

**THEA 101: Script Analysis**  
USD Theatre Department  
Spring 2020

Location and Time: SH 215, 9:15-10:35am  
Office Hours: TTH 8 - 9am, TTH 2:15-3:45pm  
Office Location: Camino Hall 173F

Instructor: Dr. Monica Stuft  
Email: [mostuft@sandiego.edu](mailto:mostuft@sandiego.edu)  
Phone: 619.260.4273

**Course Objective:**

This course focuses on the analysis of dramatic literature. Students will learn how to closely read, examine, dissect, interpret, and analyze play scripts – which is the essential foundation for playmaking. Through the process of excavating a script for the ideas that ultimately shape the play in performance, students will develop critical thinking skills. This course includes extensive reading, written analysis, individual and group projects, an oral presentation and class discussion.

**Course Learning Outcomes:**

CLO#1 – identify key terms, concepts and genres relating to plays and script analysis

CLO#2 – make effective use of script analysis skills in order to critically evaluate plays

CLO#3 – devise systems of analysis on how to approach the reading of scripts that shape the play in performance

**Required Materials:**

Ball, David. *Backwards & Forwards* ISBN: 9780809311101

Rush, David. *A Student Guide to Play Analysis* ISBN: 9780809326099

Plays:

Rebecca Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play*

Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* (available on Blackboard)

Friedrich Dürrenmatt's *The Visit*

Tony Kushner's *Angels in America Part One: Millennium Approaches*

Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone*

William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*

John Patrick Shanley's *Doubt*

Additional plays will be used during the semester

You are required to attend the USD MFA production of *The Visit* (running March 14 – 18) on campus and one off-campus production, Moxie Theatre's *Manhatta* (running April 25 – May 31)

**Class Plan:** (subject to change)

Jan. 28 - Introduction to Course

Jan. 30 – Ball's "Introduction" (pgs 3-6) – available on Blackboard

Feb. 4 - Rush's "Introduction" (pgs 1-18) – available on Blackboard

Feb. 6 – Rush's "What is a Play" (pgs 21 – 34) – available on Blackboard

Feb. 11 – Rebecca Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play*

Questioning Rebecca Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play* due

Feb. 13 – Ball's "Stasis and Intrusion" (pgs 19 – 24) and Rush's "Plot: The Beginning" (pgs 35 – 51)

and Freytag's pyramid (pdf on Blackboard)

(bring Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play* to class)

Feb. 18 – Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*

Questioning Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* due

Feb. 20 – Ball's "Obstacle, Conflict" (pgs 25 – 31) and

Rush's "Plot: The Middle, The Ending, and Other Matters" (pgs 52 – 67)

(bring Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play* and Glaspell's *Trifles* to class)

Feb. 25 – Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone*

Questioning Sarah Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* due

Feb. 27 – Ball's "Ignorance is Bliss" and "Things Theatrical" (pgs 32 – 36)

(bring Gilman's *Dollhouse: A Play*, Glaspell's *Trifles* and Ruhl's *Dead Man's Cell Phone* to class)

(Mar. 2-6 – Spring Break)

Mar. 10 – Ball’s Backwards Method (pgs 9 – 18)  
 Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America – Part One: Millennium Approaches*  
*Angels in America* Backwards due

Mar. 12 – Ball’s “Forwards” (pgs 45 – 59)  
 Theatricality Essays assigned

[Reminder – attend the USD MFA production of *The Visit* (running March 14 – March 18)]

Mar. 17 – *Angels in America* Forwards due  
 (bring comparison play & Kushner’s *Angels in America –Part One: Millennium Approaches* to class)

Mar. 19 – Group Project assigned/*The Visit* Theatricality Essay work session

Mar. 24 – Read John Patrick Shanley’s *Doubt* prior to class  
 Group Project in-class work - Backwards

Mar. 26 - Group Project in-class work – Forwards  
*The Visit* Theatricality Essay due

Mar. 31 – Ball’s “Missing Persons” (pgs 60 – 67) and Rush’s “Characters” (pgs 68 - 78)  
 Group project in-class work

Apr. 2 - Rush’s “Language” (pgs 79 – 93)  
 Group Project in-class work

Apr. 7 – Discussion and Final Project assigned  
 (Apr. 9-13 - Easter Break)

Apr. 14 – Ball’s “Image” (pgs 68 – 78)  
 Group Project in-class work

Apr. 16 – Ball’s “Theme” (pgs 76 – 78); review Ball’s “Ignorance is Bliss” and “Things Theatrical” (pgs 32 – 36)  
 Group Project in-class work

Apr. 21 – Ball’s “Tricks of the Trade” (pgs 81 – 96)  
 Group Project in-class work

Apr. 23 – Discussion and Final Project work session  
 Ranked list of plays due by noon on Monday. Apr. 27<sup>th</sup>

[Reminder – attend Moxie Theatre’s *Manahatta* (running April 25 – May 31)]

Apr. 28 – Final Project play assignments and order of presentations finalized  
 \*\*\*in order to be assigned a play, you must be able to show Dr. Monica your own copy (e-versions okay)

Apr. 30 – Final Project Presentation work session (rehearsal/tech)

May. 5 – Final Project Presentations

May. 7 – Final Project Presentations

May. 12 – Discussion and Evaluations  
*Manahatta* Theatricality Essay due

May. 21 – 8 – 10am – Final Project Essay due

**Grading Criteria:**

Participation – 2% each discussion-focused class session (13 sessions – will drop lowest 3 grades for 20% total)

Questioning Gilman’s *Dollhouse: A Play* – 2%

Questioning Susan Glaspell’s *Trifles* – 2%

Questioning Sarah Ruhl’s *Dead Man’s Cell Phone* – 2%

*Angels in America* Backwards – 2%

*Angels in America* Forwards – 2%

Group Project Participation – 2% each session (14% total)

Group Project Submissions – 2% each submission (14% total) no credit for absent group members

*The Visit* Theatricality Essay (4%)

*Manahatta* Theatricality Essay (4%)

Final Project Presentation (10%)

Peer Review of Final Project Presentations (2% each day, 4% total)

Final Project Essay (20%)

**Grade Scale:**

F	D-	D	D+	C-	C	C+	B-	B	B+	A-	A	A+
0-59	60-62	63-66	67-69	70-72	73-76	77-79	80-82	83-86	87-89	90-92	93-96	97-100

**Academic Accommodations:**

Please visit <http://www.sandiego.edu/disability/services/academic-accommodations.php> or the Disability and Learning Difference Resource Center (Serra Hall 300) for the procedures necessary to receive accommodations in this course. I am only able to offer reasonable accommodations with appropriate documentation submitted in a timely fashion.

**Academic Integrity:**

As per the Honor Code, academic dishonesty is an affront to the integrity of scholarship and a threat to the quality of learning at USD. Please see [www.sandiego.edu/conduct/documents/HonorCode.pdf](http://www.sandiego.edu/conduct/documents/HonorCode.pdf) to familiarize yourself with your responsibilities as a member of this course and our USD community. Unless clearly defined as a group effort, anything submitted is presumed to be your own original work and not previously submitted for credit in another course unless you have obtained prior written approval to do so. You may use the words or ideas of others but only with proper attribution in MLA format. If you have questions or concerns, be sure to seek clarification before the due date and review [www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/history/how-to-guard-against-plagiarism.pdf](http://www.sandiego.edu/cas/documents/history/how-to-guard-against-plagiarism.pdf).

**Classroom Etiquette:**

Theatre is a collaborative field and, in order to do theatre successfully, we rely upon each other's work. This class is no different. It will always be difficult and often impossible to make up missed class activities. For the duration of the semester, please commit to being fully present and engaged during all class activities. Disruptive or disrespectful behavior of any kind will prevent a student from earning an A in the course.

**Copyright:**

Class lectures, the syllabus, the course description, handouts and other course materials are protected by copyright laws. Students enrolled in the course are allowed to share course materials (and notes or other writings based on the materials or lectures) with other enrolled students but may not do so for commercial purposes or for payment of any kind. Lectures may not be recorded or distributed without the prior written permission of the instructor. Course materials (or derivations of those materials) may not be copied, displayed, or distributed without the instructor's prior written consent. The sale or other commercial use of course materials, class notes, summaries, or other reproductions of lectures violates copyright laws and is strictly prohibited.

**Grade Disputes:**

If you have questions regarding how work will be assessed, please make an appointment during office hours well in advance of the due date. Students who wish to dispute grades on assignments must do so in writing and within one week of the grade being recorded for that particular assignment. Indicate each issue that you dispute and submit the request along with a hard copy of the returned assignment. Grade disputes will then be discussed in person during office hours. I will not discuss grade issues via email.

**Late Work:**

Unless otherwise specified in the assignment prompt, no credit will be given for late work. For group projects, deadlines are particularly essential as others rely upon timely submissions in order to move forward or to complete the assignment. All possible efforts will be made to mitigate the negative effects on other group members if group work is missing or incomplete. If allowed for the particular assignment, late submissions will receive a penalty of 10% per calendar day late, including the day that the assignment is due if not submitted on time.

**Other Commitments:**

Please notify me of any expected absences at the start of the semester (for instance, by submitting the documentation letter provided to student-athletes). Depending upon the nature of your conflicts, you may need to find a course better suited to balancing your other commitments as a significant portion of the work for this course cannot be made up outside of class sessions. I expect you to take responsibility for your choices & to accept the consequences of your decisions regarding your attendance and participation in this course.

**Rubrics:**

Rubrics for this course can be found on Blackboard. If you have questions about the rubric criteria, please ask for clarifications and explanations prior to their use. You will earn your first participation grade next class meeting.

**Participation Rubric**

- Ask questions, offer ideas and engage constructively
- F = no show
- D = present, not prepared, negative contributions
- C = present, prepared, minimal contributions
- B = present, prepared, some contributions
- A = present, prepared, excellent contributions

**Submission of Assignments:**

Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due 30 minutes before the start of class on the announced due date. Please note that some assignments may specify that you should also bring hard copies of the assignment to a particular class session, typically for use in a group activity.

All typed assignments should follow the MLA formatting guidelines for research papers. For all quotations and citations, use the MLA format. Unless otherwise specified, parenthetical citations with a works cited list at the end of the document are preferred. See our course Blackboard page for tip sheets.

Submit assignments on our course Blackboard page; you can log in at <http://ole.sandiego.edu>. For helpful videos on how to use different features, go to <http://ondemand.blackboard.com/students.htm>. Prior to submission, name and save your file as follows: "first name" "last name" "assignment title" [for example, this document would be named *Monica Stuftt Syllabus*]. Please do not wait until the file is uploaded on Blackboard to change the file name, as that does not successfully rename the file. Acceptable file formats are .doc, .docx, .odt, .pages, .pdf, or rtf. Do not write or paste your submission into the assignment's Blackboard text window, and instead attach a file in one of the accepted formats. It is up to you to confirm that the attachments are correct and not corrupted.

**Title IX Compliance:**

USD recognizes the inherent dignity of all individuals and promotes respect for all people. If you feel that any part of the class, members of the class, or professor are not upholding this standard, please report this either to the professor, Theatre Department chair or submit a report on <https://www.sandiego.edu/titleix/>.

**A Note on Sexual Misconduct:**

Our school is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and our school policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex. Sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking — is also prohibited at our school.

Our school encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to talk to someone about what happened, so they can get the support they need and our school can respond appropriately.

If you wish to speak confidentially about an incident of sexual misconduct, want more information about filing a report, or have questions about school policies and procedures, please contact our Title IX Coordinator, which can be found on our school's website (see above).

Our school is legally obligated to investigate reports of sexual misconduct, and therefore it cannot guarantee the confidentiality of a report, but it will consider a request for confidentiality and respect it to the extent possible.

As a teacher, I am also required by our school to report incidents of sexual misconduct and thus cannot guarantee confidentiality. I must provide our Title IX coordinator with relevant details such as the names of those involved in the incident.