

# AMERICAN THEATRE THE 5205

Dr. Julia Listengarten  
Office: UTC  
Phone: 823-3858  
Office hours: TR 11:30-2:00,  
And by appointment

Spring 2018  
TR 10:00-11:20  
NSC 0209

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This seminar will introduce students to the stylistic as well as cultural diversity of American theatre. Students will explore American theatre from its literary, performance, historical, and cultural perspectives. The course will focus on analyzing the US playwriting canon and examining critical and performance history of a wide range of plays. Students are expected to participate in the discussions geared toward dramaturgical analysis of the assigned plays; these discussions will examine dramatic structure, character development, themes, dramatic language, as well as visual elements and performance styles imbedded in these written texts.

## **REQUIRED READING:**

*A Companion to Twentieth Century American Drama*, edited by David Krasner

*American Drama: Colonial to Contemporary*, edited by Stephen Watt and Gary A. Richardson

Assigned Plays

*MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Gibaldi/Achtert. Latest edition

## **RECOMMENDED READING:**

Bigsby, C. W. E. *Modern American Drama: 1945-1990*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992.

*Essays on Modern American Drama: Williams, Miller, Albee, and Shepard*. Ed. Dorothy Parker. Toronto: U of Toronto P, 1987.

*American Drama 1945 - 2000: An Introduction*, by David Krasner.

Additional reading material may be assigned every week.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Attendance assignment: list your five favorite American plays. Due by January 12.

Class participation (100 pts.)

All students will participate in class discussions. Participation in this class is essential, both to maintain a high level of discussion and to encourage you to practice your spoken communication skills. You will be graded on quality as well as quantity of your participation.

One research presentation (50 pts.), fifteen minutes. A handout with bibliography is required.

Exploratory essay (50 pts.)

Research paper (100 pts.)

Creative Project (100 pts.): group project with a written reflection.

Final paper or project (100 pts.)

### **500 points total**

NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS OR PAPERS

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Attendance is mandatory. You are responsible for all classes missed. You will be allowed 2 absences per semester in case of illness or emergency. If you need to miss class, you must contact me by phone or note before class. Each unexcused absence will lower your grade one-third of a letter (from B+ to B, for instance). Please be punctual. Three tardies=one unexcused absence for the purpose of grading. If you miss more than 4 classes, you will fail this course.

Note: Plus and minus grades will be implemented in the grading policy. The following is the system that will be used to determine your grade:

### **WEEKLY SCHEDULE:**

For each topic, please read corresponding chapters from *Companion to Twentieth Century American Drama*

#### ***Week of January 8:***

##### **Tuesday:**

Introduction to the course

##### **Thursday:**

**Assignment: In Webcourses, please list your 5 favorite American plays. Due January 12.**

Staging Feminism and Modernism

Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal*

Ch. 4: Susan Glaspell and Sophie Treadwell: Staging Feminism and Modernism, 1915-1941

***Week of January 15:***

Early American Modernism

**Tuesday:**

Eugene O'Neill, *Hairy Ape*

Ch. 5: American Experimentalism

Clifford Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*

Ch. 8: Reading Across the 1930s

**Thursday:**

Reading Across the 30s

Lillian Hellman, *Little Foxes*

Drama of Harlem Renaissance

Langston Hughes, *Mulatto*

Ch. 7: Playwrights and Plays of the Harlem Renaissance

***Week of January 22:***

Post-World War II Drama

**Tuesday:**

No class. URTA in New York

**Thursday:**

Eugene O'Neill, *The Long Day's Journey into Night*

Ch. 10: Eugene O'Neill: American Drama and American Modernism

Arthur Miller, *All My Sons*

Ch. 14: The American Jewishness of Arthur Miller

***Week of January 29:***

Post-World War II Drama (continued)

**Tuesday:**

Tennessee Williams

*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*

*The Night of the Iguana*

Ch. 12: Tennessee Williams

**Thursday:**

Theatre of Inge

William Inge, *Bus Stop*; *Dark at the Top of the Stairs*

Ch. 11: Fissures Beneath the Surface: Drama in the 1940s and 1950s

***Week of February 5:***

Staging the 60s and 70s: Theatre of Protest

**Tuesday:**

Edward Albee, *American Dream*; *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Ch. 16: Fifteen-Love. Thirty-Love: Edward Albee

**Thursday:**

Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman*

David Rabe, *Streamers*

Ch. 15: Drama of the 1960s

Ch. 17: The Drama of the Black Arts Movement

***Week of February 12:***

Staging the 60s and 70s: Theatre of Protest (continued)

**Tuesday:**

The Living Theatre (*The Brig*), The Open Theatre (*The Serpent*)

Ch. 15: Drama of the 1960s

**Thursday:**

"Asking Research Questions"--small group discussions

**At the end of class each group will produce 5 research questions that will guide students' exploratory essays.**

***Week of February 19:***

Americana of Sam Shepard and David Mamet

**Tuesday:**

Sam Shepard, *Lie of the Mind*

Ch. 18: Sam Shepard and the American Sunset

**Thursday:**

David Mamet, *American Buffalo*

*Oleanna*

Ch. 25: David Mamet: America on the American Stage

***Exploratory Essay Due***

***Week of February 26:***

Theatre of Identity

**Tuesday:**

Jewish American Comedy

Neil Simon, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*

Wendy Wasserstein, *Sisters Rosensweig*

Ch. 28: From Eccentricity to Endurance: Jewish Comedy and the Art of Affirmation

**Thursday:**

August Wilson and the Journey of African Americans Across the Century

August Wilson, *Fences* and *Gem of the Ocean*

Ch. 20: August Wilson

***Week of March 5:***

**Tuesday:**

Catch-Up Day and Discussion of Creative Project

**Thursday:**

American Drama of the 80s & 90s

Maria Irene Fornes, *Conduct of Life*

Ch. 27: Maria Irene Fornes: Acts of Translation

***Week of March 12:***

**Spring Break**

***Week of March 19***

American Drama of the 80s & 90s

**Tuesday:**

Jose Rivera, *Marisol*

Ch. 23: Writing Beyond Borders: A Survey of US Latina/o Drama

**Thursday:**

***Presentation of Creative Projects***

***Week of March 26:***

American Drama of the 90s

**Tuesday:**

Paula Vogel, *How I Learned to Drive*

Ch. 29: Repercussions and Reminders in the Plays of Paula Vogel

**Thursday:**

Tony Kushner, *Angels in America, Part 1*

Ch. 30

***Research Paper Due******Week of April 2***

Experimental Drama at the Turn of the Century

**Tuesday:**

American Performance Art

Karen Finley, *We Keep Our Victims Ready*

Marina Abramovic, *The Artist is Present* (MoMA Retrospective)

Ch. 32

**Thursday**

Suzan Lori-Parks, *In the Blood, Top Dog/Underdog*

Ch. 33

***Week of April 9***

Contemporary Trends

**Tuesday:**

Sarah Ruhl, *Eurydice*, Lynn Nottage, *Ruined*

**Thursday:**

Quiara Algría Hudes, *Water by the Spoonful*

Ayad Akhtar, *Disgraced*

***Week of April 16:***

Contemporary Trends (continued)

**Tuesday**

Annie Baker, *The Flick*

Stephen Adly Gurgis, *Between Riverside and Crazy*

**Thursday:**

Amy Herzog, *Belleville*

Lynn Nottage, *Sweat*

***Final—May 1, 10:00-12:50***

Notes:

All written assignments must be typed. Handwritten assignments and papers will not be accepted. Papers must be stapled before you arrive in class.

All written work must meet the standards of basic expository writing and must follow the style outlined in the MLA Handbook. Grammar, clarity, organization, style, and documentation count and will affect your grade.

The penalty for plagiarism is the semester grade of F.

Disclaimer

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

There are plays and materials that may express adult or controversial themes as well as strong language. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to access your chances for success in the course.

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunity.

It is the policy of the University to reasonably accommodate absences due to observed religious holidays. However, the student will be held responsible for any material covered during the absence and must inform the instructor two weeks prior the holiday.

Since theatre requires the use of mind, voice, and body, there might be situations that will require a certain amount of physical contact between you and the instructor and other students. If this presents a problem for you, please see the instructor immediately to access your chances for success in the course.



## Course Summary:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Details</b>
Fri Jan 12, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Attendance</u></a>
Thu Feb 22, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Exploratory Essay</u></a>
Thu Mar 22, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Creative Project</u></a>
Thu Mar 29, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Research Paper</u></a>
Thu Apr 19, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Research Presentation</u></a>
Tue May 1, 2018	<a href="#"><u>Final Project or Paper</u></a> <a href="#"><u>Participation</u></a>