

English 340 – American Drama I

Fall 2016
 Section #L111
 TF 12:30-1:45
 Room: Fontaine 101

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 Office Hours: TF 10:30-12:15, W 3:00-4:30

Course Description:

This course is a survey of American drama from Colonial times until the Great Depression.

The theatre is a place where artists and audiences meet to engage one another through the production and reception of a performance. The study of dramatic literature is necessarily a study of the texts produced and the people and times in which these performances were experienced. As such, we will be exploring the various individuals, places, plays, and trends that helped to shape the dramatic literature of the past and inform the dramatic literature of the present. This exploration will be focused on theatrically popular plays & dramatic traditions, which are not always the most stunning literary pieces. At the conclusion of this course, students should have an understanding of the development of drama throughout the time period and within particular social, historical, political, and artistic frameworks.

Course Philosophy:

Just as theatre artists and audiences must approach each new project with an open mind, so I ask that you approach each reading with your mind open to new possibilities. As we explore the past and its impact upon the present and future, we will encounter points of view and treatments of subjects that may offend or confound your sensibilities; indeed, the course readings will appear sexist, racist or otherwise offensive to many modern readers. While I do not want you to censor your reactions, I do ask that you please view historical documents and traditions as such. Always remember that you are reading this material and considering these events with the eyes of a 21st century student. Try to envision, based upon what we know of a particular period, how a text might have been received by that audience, at that time, in that place. You will discover that the fleeting nature of theatre limits such exercises, but acknowledging our biases and the limits of our knowledge will permit us to begin to explore the dramatic past. That said, always be on the lookout for how the past is still with us, and always allow yourself to examine if and how our dramatic traditions have changed throughout history.

Course Objectives:

At the completion of this course, students should have a greater capacity to:

- Be conversant with how playwrights utilize and react to trends and styles
- Be able to identify and explain historical developments in dramatic literature within particular social, historical, political and/or artistic frameworks
- Be able to critically analyze plays as texts for performance
- Be able to perform research that will enhance their understanding of the text and its reception
- Be able to communicate the above information during class discussions and in written work

Required Texts and Readings:

PLEASE REFER TO THE COURSE SCHEDULE for a complete list of readings and due dates.

Read assigned plays and accompanying introductions before dates listed. Any edition of the plays will serve your needs, but do work to follow along if you have another version. Please bring paper copies of the plays and other readings to class on the appropriate days. **Some readings for the course will be available through links on Learn; print these texts out.**

Required Texts:

Barlow: *Plays by American Women, 1900-1930*

Gerould: *American Melodrama*

Gassner: *Best Plays of the Early American Theater, 1787-1911*

Technology:

This classroom is a screen-free zone. Please leave your laptops, phones, and tablets in your bags.

Attendance:

By enrolling in this course, you have implicitly agreed to be a present and active member of this class. Production work and other extra-curricular activity are not valid excuses for missing class or being unprepared. Be present physically and mentally. ***Shut off the phone.***

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If extenuating circumstances develop, please contact CAAS and me as soon as possible so that we can work to keep your academic progress on track. Failure to attend class regularly will have a detrimental impact on your course grade.

Graded Assignments:

1. Short Writing Assignments & Participation. 10% (100 points):

Short Writing Assignments

There will be periodic in-class and out-of-class assignments and iLearn forum posts that will comprise part of this grade. These assignments may or may not be announced in advanced. ***Absolutely no make-up short writing assignments will be given.*** Your lowest SWA grade will be dropped.

Participation

I expect you to have done the reading and be ready to discuss the texts and their relationships to earlier class discussions. You will be participating in class through lively and intelligent discussion of the texts and application of the material to those texts. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade.

Stay focused – no cell phones.

2. Research Proposal and Paper. 30% (300 points):

You will write one 3000-4500 word research paper covering a topic apropos to the course material, although you may not choose to write on a play which we have read in class. Complete instructions will follow. You must submit a proposal in advance of writing the paper, and your proposal must be approved before you may turn in your paper. While an open-ended assignment, this paper will enable you to explore the dramatic and theatrical traditions of this period in greater depth. You may analyze a play as a vehicle for a star performer, as a literary text, as a performance text, or as a catalyst for or reaction to theatrical traditions from the period. Whatever your approach, your paper should reflect an understanding of the historical developments in dramatic literature within particular social, historical, political and/or artistic frameworks. A sample topics list will be distributed to help with idea generation.

3. Exams. 45% (450 points):

There will be two exams in this course, a midterm worth 200 points and a final worth 250 points. Exam dates are listed on the course schedule. No make-up exams will be administered except in the case of dire, unavoidable emergencies or campus closings. Exam questions will test your ability to analyze plays, identify and explain historical developments in dramatic literature within particular social, historical, political and/or artistic frameworks, and discuss how playwrights utilize and react to trends and styles.

4. Article Review Paper 15% (150 points):

In order to expose you to scholarly materials on historical and literary topics which influence the theatre and drama of the period, we will be having a discussion about scholarly articles. The topic for this article review day & paper concerns a place where playwriting and performance intersect and yet where dramatic evidence is limited and not fully evocative of performance traditions: minstrelsy. In addition to participating in the class discussion, you will write a 2-3 page review of one article from the reading list. Full instructions will follow.

Assignment Submissions, Extensions and Late Assignments:

- In fairness to students who meet deadlines, assignments handed in at any time after the beginning of the class period in which they are due will be reduced by one full letter grade (10% of the point value of the assignment) for 24 hour period it is late. Late work will not be accepted once it is seven days late.
- No incompletes will be granted unless an emergency situation develops.
- I do not grant individual extensions. You know your paper due date months in advance. On opening night you must be off-book, fully painted, hung and focused, etc., and so your paper must be written on the date it is due. No excuses. Save your work to multiple drives. Plan ahead. I will always accept work ahead of time.
- Written assignments are to be submitted to the Assignments section of iLearn unless otherwise noted. I do not accept assignments submitted via e-mail. Failure to upload your work in an accepted format (.doc, .docx, .pdf) will result in late penalties accruing. The system cannot process .pages or other file formats. Export your files to a format the system will process.
- If you know in advance that you will miss a class, I expect you to make arrangements to hand the work in on time and get notes and assignment sheets from a classmate.

iLearn, E-Mail, Etiquette and Other Policies:

- All readings not available in book format will be posted on iLearn. *Consult your schedule.*
- You are in class to learn; be here mentally and physically. Take notes. **Shut off the phone.**
- I will use e-mail to communicate with you. Please check your Marist e-mail regularly.
- Kindly put the course number in the subject line of your e-mail messages, especially if you are not using your Marist account.
- While e-mail is a great communication tool, please remember that you are still addressing a professor. If you respect yourself and present yourself respectfully, the world will take you more seriously than it would if your communications are incomprehensible, full of typos, or generally rude.
- I check email at least once daily on weekdays, but expect a delay on weekends and nights. Please do not email within 24 hours of our class meeting and expect that I will have time to read and respond.
- If you need a quick answer or need to ask a long question, come to my office hours.

- Grades on assignments are not negotiable; if you have questions about an assignment or your grade in the class, then you need to come into my scheduled office hours *with your assignments*. Federal law prohibits faculty from discussing grades over email.
- Unclaimed assignments will only be held until the start of the following semester. Claim them.

Special requirements or accommodations:

- If you have any condition that will make it difficult for you to carry out the work as I have outlined it, or which will require extra time in testing situations, please notify me *within the first two weeks* of the class so that appropriate arrangements can be made. An early heads up allows us to work with your situation; a last-minute plea rarely does.
- If you have a disability or other medical condition requiring specific accommodations, please speak with Special Services (SpecServ@Marist.edu) in order to obtain their assistance and intervention on your behalf. The office provides services that can significantly enhance your learning experience. If you are using their assistance, please notify me early in the semester so that we can be sure that we are working to create an optimal learning environment.
- Extended absences (more than one class period) must be cleared through CAAS.
- If your observance of a religious holiday conflicts with the course schedule, you must also notify me *at least two weeks prior to the holiday* so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
- Participation in college-sponsored activities does not excuse you from your responsibilities as a student in this course. You know your schedules ahead of time. Plan accordingly.

GRADING SCALE:

A	=	1000-930 points	Outstanding	C	=	769-730 points	Satisfactory
A-	=	929-900 points		C-	=	729-700 points	
B+	=	899-870 points	Very Good	D+	=	699-670 points	Unsatisfactory
B	=	869-830 points		D	=	669-630 points	
B-	=	829-800 points	Good	D-	=	629-600 points	
C+	=	799-770 points		F	=	Less than 600 points	Failure

Academic Honesty:

The currency of higher education is knowledge and as you would not steal money, so I expect you not to steal other people's ideas. The exchange of information allows us to improve society and ourselves, but we cannot grow unless we first admit that we need to rely on the thoughts of others to generate our own ideas. When you use someone else's ideas, you must cite that person. When in doubt, cite.

ANY STUDENT FOUND TO BE IN VIOLATION OF THE MARIST COLLEGE STUDENT HANDBOOK ACADEMY HONESTY CODE AS IT PERTAINS TO OUR CLASS WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE ASSIGNMENT WITH A GRADE OF ZERO AND MAY FACE FURTHER SANCTIONS, INCLUDING FAILURE IN THE COURSE.

Violations include but are not limited to activities such as plagiarism, which includes copying other artists's work. **If you do not understand how to properly cite sources, *please contact me* and I will gladly walk you through that minefield.**

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change based on our progress, although readings and assignments will never be due before the published due date.

Navigating iLearn for this Course:

Resources Tool

The resources section will have a number of folders that contain readings, supplemental handouts, etc.

- When the course schedule says that there is a reading on iLearn, you will want to go to Resources and open the appropriate document or folder. Use your schedule as a guide.
 - Sometimes, you will have an entire folder dedicated to a particular class session; in this case, read everything in the folder.
 - Sometimes, folders will have a “Read Me First” document – do so. That document will explain what you need to read and what you need to use as reference material.

Forums Tool

Forums will be used in this class in primarily four ways:

- As part of an assignment.
 - For example, if there’s a particular need for you all to share clips or information with each in advance of a class period, then a forum will be set up to facilitate communication.
- Group communication center
 - If you are assigned to a group project or a working group of any kind, you will have a forum set up for your group. This will allow for easy file transfer & communication within the group.
- Exam review and prep
 - Have a question to which everyone might want to know the answer? Ask it here.
 - In some courses, there will be an assignment to create mock exam questions for a quiz grade.
- In the event of a class cancellation or the need to have an extended conversation
 - If a class is cancelled, exercises or discussions may be found in the forums. Check your email – sometimes, you will have an assignment that does not include a forum discussion.

Assignments Tool

Instructions for written assignments will be listed under this tool. Much of the written work for this class will be submitted to the Assignments Tool.

- Select the correct Assignment and be sure to upload your work in an accepted file format
 - *ALWAYS go back into the assignment and make sure that the file upload worked. It is your responsibility to make sure that your uploads are successful and completed on time.*
 - Mac users: please do not upload .pages files. I will not be able to read them. Export to .doc
- Occasionally, I will put Assignment instructions up here for assignments that are to be turned in on paper in class; this is for your convenience – so that all assignment instructions are in one place on iLearn.
 - Materials that will form the basis of in-class workshops or exercises generally need to be brought to class. Papers generally get submitted electronically.
 - The course schedule & each assignment will detail all of this for you. Confused? Ask.

Feedback and Grades: Where can I find it? When?

- Written feedback on your assignments is more crucial for development and progress than simple numerical grades. Be sure that you are logging in, downloading and reading your feedback.
- Feedback will either be on the assignment, if handed back to you in class, or available electronically in the Assignments tool, under the appropriate assignment.
- I will announce in class or sometimes over email when feedback is available; you may receive an individual email generated by iLearn as well.
- Depending on the assignment, you might see an attachment that contains digital feedback typed directly onto your assignment, an attachment that contains digital feedback on a rubric, or you might see feedback in the assignment comment box in iLearn itself.
- All grades will be visible in the gradebook after assignments are returned
 - Please note that the gradebook will not calculate your overall course grade for you until close to the end of the semester. You can use the syllabus & the gradebook data to estimate your grade at any point during the semester, but keep in mind that your grade may fluctuate.

ENG 340 American Drama I Course Schedule

Week	Day	Date	Topic	Readings	Written Work	
1.1	T	8/30	Colonial Performance and Anti-theatricality			
1.2	F	9/2	Nation and Slavery in Musical Form	Susanna Rowson: <i>Slaves in Algiers</i> (1794) link on iLearn		
2.1	T	9/6				
2.2	F	9/9	Romanticism & The Noble Savage	John Augustus Stone: <i>Metamora</i> (1829) link on iLearn		
3.1	T	9/13				
3.2	F	9/16	City Life, Class, & Culture	Anna Cora Mowatt: <i>Fashion</i> (1845) in Gassner		
4.1	T	9/20				
4.2	F	9/23	Melodrama & Minstrelsy Intro & Clip Day			
5.1	T	9/27	Minstrelsy: Article Review Day	Article Review Day: Read "Minstrelsy" folder on iLearn	Article Review Paper Due	
5.2	F	9/30	Online discussion: Minstrelsy then and now			
6.1	T	10/4	Melodrama, Race & Slavery	William Wells Brown: The Escape (1858) link on iLearn		
6.2	F	10/7				
7.1	T	10/11	Midterm Exam		Midterm Exam	
7.2	F	10/14	No class	Fall Break		
8.1	T	10/18	Class & Conflagrations	Dion Boucicault: <i>The Poor of New York</i> (1857) in Gerould		
8.2	F	10/21				
9.1	T	10/25	Sensational Melodrama	Augustin Daly: <i>Under the Gaslight</i> (1867) in Gerould		
9.2	F	10/28				
10.1	T	11/1	The Civil War, 30 years later	William Gillette: <i>Secret Service</i> (1896) in Gassner		
10.2	F	11/4			Research Proposal Due	
11.1	T	11/8	The West	David Belasco: <i>Girl of the Golden West</i> (1905) in Gerould		
11.2	F	11/11				
12.1	T	11/15	Realism	William Vaughn Moody: <i>The Great Divide</i> (1906) in Gassner		
12.2	F	11/18				
13.1	T	11/22	Harlem Renaissance	Georgia Douglas Johnson: <i>Plumes</i> (1927) in Barlow		
13.2	F	11/25	No Class	Thanksgiving Break		
14.1	T	11/29	New Woman	Rachel Crothers: <i>A Man's World</i> (1909) in Barlow		
14.2	F	12/2			Research Paper Due	
15.1	T	12/6	Expressionism	Sophie Treadwell: <i>Machinal</i> (1928) in Barlow		
15.2	F	12/9				
16	T	12/13	Final Exam: Tuesday 10:30 am -12:30 pm			Final Exam

Schedule subject to change based on our progress. However, assignments will never be due in advance of these listed dates.