**Homework:** [Read All My Sons – Arthur Miller](#)

Feb. 3 Watch *All My Sons* DT+ in class.  
**Homework:** [Play Analysis – All My Sons .](#)

February 2022

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### Week Four

Feb. 8 **Play Analysis/Performance Review: All My Sons Due (40 pts.)**  
**In Class Assignment:** [School for Scandal – The Wild Duck \(10 pts.\)](#)  
**Homework:** [Read Chapter 3 – Background Story](#)

Feb. 10 Class Discussion: Chapter 3  
**HW:** [Read Chapter 4 – Plot: External & Internal Action](#)



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## Week Five

Feb. 15 Class Discussion: Chapter 4  
In Class Assignment: *Dead Man's Cell Phone* – Sarah Ruhl (10 pts.)

Feb. 17 Continue *Dead Man's Cell Phone*  
Homework: Read Chapter 5 – Plot: Progressions & Structure

## Week Six

Feb. 22 Class Discussion: Chapter 5  
In Class Assignment: *Three Sisters* – *The Lower Depths* (10 pts.)  
Homework: Read *Camp Comedy Roy Kift*

Feb. 24 Homework: Read Chapter 6 – Character

## March 2022

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## Week Seven

Mar. 1 **Play Analysis: Camp Comedy Due (45 pts.)**  
Class Discussion: Chapter 6  
In Class Assignment: *Camp Comedy Scene* (10 pts.)

Mar 3. **Camp Comedy Scene Performances**  
Homework: Read Chapter 7 – Idea

## Week Eight (March 7 – 11 ): No Class Spring Break

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## Week Nine

Mar. 15 **Choose Your Own Adventure Assignment #1 Due (50 pts.)**  
Class Discussion: Chapter 7  
In Class Assignment: *Machinal* – *Death of a Salesman* (10 pts.)

Mar. 17 Musical Theatre Analysis Assignment Breakdown/Work Day  
Homework: Read Chapter 8 – Dialogue

## Week Ten

Mar. 22 Class Discussion: Chapter 8  
In Class Assignment: *Death of a Salesman* – *Raisin in Sun* (10 pts.)

Mar. 24 **Musical Theatre Analysis Due (70 pts.) Presented to the class**  
Homework: Read Chapter 9 – Tempo, Rhythm, Mood



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## Week Eleven

- Mar. 29 Class Discussion: Chapter 9  
In Class Assignment: *Happy Days – The Birthday Party* (10 pts.)
- Mar. 31 **American Theatre Magazine Assignment Due (55 pts).**  
Presented to the class.  
Homework: **Read Chapter 10 – Style**

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## April 2022

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## Week Twelve

- Apr. 5 **Choose Your Own Adventure Assignment #2 Due (60 pts.)**  
Class Discussion: Chapter 10  
In Class Assignment: *Fefu Friends – American Buffalo* (10 pts.)
- Apr. 7 In Class Assignment: *Top Girls – A Lie of the Mind* (10 pts.)  
Homework: **Read** *Importance of Being Earnest* or *August Osage County*.

## Week Thirteen

- Apr. 12 In Class Assignment: *Piano Lesson - Rosencrantz Guildenstern* (10 pts)  
Homework: **Read Chapter 11 – Case Study. Importance of Being Earnest** or **August Osage County.**
- Apr. 14 Class Discussion: Chapter 11  
Homework: **Watch Earnest or August on DT +**

## Week Fourteen

- Apr. 19 In Class Assignment: *Angels in America* (10 pts.)  
**Play Analysis/Performance Review #4 Due: August/Earnest (55 pts.)**
- Apr. 21 In Class Work Day: Monologue Mock Performances

## Week Fifteen – Finals Week

### Thursday, April 28<sup>th</sup> 7:00 AM – 9:00 AM

- DIY Analysis Due (75 pts.)** Presented in class.  
**Monologue & Analysis Due (75 pts).** Performed in class.  
**Play Analysis #5 Due: Choose your own(60 pts.)** Due Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at midnight.  
**Three Production Critiques (40 pts. each)** Due Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup> at midnight.