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LIT 380.01: Literary Approaches to American Drama

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LIT 380: American Drama

Fall 2021

Prof. Quan M. Ha

Office hours: Tues & Thurs 12:30-2:00

Class meetings: Tues & Thurs 2:00-3:20

quan.ha@umontana.edu

Office: LA 213

Classroom: LA 305

Course Description

This course introduces you to the modern and contemporary American stage since 1900. We will read canonical plays by Lillian Hellman, Tennessee Williams, David Mamet, and Arthur Miller, etc., and learn to appreciate theatrical and literary devices and American dramaturgy of the 20th and the early 21st centuries. Besides the selected canonical plays, we will read plays written by underrepresented, ethnic American playwrights. We will examine these plays within their specific intellectual and artistic, socio-cultural, political, and racial/ethnic contexts in order to learn more about human struggles, the construction and deconstruction of an American identity, racial problems in America, and a sense of an underlying continuity in the history of American drama.

Learning Outcomes: After completing the course, students will be able to

- analyze drama as literary texts insightfully and critically
- understand dramatic devices and elements that characterize specific kinds/forms of drama
- contextualize each play within its specific socio-political setting
- write critical analytical and argumentative essays on dramatic literature
- appreciate underrepresented, ethnic voices in US dramatic tradition

No textbook is required for this class. Readings will be posted on Moodle.

Classroom policies

1. You are not allowed to read newspapers or class-unrelated materials while class is in session.
2. The use of cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class.
3. Any persistent talking or sleeping while the instructor or another student is speaking will result in (1) a warning and (2) then your dismissal from the classroom.
4. You are permitted to use laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.
5. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner toward your instructor and your fellow students.

Attendance, Tardiness, and Covid-19

1. Tardiness of between 5 and 10 minutes will be noted: each such tardiness after the first two will be counted as an unexcused absence; tardiness of 20 minutes or longer will be treated as an unexcused absence.
2. If you have to leave class early due to personal problems, inform me before class starts.
3. You are allowed TWO free absences. After your second unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted for each additional absence. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the failure of the course.
4. Make-up quizzes are for excused absences only.
5. Mask use is required within the classroom or laboratory.
6. If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
7. If you're required to isolate or quarantine, you'll receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress.

8. Where social distancing (maintaining consistent 6 feet between individuals) is not possible, specific seating arrangements will be used to support contact tracing efforts.
9. Class attendance and seating will be recorded to support contact-tracing efforts.
10. Drinking liquids and eating food are discouraged within the classroom.

E-mail correspondence

Use your UM e-mail account for electronic correspondence with the instructor. You may expect my response within 48 hours (except weekends and holidays). I expect you to use a professional tone in your correspondence with me.

Assignments (Specific instructions to be announced)

Three argumentative essays (5-6 pages/essay)

Two in-class exams

Two oral presentation: You will prepare 8 questions over the assigned reading(s). Then, in class, you will lead class discussion based on your prepared questions.

Reading quizzes

Grades

Grades will be assigned as percentage scores (0-1000) throughout the term. Ultimately, your final grade will be converted to the university's letter grade system using this scale:

A (931 & above)	A- (900-930)	
B+ (870-899)	B (840-860)	B- (800-830)
C+ (770-799)	C (740-760)	C- (700-730)
D (650-699)	F (640 or below)	

Reading quizzes-----	200 points
Two presentation -----	100 points (50 points/each)
Three research essays-----	450 points (150 points/each)
Two exams-----	250 points (125 points/each)

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Policies on written assignments and in-class tests

1. Late papers will be penalized with a 10% deduction for each day after the due date, including weekend days. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please talk to me BEFORE the paper is due. I am not likely to make allowances after the deadline has come and gone.
2. All papers are to be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. Follow the MLA guidelines for formatting, citations, and documentations.
3. For each formal essay, you must turn in the revised version.
4. Do not ask me to proofread your essays electronically (via email). If you need help with your papers, please schedule an appointment, or just come during my office hours.
5. Under no circumstance will I offer make-up tests/exams.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, you should first consult with me. You will have 7 days, from the time the grade is assigned/posted, to set up an appointment with me to discuss the grade. After 7 days, all grades are final.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

Academic Integrity

Refer to <https://staging.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/student-code-of-conduct-2021-pdf> for information about academic misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct, legal action will be taken. It is your responsibility as a student to understand the Student Conduct Code described in the link above.

Reading schedule (subject to change)

Canonical Plays

WEEK 1: Aug. 30 - Sept. 5

Tues: Introduction + syllabus

Thurs: Gender Ideology + *He and She*, by Rachel Crothers SUMMER

WEEK 2: Sept. 6 – 12

Tues: *The Little Foxes*, by Lillian Hellman CASSANDRA

Thurs: *A Streetcar Named Desire*, by Tennessee Williams BENJAMIN

WEEK 3: Sept. 13 – 19

Tues: *Long Day's Journey into the Night*, by Eugene O'Neill BRENNNA

Thurs: *The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller ORIANNA

WEEK 4: Sept. 20 – 26

Tues: *Buried Child*, by Sam Shepard ELSA

Thurs: *Glengarry Glen Ross*, by David Mamet JONATHAN

WEEK 5: Sept. 27 - Oct. 3

Tues: *Proof*, by David Auburn ZOE

Thurs: *August, Osage County*, by Tracy Letts JACOB

***** **ESSAY # 1 due: 10:00 PM, Sunday, Oct. 3**

Asian American Plays

WEEK 6: Oct. 4 – 10

Tues: *A Language of Their Own*, by Chay Yew JOSH

Thurs: *Gold Watch*, by Momoko Iko ANIKA

WEEK 7: Oct. 11 – 17

Tues: *Yellow Face*, by David Henry Wang MADISON

Thurs: *Tea*, by Velina Hasu Houston MIN

WEEK 8: Oct. 18 – 24

Tues: *Asiamesia*, by Sun Mee Chomet SUMMER

Thurs: EXAM # 1

African American Plays

WEEK 9: Oct. 25 – 31

Tues: *Mulatto*, by Langston Hughes

CASSANDRA

Thurs: *Dutchman*, by Amiri Baraka

BENJAMIN

WEEK 10: Nov. 1 – 7

Tues: *Funnyhouse of a Negro*, by Adrienne Kennedy

BRENNA

Thurs: *Spell # 7*, by Ntozake Shange

ORIANNA

***** **ESSAY # 2 due: 10:00 PM, Sunday, Nov. 7**

WEEK 11: Nov. 8 – 14

Tues: *Fences*, by August Wilson

ELSA

Thurs: Veterans Day / No Class

WEEK 12: Nov. 15 – 21

Tues: *The Colored Museum*, by George Wolfe

JONATHAN

Thurs: *Topdog/Underdog*, by Suzan-Lori Parks

ZOE + JACOB

Latinx Plays

WEEK 13: Nov. 22 – 28

Tues: *Beautiful Senioritas*, by Carolina Hospital

MIN

Thurs: Thanksgiving / No Class

WEEK 14: Nov. 29 – Dec. 5

Tues: US Latina and Latin American Feminisms + *Real Women Have Curves*, by Josefina Lopez

ANIKA

Thurs: *I Don't Have to Show You No Stinking Badges*, by Luis Valdez

JOSH

***** **ESSAY # 3 due: 10:00 PM, Sunday, Dec. 5**

WEEK 15: Dec. 6 – 12

Tues: *A Little Something to Ease the Pain*, by Rene Aloma

MADISON

Thurs: Review and conclusion / Last day of class

EXAM # 2: TBA