

COURSE OUTLINE

**Theatre Arts 155 (C-ID Number: THTR 114)
Introduction to Playwriting (C-ID Title: Script Analysis)**

I. Catalog Statement

Theatre Arts 155 is the study and practice of writing dramatic works for the stage. Students gain a greater understanding of how to write for the stage through reading plays, analyzing play structure, peer evaluation of writing assignments, participating in the play development process, understanding the commerce of playwriting, and having original works performed in front of an audience.

Total Lecture Units: 3.0

Total Course Units: 3.0

Total Lecture Hours: 3.0

Total Faculty Contact Hours: 48.0

Prerequisite: None.

Note: This course may include trips to local professional and/or amateur theatre productions. Students may also present their plays in a staged-reading or performance at the conclusion of the class for a public audience.

II. Course Entry Expectations

Skill Level Ranges: Reading 5; Writing 5; Listening-Speaking 4; Math 1.

III. Course Exit Standards

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

1. discuss plays and playwrights, their challenges, techniques, and relevance to social conditions of the past and present;
2. apply the elements of play structure and skills used in crafting plays;
3. illustrate the awareness and expression of theater arts design elements such as lights, sound, scenery, and costume;
4. identify playwriting terminology such as stage directions, pause, beat, dialogue, monologue, and character;
5. assess playwriting through critique and performance in front of an audience.

IV. Course Content**Total Faculty Contact Hours = 48**

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| <p>A. Dramaturgy and Play Analysis</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction to Aristotle <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Play structure b. Plot, character, theme, diction, melody, spectacle 2. Additional approaches to structure in history from Greeks to present <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Playwriting and relation to social, political, and economic influences b. Expressionism, modernism, theatre of the absurd 3. Playwright as “builder of plays” 4. The role of the dramaturge and analyzing a play as dramaturge 5. Types of plays <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. 10-minute play b. One-act play c. Full-length play 6. Discussion of the play as production, versus the play as literature 7. Art of the critique: constructive criticism | 12 hours |
| <p>B. Writing the Monologue or Monodrama</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reading and peer evaluation of the one person play or monologue 2. Examination of works using monologue form 3. Creating dramatic action 4. Understanding the use of stage directions | 6 hours |
| <p>C. Writing Scenes with Dialogue</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conflict <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What creates conflict in a scene b. Characterization c. Situation 2. Opposing forces <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Protagonist b. Antagonist c. Deciding agent 3. Creating characters and situations <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rising action b. Climax c. Crisis d. Denouement | 9 hours |
| <p>D. The Ten-Minute Play</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form and structure 2. Play in production <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Casting b. Rewriting c. Performance | 9 hours |

- E. Play Development Process 6 hours
 - 1. Director's role
 - 2. Designer's role
 - 3. Dramaturgy and role of the dramaturge
 - 4. Actor's role
 - 5. The role of the audience

- F. Commerce of Playwriting – from Page to Stage 6 hours
 - 1. Marketing and the playwright
 - 2. Contests, productions, readings, and writer's retreats
 - 3. Copyright and protecting your work
 - 4. The Dramatist's Guild – writer's union

V. Methods of Instruction

The following methods of instruction may be used in the course:

- 1. lectures and demonstration of playwriting techniques;
- 2. group discussion and peer evaluation of student writing assignments;
- 3. small group case study analysis followed by presentations to the class;
- 4. peer review or critique of student work.

VI. Out of Class Assignments

The following out of class assignments may be used in the course:

- 1. individual projects (e.g. crafting short plays and monologues);
- 2. written assignments (e.g. monologue, original plays, character creation).

VII. Methods of Evaluation

The following methods of evaluation may be used in the course:

- 1. peer review or critique of student work;
- 2. instructor evaluation of in-class presentation of original work;
- 3. practical examination (e.g. showcase of original work).

VIII. Textbooks

Cohen, Edward. *Working On a New Play: A Play Development Handbook for Actors, Directors, Designers, and Playwrights*. 2nd edition. New York: Prentice Hall Press, 2004. Print.

14th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 0-87910-190-3.

Ball, D. *Backwards & Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays*. 1st edition. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. Print.

12th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 0-8093-1110-0.

A ten-minute play anthology such as:

Lane, Eric. *Take Ten I or II: New 10-Minute Plays*. 1st edition. New York: Vintage Books, Random House Inc., 2003. Print.
12th Grade Textbook Reading Level. ISBN: 0-679-77282-0.

Individual play scripts for reading and analysis.

IX. Student Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

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