

Canon: core classic books/important texts

- Film vs. Theatre
  - o Advertising
  - o Visual /special effects
  - o Cost – cheaper to go to a movie
  - o Perfectionism
  - o Accessibility
- Why don't we go to theatre often?
  - o Expensive
  - o Not convenient- plan in advance, theater isn't close by
  - o Requires more concentration than movies
  - o Movies turn over more quickly than plays
  - o Actor recognition- knowing a movie star vs. a theater star
  - o We talk about film more than we do theater
  - o "Graying of the American audience"- theater audiences are getting older and aren't being replaced by younger audiences. \*older people are more likely to be viewers
- Why do we study theater?
  - o Historically relevant- it is one of the oldest forms of art
  - o It's an art form, part of cultural literacy
  - o It's universal- all cultures have theater
  - o Theatrical impulse- innate mimetic desire (desire to imitate) in humans
  - o The language of theatre helps us understand how we organize life
- Theater must have/be... (definition of theatre)
  - o A performer/ actor
  - o An audience
  - o A text (not always written) following an action
  - o "Liveness"
  - o Ephemeral: theatre is fleeting and impermanent, so you can never recapture a show from the past (shortlived, you can never experience the same thing twice, which makes theatre a very difficult study)

- o Aesthetic, not efficacious
- Communication interaction model
  - o Sender → message → receiver
  - o Receiver → feedback → sender
- Theatre...
  - o requires action
  - o requires a space
  - o uses actors – people who impersonate
  - o relies on “liveness”
  - o is a hybrid form
    - it requires spoke word, art, and architecture because there are so many different components; it is a collaborative art
- Theatrical conventions: rules or shorthand that the audience agrees to accept. Ex: men playing parts of women or when the curtain goes down and then up to show darkness which would mean night time
- Willing suspension of disbelief: although we know the events of the play are not real, we agree for the time that we’re in the theater not to disbelieve them.
- Aesthetic distance: we remember that events on stage are not real so we don’t intervene

#### Play writing and Dramaturgy:

- The theatrical performance is the sum of a set of choices made by:
  - o The producer or artistic director
  - o The playwright
  - o The director
  - o Designers
  - o Actors
- It is a two step process: identifying and evaluating – as audience members
- Play vs. Production
  - o You see or read a play
  - o A production is an entire show; everyone is involved, it is what you see
- Play vs. Playwright
  - o The play is the text

- o Playwright is the person, author, creator of the play
  - Has choices to make based on subject: history, biography, autobiography, current events/contemporary, abstract inspiration, existing source material
  - He/she creates the blueprint for a production based on decisions made for the setting, characters, dialogue, actions, themes, and textures
- How to read a play
  - o Start with the title; understand what it is going to be about
  - o Cast of characters; personalities the order will set the level of importance for that character
  - o Stage directions; everything that is not dialogue
  - o Given circumstances
    - Facts about the world of the play that are given
  - o Themes
- Plot: the order of incidents in the play. Composed by actions
  - o Linear/climactic plot: cause and effect. Ex: DOAS
  - o Episodic plot: what happens in one episode doesn't affect another. Ex: family guy
  - o Cyclical plot: begin and end in the same place
- Story: sets the scene and is what actually happened; exposition (things that happen before the play begins)
  - o Point of attack: point in the story where the playwright begins the plot.
  - o Complications or obstacles
  - o Climax: point of the greatest dramatic tension. Ex: in DOAS, it's the fight between Willy and Biff
  - o Denouement: falling action or resolution
- Types of characters
  - o Protagonist: desires sustain the dramatic action (Willy)\*
  - o Antagonist: creates complications for the protagonist (Willy/society/Biff)\*
  - o Raisonneur: speaks for the author, other than the protagonist. (Biff)
  - o Foil: contrast to another character (Charley)\*
  - o Stock characters: common and predictable types that reappear
- Dramaturgy