

ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY



**MISSION STATEMENT**

St. Mary's University, as a Catholic Marianist University, fosters the formation of people in faith and educates leaders for the common good through community, integrated liberal arts and professional education, and academic excellence.

**DM 3363 — SCRIPT ANALYSIS**  
**(syllabus extract)**

**Fall 2018**  
**Tue/Thu, 12:35 - 1:50 pm**  
**Treadaway 381, Drama Studio**

**Faculty:** George Kendall, M.F.A.

**Office Hours:** M, W 11:30 am-2:30 pm, or by appointment

**Office:** Treadaway Hall, TR-379

**E-mail:** gkendall1@stmarytx.edu

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**Course Description**

The analysis of a play requires a different methodology than other literature, using tools focused on performance possibilities. This course will read and discuss the structure of plays and how theatrical staging choices are determined from their text, considering actor, director, and designer perspectives. Additional focus will be on the history (cultural/social/political/economic) when the play was written, scholastic/critical interpretations, and the playwright's perspective. Our focus is to gain a comprehensive understanding of a play – identifying and understanding each element, how they work singularly and together, with the ultimate goal of assembling them into a balanced interpretation of the play. As theatre is highly collaborative art, course work will often mimic that inclusive and collaborative style in both class discussions and group work, including in-class scene performances.

**Course Materials**

Readings posted to CANVAS and the following text:

- *Backwards and Forwards: A Technical Manual for Reading Plays* by David Ball  
ISBN 978-0809311101
- *Studying Plays* by Mick Wallace and Simon Shepherd  
ISBN 978-1350007321
- *Mummified Deer and Other Plays* by Luis Valdez  
ISBN 978-1558854178
- *Ruined* by Lynn Nottage  
ISBN 978-1559363556

We'll read the following plays, either completely or excerpts, with all texts available on Canvas except *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* and *Ruined*:

- *Antigone*, Sophocles
- *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen
- *Mother Courage and Her Children*, Bertolt Brecht
- *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa*, Luis Valdez
- *12-A-1*, Wakako Yamauchi
- *Ruined*, Lynn Nottage

## **Course Requirements**

Class Participation	10%
Journal Entries	15%
Short Essays	30%
Long Essay	15%
Final Portfolio	30%

### Class Participation (10%)

Attentive and contributory involvement with class discussion, both answering and posing questions.

### Journal Entries (15%)

A running interactive Canvas commentary on the course material by posing questions, doubts, connections, articulating opposing viewpoints, etc. These entries should be a minimum of 500 words and posted no later than noon the day due. The journal is a place to comment on readings, class discussions, express your thoughts, investigate any cultural/sociological/historical references, and develop your understanding of topics discussed.

### Short Essays (30%)

Three short essays (3-4 pages) assigned throughout the semester on topics discussed in class, with the writing prompts to come from the instructor.

### Long Essay (15%)

One longer essay (5-6 pages) on a topic of your choice, with the assignment coming the last month of the semester.

### Final Portfolio (30%)

A set of documents forming a detailed analysis of one of the plays read for class. This analysis will include information on the playwright, play's production history, plot, characters, theme, and a detailed analysis of one scene. Your essay should cite classroom assigned reading and outside researched sources to support your ideas and interpretation.

**Course Calendar (tentative)**

The following schedule is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and on Canvas.

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>CONTENT</b>
ONE	How to Read a Play
TWO	Presentational and Representational Theatre
THREE	The Lens of Culture
FOUR	Plot and Story
FIVE	Action
SIX	Characters
SEVEN	The Actor's Body – Movement
EIGHT	Thought and Thematic Elements
NINE	There is No Universal Truth
TEN	The Play's Text
ELEVEN	The Function of Spoken Language
TWELVE	Music and Non-Verbal Sounds
THIRTEEN	Spectacle and Imagery
FORTEEN	Metaphor and the Abstract
FIFTEEN	COURSE WRAP-UP