AMERICAN THEATRE

Dr. Julia Listengarten
Office: PAC T220
Phone: 823-3858
Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:20-1:20;
Tuesday/Thursday 3:00-4:00, and
by appointment

Spring 2016
TR 10:00-11:15
M116

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 variety 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

RECOMMENDED READING:

Additional reading material may be assigned every week.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:
1. **Class participation (100 pts.)**
   Each student 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.

2. **Two research presentations (50 pts. each),** fifteen minutes each. A handout with bibliography is required for each.

3. **Critical essay (100 pts.)**

4. **Creative Project (100 pts.)**

5. **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*

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*Week of January 11:*
Tuesday:
Introduction to the course

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

*Week of January 18:*
Tuesday:
*Early American Modernism*
Eugene O’Neill, *Hairy Ape*
Ch. 5: American Experimentalism

*Reading Across the 30s*
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 25:*

*Post-World War II Drama*

Tuesday:
Eugene O’Neill, *The Long Day’s Journey into Night*
Ch. 10: Eugene O’Neill: American Drama and American Modernism

Thursday:
Arthur Miller, *All My Sons* and *American Clock*
Ch. 14: The American Jewishness of Arthur Miller

*Week of February 1:*

Tuesday:
No Class (URTA auditions in New York)

In lieu of class, students are encouraged to attend the workshop “Performing Justice Project: Devising toward Racial and Gender Justice” led by guest artist Dr. Megan Alrutz. February 5, time--TBD

Thursday:
*Post-World War II Drama and Tennessee Williams*
Tennessee Williams
*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*
*The Night of the Iguana*
Ch. 12: Tennessee Williams

*Week of February 8:*

Tuesday:
No Class (URTA auditions in Chicago)

**Theatre of Inge**
William Inge, *Bus Stop*
William Inge, *Dark at the Top of the Stairs*
Ch. 11: Fissures Beneath the Surface: Drama in the 1940s and 1950s

In lieu of class, please prepare a short analysis (500 word narrative) on Inge’s dramaturgy

**Thursday:**

*Staging the 60s and 70s: Theatre of Protest*
Edward Albee, *American Dream; Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*
Ch. 16: Fifteen-Love. Thirty-Love: Edward Albee

**Week of February 15:**

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

**Tuesday:**
Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman*
David Rabe, *Streamers*
Ch. 15: Drama of the 1960s
Ch. 17: The Drama of the Black Arts Movement

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

**Week of February 22:**

*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

**Week of February 29:**

**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

Paper Due—March 6

Week of March 7:
Spring Break

Week of March 14:

No classes during this week: Michael Rohd (artistic director of Sojourn, an ensemble-based company) is a guest lecturer on campus. In lieu of classes, please attend his lecture and participate in his workshop.

Tuesday, March 15
- Department-wide lecture (*Open to all theatre students*) – Time and Location TBD
- 5PM-8PM – Graduate Level Master class (*Open to all graduate students*) – Studio One

Thursday, March 17
The devising sessions below will build on one another, but students may attend either or both sessions.
- 10AM-1PM – Devising session (*Open to all theatre students*) – UCF Art Gallery
- 2PM-5PM – Devising session (*Open to all theatre students*) – UCF Art Gallery

Week of March 21:
*American Drama of the 80s & 90s*
Tuesday:
Maria Irene Fornes, *Conduct of Life*
Ch. 27: Maria Irene Fornes: Acts of Translation

Thursday:
Jose Rivera, *Marisol*
Ch. 23: Writing Beyond Borders: A Survey of US Latina/o Drama

Week of March 28:
Tuesday:
*Creative Project Presentations*
Thursday:
American Drama of the 90s
Paula Vogel, How I Learned to Drive
Ch. 29: Repercussions and Remainders in the Plays of Paula Vogel

Week of April 4:
Tuesday:
American Drama of the 90s (continued)
Tony Kushner, Angels in America, Part 1
Ch. 30
Discussion of Final Presentations and Catch Up

Thursday:
Experimental Drama at the Turn of the Century
American Performance Art
Suzan Lori-Parks, In the Blood
Karen Finley, We Keep Our Victims Ready
Chs. 32 and 33

Week of April 11:
Contemporary Trends
Tuesday
Sarah Ruhl, Eurydice, Lynn Nottage, Ruined

Thursday
Quiara Algería Hudes, Water by the Spoonful
Ayad Akhtar, Disgraced

Week of April 18:
Contemporary Trends
Tuesday
Annie Baker, The Flick
Stephen Adly Gurgis, Between Riverside and Crazy

Thursday
Branden Jacobs-Jenkins, Octofoon

Week of April 25:
Contemporary Trends
Tuesday
Notes:
1. All written assignments must be typed. Handwritten assignments and papers will not be accepted. Papers must be stapled before you arrive in class.
2. 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.
3. 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.