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

RECOMMENDED READING:

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 Remainders 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 Algería 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:

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<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Feb 22, 2018</td>
<td>Exploratory Essay</td>
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<td>Thu Mar 22, 2018</td>
<td>Creative Project</td>
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<td>Thu Apr 19, 2018</td>
<td>Research Presentation</td>
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<td>Final Project or Paper</td>
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