

**Thea 140-01: F/ Play Analysis  
Fall 2010**

MWF 10:30-11:20  
Brodie 154

Professor: Melanie Blood  
Brodie 121  
Office hours: MWF 11:30; or by apptmt  
IM: TheaProfonCall

**Required Books:** Available at Sundance Books or college bookstore

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata (P)*, 0486282252, DOVER  
Brecht, Bertolt, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*  
Caristi, et al, *Tracers*, ISBN: 0822211645, DRAMA PLAY87  
Howe Tina. *Museum*. ISBN: 0573612897  
Ionesco ,Eugene, *Rhinoceros (P)*, ISBN: 0573614741, FREN  
Miller, Arthur, *All My Sons (P)*, ISBN: 0822200163, DRPSE  
Raffo, Heather, *9 Parts of Desire*, ISBN: 0810123452, UCHIC  
Shakespeare, William, *Henry V (P)*, ISBN: 0486428877, DOVER

**Required online reading:** [mycourses.geneseo.edu](http://mycourses.geneseo.edu) or <http://www.geneseo.edu/~blood>

Aristotle, *Poetics*, (excerpt).  
Blood, Melanie. *Theatre Spaces, Audience, The Playwright, The Actor, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Lighting Designer, Sound Designer, Director, and Musical Theatre* .1997.  
Dobree, Bonamy. *On Comedy*.  
Frye, Northrup. *Structure of Comedy*.  
Holmes, Rupert. *Mystery of Edwin Drood*.  
Hare, David. *Stuff Happens*, (excerpt).

**Mycourses.geneseo.edu** also has a copy of this syllabus, all handouts, powerpoints, and will include drop boxes for papers and a Wiki for small groups' discussions.

**Required Performances:**

*Museum*, by Tina Howe, Sept 28-Oct 3, Black Box (\$8.)  
*Mystery of Edwin Drood*, by Rupert Holmes, Nov 17-21, Austin (\$8.)  
All tickets available at [bbo.geneseo.edu](http://bbo.geneseo.edu); more info from 245-5833

**Optional Performances** for extra credit, or to make up one of the above required plays:

*Dangerous Liaisons*, adapted by Christopher Hampton  
*Kiss Me Kate*, by Cole Porter.  
*Evita*, by Andrew Lloyd-Weber and Tim Rice.  
Stratford Festival trip, October 8-10, sponsored and subsidized by Cothurnus. More details will be given in class. To receive extra credit, you will write a three-page paper on a leading actors' work in one of the plays. Last year's trip cost was about \$100, plus some money for gas and food.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

The successful student will:

¥Increase his/her awareness of the variety of live theatre performance in America today by completing the group projects, and by seeing plays in performance and analyzing them verbally and in writing.  
¥Analyze a dramatic text from the various perspectives of actor, designer, director, and dramaturge, demonstrating the results in verbal and written form.  
¥Learn to use historical and critical material to inform dramatic production, as demonstrated on short answer style tests and in more substantial essays.  
¥Develop his/her ability to work in a small group, sharing and building upon one another's ideas. There are five small group projects over the semester.  
¥Note details and evaluate the success of the translation of dramatic texts from page to stage, as demonstrated in analytical essays.

¥Develop his/her ability to write effective analytical essays and to present ideas verbally, skills critical to success in college or as a theatre artist, by writing three essays and giving two oral presentations.

**Course requirements:**

**1. Midterm and Final Examinations.** Two one-hour, in-class exams. Both will contain short answer and identification style questions, and identifications might include quotes from plays or graphics. All material covered in class or assigned for homework and reading will be on the exams. The midterm (M 10/18, in class) covers everything up to the date of the midterm; the final (Mon 12/13) covers only the material since the midterm. No late or early exams will be given. (15% each, 30% total)

**2. Three Essays.** For the **first two essays**, you will be required to attend two productions at Geneseo and write a paper on each: *Museum* by Tina Howe (Sept. 28-Oct 3), *Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes (Nov 17-21). A three page, typed, double spaced essay is due after each production (Wed Oct. 6 and Mon Nov. 22). Each paper should include

1. a textual analysis, properly footnoted, from the point of view of the artist you have selected (based in the online reading of that artist’s function);
2. an analysis of the choices made by the artist in this specific production;
3. your evaluation of the artist’s choice; and
4. your own artistic vision of the chosen production aspect.

You should demonstrate familiarity with the terms and concepts covered in the readings and in class. The first paper will analyze the work of an actor in *Museum* and the second paper will analyze the work of the set designer, costume designer, or lighting designer for *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. The Brodie box office extension is x5833, Union box office is x5873. Tickets may be purchased online with a processing fee: bbo.geneseo.edu. See description of assignments at the end of the syllabus. Late papers will not be accepted. (15% each, 30% total)

**Your final essay** will be prepared with your small group. The group will pick one play to read, outside of class readings, and assign each group member a role on the production staff or acting a major role. Everyone must work within the director’s concept for the production, which should be articulated in your paper as it applies to your role in the production. Your paper should include:

1. a textual analysis, properly footnoted, from the point of view of the artist you have selected
2. pertinent research outside the text
3. your own artistic vision of the chosen production aspect

Your paper should be either five pages or three pages plus sketch(es) if you chose a design element. The paper is due at the final exam, (Fri 12/17, 8-11) and you will present the major points with your group. (20%)

**3. Group projects.** You will be assigned a group of 4-5 the first week of class and work with this group on five short projects to be presented in class on M 9/13, W 9/29, F 10/29, W 11/10, and F 12/17 (the final exam). Groups should meet once per project outside of class, or demonstrate each person’s substantive participation using the Wiki function in mycourses. Each student must be presenter on one project, and this project will determine your grade, so long as you participate in the other four. The presenter prepares

- 1) an outline (or drawing) from which to present the groups solution(s) to the project.
- 2) a review of the group process, including A) documentation of two different possible solutions, or a disagreement, and its choice/resolution and B) participation of all group members.

Both documents are to be turned in at the end of the presentation. Lack of participation on group projects for which you are not the presenter will substantially reduce your grade. Late assignments will not be accepted.(15%)

**Final Grades will be calculated as follows:**

Midterm:	15%
Final:	15%
Essay #1 on <i>Museum</i> :	15%
Essay #2 on <i>Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> :	15%
Essay #3 on your artist’s approach to your group’s play:	20%
5 Group Projects:	20%
	Total 100%

**Policy for accommodating students with disabilities:** SUNY Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented physical, emotional or learning disabilities. Students should contact the Director in the Office of Disability Services (Tabitha Buggie-Hunt, 105D Erwin) and their faculty to discuss needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester.

## **SYLLABUS:**

**TBA performances: Musical Theatre Club, VegSOUP, Orchestis and ACT 1's.**

### **Introduction**

M 8/30 Course Introduction; theatre as a performing art.  
\*\*AUDITIONS begin immediately for *Museum*, the VegSOUP, all musical ensembles, Musical Theatre Club, Dance Ensemble, and Freshmen Showcase. Auditions in week two include *Mystery of Edwin Drood*. All students are welcome and encouraged to audition.  
W 9/1 Spaces and terms. Reading due: *Theatre Spaces* (online)  
F 9/3 Reading due: *Audience* (online)  
Theatre Tour; bring handout on terms  
M 9/6 LABOR DAY – No class

### **Classical Greek Theatre**

W 9/8 Lecture: *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes  
Reading due: *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes  
F 9/10 Lecture: Theatre of classical Athens  
Reading due: excerpt from Aristotle's *Poetics* (online in mycourses)  
M 9/13 **Group Project #1 due:** What space at Geneseo can best house a production of *Lysistrata*?  
W 9/15 Lecture: Playwrights  
Reading due: *Playwright* (online)

### **Elizabethan Theatre**

F 9/17 Reading due: *Actor* (online)  
M 9/20 Finish *Actor* and *Playwright*  
W 9/22 Lecture: Elizabethan Theatre  
Reading due: *Henry V*, by William Shakespeare, Acts 1-3;  
F 9/24 Reading due: *Henry V*, by William Shakespeare, Acts 4-5  
M 9/27 *Henry V* videos; acting Shakespeare

**Required Performance:** *Museum* by Tina Howe. Directed by Dr. Kaplan. Tues 9/28-Sun 10/3. 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm, Black Box. Tickets \$8. x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

W 9/29 **Group Project #2 due:** Text analysis for Henry in *Henry V*  
F 10/1 Reading due: *Set Design* and *Costume Design* (online)

**Potential Performance:** Freshmen Showcase, Fri 10/1, 4 pm Austin Theatre. Free.

M 10/4 Discussion of design choices & production process for *Museum*  
Reading and viewing due: *Museum* by Tina Howe  
W 10/6 **Essay #1 Due.** See assignment on *Museum* under course requirements; you will analyze the work of an actor in a leading role.  
In class discussion focusing on acting in the production.  
F 10/8 Reading due: *Lighting and Sound Design* (online)

**Strongly Recommended trip to Stratford Festival:** October 8-10. See Dangerous Liaisons,

Cole Porter's *Kiss Me Kate*, and Lloyd Weber/Rice's *Evita*— and get two nights accommodation with breakfast in Stratford. More information forthcoming.

**Optional Extra Credit Essay due;** analyze the work of a lead actor, set or costume designer for one of the Stratford productions. 3 pp. Due Fri 10/15 in class.

M 10/11 FALL BREAK – No class

### Modern Realism

W 10/13 Lecture: Conventions of Modern Realism, *All My Sons* by Miller

Reading due: *All My Sons* by Arthur Miller

F 10/15 Lecture: WWII and theatre in US and Europe

M 10/18 **Midterm Examination**

### Modern Anti-Realism: Epic and Absurd Theatre

W 10/20 Lecture: Bertolt Brecht and Epic Theatre

Reading due: *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, by Bertolt Brecht, through I:9, p. 72

**Recommended Production:** Veg SOUP presents new plays by student authors; dates probably Oct 20-22, Black Box Theatre. Tickets \$5 x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu.

F 10/22 Lecture: Brecht's historical analogy, Brechtian acting and design  
Reading due: *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui*, by Bertolt Brecht, rest of play;  
excerpt from Brecht's *Short Organum on Theatre* (online in mycourses)

M 10/25 Theatre of the Absurd and Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*

Reading due: *Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco, Act 1

W 10/27 Reading due: *Rhinoceros* by Eugene Ionesco, Acts 2-3

Film: *Rhinoceros* starring Gene Wilder

F 10/29 **Group Project #3 due:** Costume design for Berenger turning into a rhinoceros, Act 2 of *Rhinoceros*.

M 11/1 Reading due: *Director* (online)

### American Musical Theatre

W 11/3 Lecture: American Musical Theatre, focusing on those taking place during wartime

Reading due: *Musical Theatre* (online)

F 11/5 Lecture: Musical Theatre continued

Reading due: Web sites' summaries of *South Pacific*, *Hair!*, *Miss Saigon*

M 11/8 Video: *The Heat is on in Saigon: The Making of Miss Saigon*

### Contemporary Theatre Styles: Group created, Docudrama, Performance Art

W 11/10 **Group Project #4:** web site reports, first half of class

F 11/12 **Group Project #4:** web site reports, second half of class

M 11/15 Lecture: Stage Manager, Technical Director, other tech staff, crews and theatrical Unions.

Reading due: Northrop Frye's *Structure of Comedy* and Dobree *On Comedy* (online in mycourses)

**Required Performance:** *Mystery of Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes. Directed by Dr. Blood, music directed by Dean Davis and Vocal Coaching by Alan Case. Wed 11/17—Sat 11/20. 8 pm, Sun at 2 pm, Austin Theatre. Tickets \$8. Students x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

W 11/17 Lecture: Vietnam War, 1960's Theatre trends, *Tracers*

Reading due: start *Tracers*, by Caristi et al.

F 11/19 Discussion of *Tracers* and collaboratively written theatre, with video clips

Reading due: finish *Tracers*, by Caristi et al.

Introduce *Edwin Drood*

M 11/22 Discussion: Acting, music and audience expectations in *Edwin Drood*  
Reading and viewing due: *Edwin Drood* by Rupert Holmes  
**Essay #2 Due: Set design, costume design, or lighting for *Edwin Drood***

W 11/24-F 11/26 THANKSGIVING BREAK – No class

M 11/29 Lecture: The current war and theatrical responses  
Viewing in class: *Embedded* by Tim Robbins and the Actors Gang  
**Final play selection and roles due** for Final Paper/Group Project

W 12/1 Finish viewing *Embedded*

F 12/3 Discuss *Embedded*

**Recommended Production:** GENseng presents *Strictly Dandia* by Sudha Buchar and Kristine Landon-Smith. Directed by Dr. Kaplan. Thurs 12/2 at 7, Fri 12/3 at 4, Sat 12/4 at 2, Black Box Theatre. Tickets \$8. at x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

M 12/6 Lecture: Introduce Hare's *Stuff Happens* and documentary theatre.  
Reading due: online excerpt of *Stuff Happens* by David Hare

W 12/8 Lecture: Solo Performance/Performance Art; Introduce Raffo play  
Reading due: excerpt on Performance Art (online in mycourses), *Nine Parts of Desire* by Heather Raffo, through p. 41 (up to Nanna's monologue)

**Optional Performance:** An Evening's Dances. Thurs 12/9-Sun 12/12. 8 pm, Sun at 2pm, Austin Theatre. Tickets \$7. x5833 or bbo.geneseo.edu

F 12/10 Discuss: *Nine Parts of Desire*  
Reading due: Finish *Nine Parts of Desire* by Heather Raffo  
Review for Final Exam

M 12/13 **Final Examination**

F 12/17, 8-11 **Group Project #5: Presentation of Production plan:** Present your production choices for your play with your group.  
**Paper #3 due**

### **Group Project and Essay Assignments Theatre 140: F/Play Analysis Fall 2009**

#### **Essay Assignments:**

Essays can be either submitted in hard copy in class on the due date or in the drop box on mycourses.geneseo.edu for this class, before the start of class on the due date.

**Essay 1, due Wed Oct 6 in class.** See the SOTA production of *Museum*, by Tina Howe, and save the program so you can address actors by name in your paper. Write a three-page, typed, double-spaced paper analyzing the work of a lead actor. Trace the character's given circumstances in the text, describe the choices the actor made to portray the character (physical, vocal, and intentions), and tell how well the actor's choices serve the script and work with other actors' interpretations and overall production choices. Use terms from the Actor reading. Include:

1. a textual analysis (given circumstances plus your interpretation), properly footnoted, from the point of view of the artist you have selected;
2. an analysis of the choices made by the artist in this specific production (physical, vocal, character interpretation, Stanislavsky based choices like intention);
3. your evaluation of the artist's choices; and

4. your own artistic vision of the role.

**Essay 2, due Mon 11/23 in class.** See the SOTA and MTC production of *Mystery of Edwin Drood*, by Rupert Holmes, and save the program so you can cite the designer you select by name. Write a three-page, typed, double-spaced paper analyzing the work of the set designer, costume designer, or lighting designer. Use terms from the appropriate class readings. Look to the text for visual requirements and suggestions. How does the designer accomplish practical requirements and make visual meaning that enhances the text and supports an overall production concept? Include #1-4 above.

**Essay 3, due Wednesday 12/16 at the final exam (8am).** With your group that you are assigned for the five group projects, select a play from contemporary world theatre and divide your group into a director, designers, and (optional) an actor in a leading role. Either come up with a production concept together or the director should provide one, rooted in the text. Your paper should include that production concept plus:

1. a textual analysis, properly footnoted, from the point of view of the artist you have selected
2. pertinent research outside the text
3. your own artistic vision of the chosen production aspect

Your paper should be either five pages or three pages plus sketch(es) if you chose a design element. The paper is due at the final exam, (Fri 12/17, 8-11) and you will present the major points with your group.

#### **Theatre 140: F/Play Analysis Group Project Assignments:**

Each group member should document and take the lead on one of the five projects. Groups are expected to meet once, with reading done, to engage in a substantive conversation as you would if actually making production choices for a script. If you can't meet in person, use the Wiki function in mycourses.

**Project 1, due M 9/13.** Read *Lysistrata* by Aristophanes. Imagine that a contemporary company wants to perform this play at Geneseo and be as true to ancient Greek staging practices as possible. Select a site on campus and defend your choice by references to class materials on ancient Greek theatre.

**Project 2, due W 9/29.** Read *Henry V* by William Shakespeare. What characteristics does Shakespeare give to Henry that make him a great king? Look to the text for the character's actions, his words, and what others say about him. Find quotes to support your choices. Are there negative qualities, and if so does that make him more fully developed as a character? Which characteristics would you emphasize, when, if you were playing the character?

**Project 3, due F 10/29.** In Act 2 of *Rhinoceros*, Berenger slowly transforms into a rhinoceros. Design a costume that fulfills all textual requirements, including transforming in several stages. Pay particular attention to silhouette, movement, and what kind of materials would be most effective. Make a rendering.

**Project 4, due W 11/10 and F 11/12.** This web research assignment will examine the range of live theatre activity in the US today. Your group will select a topic and be given several URL's of producing or arts advocacy organizations or artists' unions. Look for the following about each organization on its site:

- A. What is the nature of the organization? Describe briefly.
- B. Give highlights of the history of your organization.
- C. What is the current work of your organization?

Each group will be given a set of related URLs. You should discuss similarities and differences so you can make a joint, group presentation on the topic that unites your organizations.

**Project 5, due F 12/17.** Select a play from the given list, or get another approved by me, and divide up production roles by Mon 11/29. After reading your play, meet as a group and either discuss and arrive at a production concept or the director could present a production concept and the group discuss how it can be applied by each of the other artists. Plan a proposed production of your play, with each of you as one of the

artists, but working together. Assume an audience of your peers, a theatre space of your choice, and an unlimited budget. Decide how to present your proposed production to the class; I would hope your classmates want to see or read your play when your group is done presenting.

### **Theatre 140: F/Play Analysis**

**The full assignment is on your syllabus and online; it is due at the final exam, Friday 12/17**

#### **Recommended plays for Essay #3 & Group Project #5:**

WWII – Early 60's:

*Glass Menagerie* or *Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

*Children's Hour* by Lillian Hellman

*Long Day's Journey Into Night* by Eugene O'Neill

*A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

*Waiting for Godot* or *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett

*Mother Courage* or *Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht

*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* by Edward Albee

*The Homecoming* by Harold Pinter

*West Side Story*, conceived by Jerome Robbins; must also listen to full score by Bernstein

1960's to early 80's:

*for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf* by Ntozake Shange

*Fefu and Her Friends* by Maria Irene Fornes

*American Buffalo* or *Glengarry Glen Ross* by David Mamet

*True West* or *Buried Child* by Sam Shepard

*Cloud Nine* or *Top Girls* by Caryl Churchill

*Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

*Crimes of the Heart* by Beth Henley

*M. Butterfly* by David Henry Hwang

1980's to now:

*Fences* or *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom* by August Wilson

*The Heidi Chronicles* by Wendy Wasserstein

*Angels in America pt 1* by Tony Kushner

*Master Harold and the Boys* by Athol Fugard

*Sunday in the Park With George* by Sondheim and Lapine – score and script

*The America Play* or *Topdog/Underdog* by Suzan-Lori Parks

*How I Learned to Drive* by Paula Vogel

*Love! Valor! Compassion* by Terrence McNally

*Three Tall Women* by Edward Albee

*The Laramie Project* by Moises Kaufman & Tectonic Theatre Project

*Doubt* by John Patrick Shanley

\*\* This list is heavy on American plays and ones that have won the Pulitzer Prize for drama. Other scripts are also possible, just clear them by me first. All are in the library; no one should need to buy another book.

Your group should pick a play and divide up the production responsibilities – pick a director, designers, etc. – as soon as possible