

NYC College of Technology, Humanities
THE 2380: Play Analysis: Texts and Contexts
Section D480, Writing Intensive
Room: L639

Dr. Christopher Swift
E-mail: cswift@citytech.cuny.edu
Office: L630
Office Hours: T/TH 11:30am-1:00pm
by appointment

SYLLABUS

Prerequisite: English 1101

Textbook (Available for purchase at the Bookstore and on reserve in the library)

Burgoyne, Suzanne and Patricia Downey. *Thinking Through Script Analysis*. Newburyport, Mass.: Focus Publishing, 2012. ISBN: 978-1-58510-361-4.
On Reserve in Library: PN1707.B87 2012



Mark Rylance in *Twelfth Night*, Globe Theatre 2012

Read the editions of the following plays. Bring your own copy of the play (either printed from a database or borrowed from the library) to every class.

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry (text and film)
Boesman & Lena, Athol Fugard (text and the Signature Theater, Feb. 5-March 17)
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof, Tennessee Williams (text and film)
If Pretty Hurts Ugly Must Be a Muhfucka, Tori Sampson (text and Playwrights Horizons, 2/15-3/31)
King Lear, William Shakespeare (Opens February 28 on Broadway, film VHS 1293 and 188)
How I Learned to Drive, Paula Vogel (text)

Course Description

Students will learn methods of analyzing plays as readers and audience members. This includes identifying theatrical genres, structures, and historical contexts that help artists read, dissect, interpret, and present stories for live audiences. We will examine various theatrical models by reading play texts and attending performances in order to gain working vocabulary and critical understanding. Students will identify major dramatic questions, plot structures, characters, and thematic elements. Through critical reading of plays and the documentation of specific artistic choices made in production, students will develop skills to synthesize the intellectual and creative work required to bring a text to life.

Attending a Performance

Students are required to attend a production of the play for their final Dramaturgical Report. Prof. Swift will provide ticket information.

Writing Intensive

In order to fulfill Writing Intensive requirements, students are expected to a) engage in critical reading, logical thinking, and the use of writing to better engage with course material; b) use appropriate style and disciplinary conventions in writing (MLA citation and organizational styles); c) Conduct appropriate original research using library materials and other valid sources; and d) Produce a minimum of fifteen pages of writing, which includes both informal assignments (journals, summaries, definitions, low stakes writing and free writing) and formal writing projects (scaffolded essays and reports). [As part of the Gender & Sexuality concentration at City Tech, a portion of the thinking and writing in the class will be devoted to issues of gender performativity and sexuality in dramatic literature and on stage.]

Knowledge

- will be able to analyze plays in their social and cultural contexts, including gender & sexuality
- will be able to analyze plays on the basis of plot structure, character, theme, given circumstances, etc.

- will be able to understand how theatre professionals use information from the script in order to make artistic decisions in production

Skills

- will have improved critical thinking skills
- will have improved ability to communicate effectively in oral language
- will have improved ability to communicate effectively in written language
- will have improved information literacy and research skills
- will have improved group collaboration skills
- will be able to properly format in MLA bibliographic style.

Values

- will have increased respect for the opinions of others.
- will have an increased appreciation of aesthetics from various historical cultures.

Assessment

In this course, students are expected to devote significant time and effort reading and writing outside of class. Students are also expected to participate in group discussions and low-stakes response writing in order to demonstrate conceptual understanding of the material. Throughout the semester, students will demonstrate imaginative and critical thinking by completing formal and informal writing assignments. *Written work is assigned every week of the semester.*

Class Participation (5%)

- Students should actively participate in class by asking pertinent questions, taking notes, contributing to a substantive discussion of the topics, and demonstrating that they have read and thought critically about the assigned texts.
- Cell phones are not permitted under any circumstances. E-readers, Ipads, and laptops for note taking and in-class reading are permitted.
- Students must bring the assigned readings and plays to every classroom session, either in paper form (book, published play, print out), or on a laptop or eReader.
- I encourage students to take advantage of my availability during office hours. Asking for assistance from the professor will provide students with individual attention not always available in class. Students who seek help outside of class perform at a higher level than those students who remain in the dark.

Assignments

Formatting typewritten work: Times Roman 12-point font. 1-inch margins. Double-spaced.

1. **Dramatic Structure Worksheets:** (10%) Students will complete dramatic structure worksheets for *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *King Lear*. Submit hard copies to instructor.
2. **Character Map:** (5%) Incorporate all characters from *King Lear* into a bubble network map that describe relationships.
3. **Online Reading Responses:** (20%) Critical analyses of *Raisin in the Sun*, *How I Learned to Drive*, *Boesman and Lena*, and *If Pretty Hurts*, often in conversation with secondary reading. 2 paragraphs minimum, posted on Blackboard.
4. **Free writing:** (10%) At the start of every class, students will respond to a question that engages with the readings due that week. Free writing will end promptly after 15 minutes. Late students are not permitted to make up the writing, and will receive a zero for that assignment. Five of the free writing assignments will be graded.

5. **Dramaturgical Report:** (stage one 5%; stage two 10%; stage three 15%; stage four 20%) Students will synthesize the main concepts of the course in a scaffolded dramaturgical report on one of these plays: *Boesman and Lena*, *King Lear* or *If Pretty Hurts*. There are two main focuses for this project: 1) an extended dramaturgical analysis of the play using tools from play analysis (plot/action or non-Aristotelian structure, given circumstances, character, theme, etc.) and 2) a critical analysis of gender and sexuality as it is presented in live production. Students must engage with terminology and concepts discussed in the textbook, readings, and seminars. Each of the four stages must be completed and returned with feedback before the next stage can be submitted. Late assignments will not be accepted since progress through the stages of writing depends on timely submission.

Engaging with topics about gender and sexuality

Studying dramatic literature allows opportunities for us to engage with socially and personally relevant topics and issues. Some topics and issues may be difficult to discuss or can be personally challenging for some students. As a group of investigators, we need to be respectful of different perspectives in order that we can better understand the complexity of human life and society. Students should show respect to the personal, political and spiritual values of others, particularly in relation to race, gender and religious beliefs. If disagreements are discussed in thoughtful, open, and respectful ways, we are bound to discover new ideas in unexpected ways.



Norbert Leo Butz and Elizabeth Reaser in *How I Learned to Drive*, Second Stage 2012

Humanities Department Attendance Policy

It is the conviction of the Humanities Department that a student who is not in a class for any reason is not receiving the benefit of the education being provided. Missed class time includes not just absences but also latenesses, early departures, and time outside the classroom taken by students during class meeting periods. Missed time impacts any portion of the final grade overtly allocated to participation and/or any grades awarded for activities that relate to presence in class.

Statement on Students with Disabilities

Qualified students with disabilities will be provided reasonable academic accommodations if determined eligible by the Office of Students Support Services (OSSS). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility from OSSS, which is located in Room A-237. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with the OSSS staff and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement: CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS

| Class Dates | Classroom Activities | Reading and Watching Assignments [READ/WATCH in order listed] | Due Dates |
|-------------|--|---|---|
| 1.28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction to course: Blackboard, Readings and WI Assignments ▪ Watch first half of <i>Raisin</i> (VHS 1951) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Umberto Eco, “The Role of the Reader” ✓ Read introductory material to gender and sexuality studies | |
| 2.4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Given Circumstances ▪ Group discussion and workshop on <i>Raisin</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Wilkerson essay in Case, <i>Performing Feminisms</i> ✓ Read Burgoyne, Chapter 2 ✓ Read remainder of <i>Raisin</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog: <i>Raisin in the Sun</i> |
| 2.11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bibliography/research workshop ▪ Discuss <i>Boesman & Lena</i> ▪ Computer classroom: N1118 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Galens, “Boesman and Lena” (summary) ✓ Read <i>Boesman and Lena</i> (play) | |
| 2.18 | NO CLASSES | | |
| 2.25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plot, action, event, root action ▪ Discuss Stage 1 ▪ Essay analysis: Lenta & Wilkerson ▪ Computer Classroom: N1118 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Burgoyne, Chapters 3 & 4 ✓ Read Lenta, “Goodbye Lena” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog: <i>Boesman & Lena</i> • Submit choice of play for Dramaturgy Report and purchase tickets |
| | ATTEND IF PRETTY: 3/2 | | |
| 3.4 | ▪ <i>SNOW DAY: CLASS CANCELLED</i> | | |
| 3.11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Watch first hour of <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> (VHS 1006) ▪ Discuss Structure Worksheet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Bottoms, <i>Student Handbook</i> (highlighted text) ✓ Read <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Stage 1 |
| 3.18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Workshop character map ▪ Discuss <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof: 1950s USA</i> and queer dramaturgy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Burgoyne, Ch. 5, pp. 78-80 ✓ Read Savran, Ch. 2 (highlighted) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic Structure Worksheet: <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> |
| 3.25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss <i>If Pretty Hurts</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read <i>If Pretty Hurts</i> (play) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. returns Stage 1 • Free write quiz |
| | ATTEND KING LEAR | | |
| 4.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In class workshop: <i>If Pretty</i> ▪ Discuss Stage 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Fila-Bakabadio ✓ Read Burgoyne, Chapter 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blog <i>If Pretty Hurts</i> • Free write quiz |
| 4.8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shakespeare and Gender ▪ Discuss Stage 3 ▪ Review “theme” | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Hacht (plot summary, character descriptions, themes) ✓ Read <i>King Lear</i>, Act I, Scene i ✓ Read Helms, pp. 196-200 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Stage 2 • Character map: <i>King Lear</i> |
| 4.15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Shakespeare and Daughters: <i>Cordelia and Juliet</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Ballard ✓ Read Gay ✓ Watch Stratford production of <i>King Lear</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dramatic Structure Worksheet: <i>King Lear</i> • Free write quiz |
| 4.22 | No classes scheduled | | |
| 4.29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender and sexuality in Renaissance England ▪ Explain Turnitin | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Read Bulman, pp. 11-14 ✓ Read Drouin, pp. 23-40 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. returns Stage 2 • Free write quiz |

| Class Dates | Classroom Activities | Reading and Watching Assignments [READ/WATCH in order listed] | Due Dates |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| 5.6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discuss <i>How I Learned to Drive</i> ▪ Writing workshop | ✓ Read <i>How I Learned to Drive</i> (play) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Stage 3 on Blackboard |
| 5.13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>How I Learned</i> meta-narrative ▪ Outlining workshop ▪ Review Turnitin tools ▪ Computer Classroom: N1118 | ✓ Read <i>How I Learned to Drive</i> reading pack | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prof. returns Stage 3 Blog <i>How I learned</i> • Free write quiz |
| 5.15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review main concepts ▪ Peer review of papers | ✓ READING DAY (SNOW DAY MAKE UP) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • |
| 5.20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Writing workshop ▪ Computer Classroom: N1118 | | |
| 5.22 No class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Final Draft (Stage 4) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit Stage 4 on Blackboard |



Steven Perry, Ruby Dee, Claudia McNeil, Diana Sands, and Sidney Poitier in *A Raisin in the Sun*, Columbia Pictures 1961.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ballard, Kim. "Daughters in Shakespeare: dreams, duty and defiance." *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare and Renaissance*. *British Library*. 15 March 2016. <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/daughters-in-shakespeare-dreams-duty-and-defiance#>

Barton, Randall. "Constructing Gender." *Reed Magazine*. 10 September 2018. <https://www.reed.edu/reed-magazine/articles/2018/bredeson-constructing-gender.html>

Burrell, Julie M., "To Be a Man: A Re-Assessment of Black Masculinity in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* and *Les Blancs*." *English Faculty Publications* 9 (2014). https://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/cleng_facpub/9

Case, Sue-Ellen, ed. *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

Dossett, Kate. "Staging the Garveyite Home: Black Masculinity, Failure, and Redemption in Theodore Ward's 'Big White Fog.'" *African American Review*, vol. 43, no. 4, 2009, pp. 557–576. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/41328657.

Dreher, Diane E. *Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1986.

Drouin, Jennifer. "Cross-Dressing, Drag, and Passing: Slippages in Shakespearean Comedy", in *Shakespeare Re-Dressed: Cross-Gender Casting in Contemporary Performance*, (pp. 23-56), ed. James C. Bulman, Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2008. ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/citytech-ebooks/detail.action?docID=3115994>.

Eco, Umberto. *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts*. Indiana University Press, 1979.

Fila-Bakabadio, Sarah. "'Pick Your Afro Daddy': Neo Soul and the Making of Diasporan Identities": *Musiques dans l'Atlantique noir* 216 (2014), pp. 919-44.

Galens, David M., ed. *Drama for Students*. Vol. 6. Detroit, MI: Gale, 1999.

Gay, Penny. "Juliet's eloquence." *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare and Renaissance*. British Library. 15 March 2016. <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/juliets-eloquence>

Hacht, Anne Marie, ed. "King Lear." *Shakespeare for Students: Critical Interpretations of Shakespeare's Plays and Poetry*, vol. 2, Gale, 2007, 368-408. http://link.galegroup.com.citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu/apps/doc/CX2896100023/GVRL?u=cuny_main&sid=GVRL&xid=e329be5d

Lenta, Margaret. "Goodbye Lena, Goodbye Poppie: Post-Apartheid Black Women's Writing," *Ariel* 29(4) (1998), 101-118

Luckyj, Christina. "Silence and Drama." In *"A moving Rhetoricke": Gender and Silence in Early Modern England*, pp. 78-120. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2002.

Mansbridge, Joanna. *Paula Vogel*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014.

McManus, Clare. "Shakespeare and gender: the 'woman's part'". *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare and Renaissance*. British Library. 15 March 2016. <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/shakespeare-and-gender-the-womans-part>

Moss, Joyce and Lorraine Valestuk. "King Lear." *World Literature and Its Times: Profiles of Notable Literary Works and the Historical Events That Influenced Them*. Vol. 3: *British and Irish Literature and Its Times: Celtic Migrations to the Reform Bill (Beginnings-1830s)*. Detroit, MI: Gale, 2001. P. 187-196.

Orgel, Stephen. "Shakespeare, Sexuality, and Gender." *The New Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare*. Eds. Margreta De Grazia and Stanley Wells. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. 217-231.

Pressley, Nelson. "Paula Vogel's 'How I Learned to Drive' steers into the #MeToo era." *The Washington Post* (Oct. 16, 2018).

Rasmussen, Eric. "Marriage and Courtship." *Discovering Literature: Shakespeare and Renaissance*. British Library. 15 March 2016. <https://www.bl.uk/shakespeare/articles/marriage-and-courtship>

Savran, David. *Communist, Cowboys, and Queers: The Politics of Masculinity in the Work of Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992.

Stern, Lizzie. "The American Voice: Theater of the Neo-Soul", *Playwrights Horizons* December 6, 2018. <https://www.playwrightshorizons.org/shows/trailers/american-voice-if-pretty-hurts/>.

Weiss, Katherine. *A Student Handbook to the Plays of Tennessee Williams*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014.

Wolf, Stacy. *Changed for Good: A Feminist History of the Broadway Musical*. Oxford University Press, 2011.

Ziegler, Georgianna, with Frances E. Dolan, and Jeanne Addison Roberts. *Shakespeare's Unruly Women*. Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1997.