

English E341– American Drama II

Spring 2014
 Section #L111
 TF 12:30-1:45
 Room: Fontaine 102

Dr. Eileen Curley
 Eileen.curley@marist.edu
 Office: Fontaine 214 x2536
 Office Hours: T 3:30-5:45, W 2-3:15, F 3:30-5:00

Course Objectives:

This course is a survey of American drama from the Great Depression through the current day. Dramatic literature in this period reflects the political and social upheavals of the century; accordingly, we will be looking at how playwrights incorporate and react to wars, the Depression, the civil rights movement, queer theory, feminism, politicians, and other social and political developments. Society and dramatic styles change with great rapidity in this period; be ready for a roller coaster of stylistic experimentation all along the realistic/non-realistic spectrum, with occasional side trips into ritual, performance art, and happenings.

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. 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 to many modern readers, and a number of the playwrights we will study have set out to offend their audiences. Be prepared. While I do not want you to censor your reactions, I do ask that you please view historical documents and traditions as such, and I ask that you contemplate the effectiveness of shocking an audience. 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.

Outcomes Assessments:

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

- Be conversant with how playwrights utilize and react to previous trends and styles to produce scripts
- 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 scholarly research that will enhance their understanding of American theatre
- 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.

Completely read assigned plays and accompanying introductions before the dates listed. Any edition of the plays will serve your needs, but do work to follow along if you have another version. Please bring the plays and other readings to class on the appropriate days. We are reading a number of one-acts this semester, and thus there may be more than one text due each week. Please keep on top of the schedule, which is labeled to help you find the texts in the small anthologies listed below.

Required Texts:

Albee: *The American Dream and The Zoo Story* (out of print, copies available used or on iLearn)

Havis: *American Political Plays*

Hwang: *M. Butterfly*

Hudes: *Water by the Spoonful*

O'Neill: *Three Great Plays: Anna Christie, The Emperor Jones, The Hairy Ape (DOVER edition)*

Rabe: *Vietnam Plays Volume One: The Basic Training of Pavlo Hummel and Sticks and Bones*

Shepard: *Buried Child*

Shine & Hatch: *Black Theatre USA Plays by African Americans: The Recent Period, 1935-Today*

Sondheim: *Assassins*

Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

iLearn: Additional short readings and plays will be available via iLearn. Please consult your schedule for details.

Graded Assignments:**1. Short Writing Assignments & Participation 10%:****Short Writing Assignments**

There will be periodic in-class and out-of-class assignments which assess all course objectives and which 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. Manifesto Paper. 30% (300 points):

This research paper is a culmination of all course objectives and content. In it, you will be arguing for your vision of what American theatre is now and should be in the future, based in part on where it has been. Full instructions will follow.

3. Exams. 45% (450 points):

There will be two exams in this course which cover all course objectives, a midterm worth 20% of your grade and a final worth 25%. 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. The final exam will have one cumulative essay question, options for which will be distributed in advance. Each exam contains quotes & essays, and may include smaller short answer questions.

Please note: phones are not permitted at the exams. If I see one, then you will be asked to leave without finishing your exam.

4. Guerilla Paper 15% (150 points):

During this period, theatre artists experiment with performance, ritual and political protest to create new art forms. Guerilla theatre is just one form that develops out of this experimentation, but it is the easiest catchall term to describe the research and performance project that you will conceive. This project addresses all course objectives, and full details will follow. Performances are an option, but not a requirement for this project.

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 each class period it is late; over breaks and exam weeks, the late penalty is applied for each 24 hour period past the due date/time. 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 disks. 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.

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.**
- A course website with research tools, the syllabus & a schedule has been established at <http://foxweb.marist.edu/users/eileen.curley/> under Courses
- 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. With all the spam in my inbox, messages entitled "Help!" run the risk of deletion.
- While e-mail is a great communication tool, please remember that you are still addressing a professor. Do not hit that send key until you have taken a moment to reflect upon what you have written. 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. Remember, it is in print.
- 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 end 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
A-	= 929-900 points	
B+	= 899-870 points	Very Good
B	= 869-830 points	
B-	= 829-800 points	Good
C+	= 799-770 points	
C	= 769-730 points	Satisfactory
C-	= 729-700 points	
D+	= 699-670 points	Unsatisfactory
D	= 669-630 points	
D-	= 629-600 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 citation fabrication, plagiarism, and cheating. **If you do not understand how to properly cite sources, *please contact me* and I will gladly walk you through that minefield.**

All work submitted to class may be submitted to www.turnitin.com.

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.

American Drama II Spring 2014

Week	Date	Topic	Readings Due	Text Location	Work Due
1.1	T	1/21	Introduction to the Course, Expressionism		
1.2	F	1/24	Expressionism	O'Neill: <i>The Emperor Jones</i> 1922	O'Neill collection
2.1	T	1/28	Federal Theatre Project	iLearn: Federal Theatre Folder contents	iLearn
2.2	F	1/31	Modified Realism	Williams: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> 1947	Solo text
3.1	T	2/4	Modified Realism	Williams: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> 1947	
3.2	F	2/7	Comic Realism & The American Dream	Hansberry: <i>Raisin in the Sun</i> 1959	Black Theatre USA
4.1	T	2/11	Comic Realism & The American Dream	Hansberry: <i>Raisin in the Sun</i> 1959	
4.2	F	2/14	American Absurdism & The American Dream	Albee: <i>The American Dream</i> 1959	solo text
5.1	T	2/18	Surrealistic Responses	Kennedy: <i>Funnyhouse of a Negro</i> 1962	Black Theatre USA
5.2	F	2/21	Revolutionary Theatre	Baraka: <i>Dutchman</i> 1964 and Baraka Essay on Revolutionary Theatre (iLearn)	Black Theatre USA & iLearn
6.1	T	2/25	Theatre of War & Dreams Destroyed	Rabe: <i>Sticks & Bones</i> 1969	Rabe Collection
6.2	F	2/28	Theatre of War & Dreams Destroyed	Rabe: <i>Sticks & Bones</i> 1969	
7.1	T	3/4	Buried Dreams	Shepard: <i>Buried Child</i> 1978	Solo text
7.2	F	3/7	Buried Dreams: <i>iLearn Discussion</i>	Shepard: <i>Buried Child</i> 1978	iLearn discussion
8.1	T	3/11	Environmental & Protest Theatre	Watch El Teatro Campesino: <i>Los Vendidos</i> 1967; Living Theatre <i>Paradise Now</i> excerpts; Happening folder	DVD on reserve; rest on iLearn
8.2	F	3/14	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam	Midterm
			Spring Break	Spring Break	
9.1	T	3/25	Gender, Race and Power	Hwang: <i>M. Butterfly</i> 1988	Solo text
9.2	F	3/28	Gender, Race and Power	Hwang: <i>M. Butterfly</i> 1988	Guerilla Theatre Paper
10.1	T	4/1	Censorship, Decency and Perversion	iLearn Finley folder (links to a play & reviews)	iLearn
10.2	F	4/4	Censorship, Decency and Perversion	Wellman: <i>7 Blowjobs</i> 1991; NEA SC Decision on iLearn	Amer. Pol. Plays
11.1	T	4/8	No class - Assessment day		
11.2	F	4/11	Musical Perversions of the American Dream	Sondheim: <i>Assassins</i> 1991	Solo text
12.1	T	4/15	Musical Perversions of the American Dream	Sondheim: <i>Assassins</i> 1991	
12.2	F	4/18	No class - Easter Break		
13.1	T	4/22	Postmodernism	Rivera: <i>Marisol</i> 1992	Amer. Pol. Plays
13.2	F	4/25	Postmodernism	Rivera: <i>Marisol</i> 1992	
14.1	T	4/29	American Dreams and Carnivals	Parks: <i>The America Play</i> 1994	Amer. Pol. Plays
14.2	F	5/2	American Dreams and Carnivals	Parks: <i>The America Play</i> 1994	
15.1	T	5/6	Contemporary American Theatre	Hudes: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> 2012	solo text
15.2	F	5/9	Contemporary American Theatre	Hudes: <i>Water by the Spoonful</i> 2012	Manifesto Paper
16	F	5/16	Final Exam: Friday 10:30-12:30	Final Exam	Final Exam