

Canon: core classic books/important texts

- Film vs. Theatre
 - Advertising
 - Visual /special effects
 - Cost – cheaper to go to a movie
 - Perfectionism
 - Accessibility
- Why don't we go to theatre often?
 - Expensive
 - Not convenient- plan in advance, theater isn't close by
 - Requires more concentration than movies
 - Movies turn over more quickly than plays
 - Actor recognition- knowing a movie star vs. a theater star
 - We talk about film more than we do theater
 - "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?
 - Historically relevant- it is one of the oldest forms of art
 - It's an art form, part of cultural literacy
 - It's universal- all cultures have theater
 - Theatrical impulse- innate mimetic desire (desire to imitate) in humans
 - The language of theatre helps us understand how we organize life
- Theater must have/be... (definition of theatre)
 - A performer/ actor
 - An audience
 - A text (not always written) following an action
 - "Liveness"
 - 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)
 - Aesthetic, not efficacious
- Communication interaction model
 - Sender → message → receiver
 - Receiver → feedback → sender
- Theatre...
 - requires action
 - requires a space
 - uses actors – people who impersonate
 - relies on "liveness"
 - 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:
 - The producer or artistic director
 - The playwright
 - The director
 - Designers
 - Actors
- It is a two step process: identifying and evaluating – as audience members
- Play vs. Production
 - You see or read a play
 - A production is an entire show; everyone is involved, it is what you see
- Play vs. Playwright
 - The play is the text
 - 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
 - Start with the title; understand what it is going to be about
 - Cast of characters; personalities the order will set the level of importance for that character
 - Stage directions; everything that is not dialogue
 - Given circumstances
 - Facts about the world of the play that are given
 - Themes
- Plot: the order of incidents in the play. Composed by actions
 - Linear/climactic plot: cause and effect. Ex: DOAS
 - Episodic plot: what happens in one episode doesn't affect another. Ex: family guy
 - 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)
 - Point of attack: point in the story where the playwright begins the plot.
 - Complications or obstacles
 - Climax: point of the greatest dramatic tension. Ex: in DOAS, it's the fight between Willy and Biff
 - Denouement: falling action or resolution
- Types of characters
 - Protagonist: desires sustain the dramatic action (Willy)*
 - Antagonist: creates complications for the protagonist (Willy/society/Biff)*
 - Raisonneur: speaks for the author, other than the protagonist. (Biff)
 - Foil: contrast to another character (Charley)*
 - Stock characters: common and predictable types that reappear
- Dramaturgy
 - Dramaturgs: good at analyzing plays; interested in context and conversation
 - Different situations:
 - Literary managers

- Full time position, they maintain script library for theatre, and help with the season selection
 - Production dramaturgs
 - Hired for one play
 - Do a lot of research on the playwrights, context for the play, major productions, context for this production, and visual images
 - Communicating with the production team: directors, actors, designers, marketing
 - Communicating with the audience: lobby display, program notes, pre- and post- show talk backs
 - New play dramaturgs
 - Working with the playwrights
 - Listen ask questions, help develop
- Adaption vs. Translation
 - Adaptation is when, for example, a story is turned into a play production
 - Challenges of adaptation
 - Stories are written with description
 - Plays are described with dialogue and setting (how do you get thoughts on the stage)
 - Play setting needs to be clear
 - Size of the cast
 - References of specific places
 - Translation is a form of adaptation – is helps to understand the true meaning
 - Plays are translated into different forms such as from old English to contemporary ways for better understanding
- Theater etiquette
 - Dress: business casual
 - Arrive early- read program
 - No noise- candy wrappers, talking, phones
 - No early departures
 - Standing ovation is not necessary but up to you
- Production coordinator/ manager (Cary Gillett)
 - Sees the show from the very beginning to the end. Responsible for overseeing
 - Makes sure that everyone is collaborating
 - Leads negotiations
- Stage manager: (take down blocking, run rehearsals, call the show)
 - Responsible for just as much communication but on a smaller scale
 - He or she is at all of the rehearsals and performances and collaborate mostly with the director
 - There is a different one for every set cast/show
 - Responsible for calling the show and making sure it follows out to be exactly how the director directed it and left it to be (during the actual performances)
 - Takes down all blocking (anything an actor does on stage) into a prompt script just in case an actor forgets
 - Calls the cues
 - Takes information that designers give them and regurgitate the information for every performance (to the people doing the lights for example)
 - Sits in the booth and has two assistants that are back stage running everything – everyone works as a cohesive movement to get it done