
COURSE GUIDE FOR ENGLISH 211:

Introduction to the Drama



Fall 2005

9:30-10:50 a.m. TR • 503 Summerfield Hall • Class # 14655

11:00 a.m.-12:20 p.m. TR • 503 Summerfield Hall • Class # 15478

Instructor: Dr. Steve Evans

Office: 1090 Wescoe Hall • Office Hours: 9:30-10:30 a.m. MWF, 8:00-9:00 a.m. TR, and By Appointment

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Course Description

When Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) began writing his plays in the 1920s the American theater was about a quarter-century behind that of Europe. Within only a few years, however, O'Neill's remarkable innovations in playwriting techniques, staging practices, and treatment of themes and issues had brought the American theater into world prominence. Winner of four Pulitzer Prizes for his work, one of O'Neill's greatest achievements was, in the words of one critic, his dramatic portrayal of "the anguish and turmoil that wrack the spirits of sensitive people." The importance of O'Neill's dramatic career also can be measured in another way: in terms of his influence on succeeding generations of playwrights—and that is the focus of this course, which is subtitled "The Legacy of Eugene O'Neill." That is, after studying one of O'Neill's masterpieces, *The Iceman Cometh* (1946), we then will devote the semester to an in-depth examination of the achievements and contributions to twentieth-century drama made by Tennessee Williams (1911-83), Arthur Miller (1915-2005), and William Inge (1913-73)—playwrights who, thanks in part to O'Neill's groundbreaking work, brought new directions to the American theater in their uses of psychological realism, vivid characters, "poetic" language, and expressionistic staging.

One writer, for example, speaks for many in explaining that Williams' unabashed treatment of "issues such as homosexuality, fetishism, sex, his belief in the falsehood of religion, and domestic violence, shocked the audiences of his time." For a number of reasons, Miller's landmark "tragedy of the common man," *Death of a Salesman* (1949), is arguably the most important and influential American play of the twentieth century. Inge, a University of Kansas alumnus, joined Williams and Miller in the 1950s as a shaping influence on the development of American drama, and at the time his four best plays rivaled the work of his celebrated peers for critical attention and popular acclaim. Like Williams, a Southerner, Inge also was a "regionalist" playwright whose works, as one critic describes them, "portray sympathetically the aspirations and frustrations of small-town life in the Midwest." While the reputations of O'Neill, Williams, and Miller have remained strong over the years, Inge's star has dimmed some over time, and one of our goals

in the course will be to give his work fresh consideration. We will study the plays not only as examples of dramatic literature but also as documents that reflect American life, culture, and politics in the decades of the '40s and '50s. Plays based on the struggles of the individual and essential human relationships continue to resonate forcefully with audiences today; other works, notably Miller's *The Crucible* (1953), continue to have universal appeal in their portrayal and questioning of human politics and motives.

Through the study of eight plays representative of the best work of O'Neill, Williams, Miller, and Inge, students will acquire skills necessary for the critical appreciation of dramatic texts as a type of literature—including concepts and terminology proper to academic discourse on the drama; a broad knowledge of theater history; and an understanding of features characteristic of dramatic genres.

Prerequisite: Completion of English 101 and 102 or their equivalents.

Required Texts and Materials

Plays (These Editions Only)

- Inge, William. *Four Plays: Come Back, Little Sheba; Picnic; Bus Stop; and The Dark at the Top of the Stairs*. Foreword by Inge. 1958. Rpt. New York: Grove Press, 1979.
- Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible: A Play in Four Acts*. 1953. Introd. Christopher Bigsby. Rpt. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.
- . *Death of a Salesman: Certain Private Conversations in Two Acts and a Requiem*. 1949. Rpt. New York: Penguin Books, 1976.
- O'Neill, Eugene. *The Iceman Cometh*. 1957. Rpt. New York: Vintage, 1999.
- Williams, Tennessee. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. 1954. Introd. Edward Albee. Rpt. New York: New Directions, 2004.
- . *A Streetcar Named Desire*. 1947. Introd. Arthur Miller. Rpt. New York: New Directions: 2004.

Rhetoric

Lunsford, Andrea A. *The Everyday Writer*. 3rd ed. Boston: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2005. [EW]

Note: EW is a required text for all 100- and 200-level English courses. If you already own a copy of the second edition you may use that book in this course.

Other

An active KU (ku.edu) e-mail account (necessary for Course Distribution List mailings).
Collegiate-level dictionary.

Recommended

A pocket-style folder to contain handouts and course materials.

Required Work and Grading System

In order to pass the course a student must (1) successfully complete and submit all assigned work; and (2) earn a passing grade on the Final Exam. Distribution of course requirements is as follows:

Daily Grade (10%):

Based on attendance, class participation, quizzes, and incidental writing assignments. Extra credit opportunities will be available in the form of play reviews, brief oral reports, and class handouts;

Essays (65%):

Students will write three papers of about four pages of text each. At the end of the course the Instructor will weight the student's essay grades highest-to-lowest by assigning them 30%, 20%, and 15% respectively.

Final Exam (25%):

The Final Exam will consist of two parts, each worth 50 points: (1) *Objective*—definition of terms; matching/identification of passages from the readings; brief responses to passages from the readings; and (2) *Formal Essay*—a response of about five pages asking the student to evaluate a number of texts in relation to major themes and concerns of the course.

Grades will be calculated on an 11-point scale, with 11 points for an *A* and 0 points for an *F*. Evidence of improvement will be considered in determining the student's grade for the course.

Minimum Standards for Passing Work

The following minimal criteria will be used in the evaluation of written work in this course:

Demonstrated mastery of sentence-level grammar (proper spelling, simple grammatical acceptability, implied or explicit subject-verb completeness, subject-verb agreement, correct and consistent use of verb tenses, clear pronoun references, agreement between pronoun and antecedent, correct use of pronoun cases, proper parallelism, properly integrated interrupters and modifiers, correct punctuation);

Ability to state clearly or imply a Controlling Idea (thesis) for the paper. (An effective CI should *control* the paper—that is, the paper as a whole should be a development of one main idea.);

Ability to recognize and treat the most important aspects of the CI;

Ability to arrange these main points according to some logical organizing principle. (Even if the author strays occasionally from the sequence s/he has established, the sequence itself should be clearly recognizable.);

Ability to address the assigned topic;

Ability to analyze and interpret literary texts with a growing repertoire of critical skills and approaches;

Ability to select and use quotations and other forms of textual evidence properly and effectively.

Announcements

Continued enrollment signifies a student's understanding and acceptance of policies, rules, and regulations set forth in this and other documents relative to the course.

The office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)—135 Strong Hall, 785/864-2620 (v/tty)—coordinates accommodations and services for KU courses. If you have a disability for which you may request accommodation in KU classes and have not contacted SSD, please do so as soon as possible. Also see the Instructor privately in regard to this course.

Promptness: Students are expected to arrive at class on time. Except for a good reason, arriving later than five minutes will be considered an absence (see Attendance, under Policies, below). On the rare occasion when you must arrive late, please take your seat as quietly as possible. If you cannot make class on time regularly, please find a course that better fits your schedule.

Classroom Atmosphere: For our classroom to succeed as a learning environment, everyone must maintain the highest standards of behavior, including respect for and tolerance of others and their opinions and ideas. Try always, therefore, to maintain a spirit of intellectual flexibility. For obvious reasons, cellular phones, beepers, and pagers must be turned off during class.

Academic Support: Most colleges and universities have writing centers, places where students may go to discuss their writing with trained peer consultants. At KU, we call our writing centers Writer's Roosts. When you visit, bring your work in progress and have an idea of what you would like to work on—organization, support, documentation, editing, and so forth. The Roosts are open in several different locations across campus; please check the website at <www.writing.ku.edu> for locations and hours. The Roosts welcome both drop-ins and appointments, and there is no charge for their services. For more information, call 864-2399 or send an email to <<mailto:writing@ku.edu>>.

Contacting the Instructor: The Instructor prefers that students use e-mail or home telephone rather than office voice-mail, preferably before 9:00 P.M. Avoid using e-mail to explain an absence; instead, discuss the matter in person with the Instructor. **Note:** The Instructor cannot discuss student matters with parents. The proper way for a student or parent to explain a serious illness or emergency situation affecting the student's attendance or performance is through services provided by the Student Development Center (22 Strong Hall; 785/864-4064). SDC will furnish an official letter of explanation to each of the student's instructors.

Always save your work both to disk and your computer's hard drive. For your protection, keep a hard copy of out-of-class assignments as well.

Make it a practice to check your e-mail at least twice daily. Also, please send a brief note of reply—for example, "Thanks, got it!"—to acknowledge receipt of a *personal* message (not CDL mail) from the Instructor.

Policies

Incompletes: A grade of *I* (Incomplete) will be given only under extraordinary circumstances.

Attendance: Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *With the fourth unexcused absence, the student's grade for the course will be lowered one full letter.* (Allowances will be made, of course, for unavoidable absences due to illness, conflicting University obligations, and other valid reasons.) Active participation in the course—in terms of *attendance, clear interest in learning the material, and class participation*—is mandatory in order for a student to earn a passing grade. **Note:** If excessive absences—for *any reason*—suggest that a student is unable to participate in the course fully, the Instructor may ask the student to withdraw or retake the course at another time.

Work in Acceptable Form: All essays must be word-processed or typed in proper MLA form. **Note:** Papers may be penalized as much as one full letter grade for problems of form (vague title; improper handling of quotations; inaccurate Works Cited page entries; and the like). The Instructor may refuse work that does not meet these criteria.

Late Work: Work is due at the start of the class period for which it is assigned. Plan carefully, therefore, in order to avoid last-minute computer or printer problems. Take late work to the Instructor's mailbox in 3114 Wescoe Hall; after 5:00 P.M., place it in the adjacent mail slot. The Instructor is not responsible for work that is shoved under his office door or delivered in any way other than in person or to his mailbox.

Assignments sent by e-mail are acceptable only in unusual circumstances (illness, for example), and only with the Instructor's prior permission. That is, if you must send work via e-mail, contact the Instructor first for permission to do so.

Note: Work that is turned in late (unexcused) may be penalized as much as one letter grade for each *day—not class period*—that it is late.

Originality: *Plagiarism*—the willful or negligent use of someone else's thoughts or words without proper attribution—will not be tolerated. Any assignment that has been plagiarized will receive a grade of *F*; additional penalties may apply depending on the situation. Please review English Department policy on plagiarism explained in *Composition and Literature 2005-2006*. If you have questions concerning this important aspect of academic integrity, please consult the Instructor.

Note: The issue of digital plagiarism has raised concerns about ethics, student writing experiences, and academic integrity. KU subscribes to a digital plagiarism detection program called *Turnitin.com* that may be used to check papers submitted in this course. You may be asked to submit your paper(s) in a digital format (email attachment) so that your paper can be checked against web pages and databases of existing papers. Although you may never have engaged in intentional plagiarism, many students do incorporate sources without citations; this program can alert your instructor to your academic needs. Please consider the use of the program as a learning tool for all of us.

Resources

The following scholarly works and films of productions are available for one-day checkout at the Watson Library Reserve Desk. Students are encouraged to broaden their understanding and appreciation of the plays by making prudent and responsible use of secondary materials in papers. If you have questions, please see the Instructor.

Inge

Johnson, Jeff. *William Inge and the Subversion of Gender: Rewriting Stereotypes in the Plays, Novels, and Screenplays*. Forward by Jackson R. Bryer. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2005. [PS/3517/.N265/Z726/2005]

McClure, Arthur F. *Memories of Splendor: The Midwestern World of William Inge*. Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1989. [PS/3517/.N265/Z75/1989]

McClure, Arthur F., and C. David Rice, eds. *A Bibliographical Guide to the Works of William Inge (1913-1973)*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991. [Z/8437/.5/.M36/1991]

Shuman, R. Baird. *William Inge*. Rev. ed. Boston: Twayne, 1989. [PS/3517/.N265/Z87/1989]

Voss, Ralph F. *The Art of William Inge*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas. Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1985. [PS/3517/.N265/Z9/1975a]

Miller

Biggsby, Christopher. *Arthur Miller: A Critical Study*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. [PS/3525/.I5156/Z5445/2005]

—, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Arthur Miller*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. [PS/3525/.I5156/Z548/1997]

Bloom, Harold, ed. *Major Literary Characters: Willy Loman*. New York: Chelsea House, 1991. [PS/3525/.I5156/D4387/1991]

—, ed. *Modern Critical Interpretations: The Crucible*. Philadelphia: Chelsea House, 1999. [PS/3525/.I5156/C7334/1999]

Gussow, Mel. *Conversations with Miller*. New York: Applause, 2002. [PS/3525/.I5156/Z463/2002]

Miller, Arthur. *Timebends: A Life*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995. [PS/3525/.I5156/Z477/1995]

Weales, Gerald, ed. *Arthur Miller: The Crucible—Text and Criticism*. 1971. New York: Penguin Books, 1996.
[PS/3525/.I5156/C7/1996]

O'Neill

- Alexander, Doris. *Eugene O'Neill's Creative Struggle: The Decisive Decade, 1924-1933*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992. [PS/3529/.N5/Z555/1992]
- Bloom, Harold. *Modern Critical Interpretations: Eugene O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987. [PS/3529/.N5/I334/1987/c.2]]
- Bogard, Travis. *Contour in Time: The Plays of Eugene O'Neill*. Rev. ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988. [PS/3529/.N5/Z658/1988]
- Carpenter, Frederic I. *Eugene O'Neill*. Rev. ed. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979. [PS/3529/.N5/Z578/1979]
- Manheim, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Eugene O'Neill*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. [PS/3529/.N5/Z575/1998]
- Martine, James J., ed. *Critical Essays on Eugene O'Neill*. Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984.
[PS/3529/.N5/Z62727/1984]
- Stroupe, John H., ed. *Critical Approaches to O'Neill*. New York: AMS Press, 1988.
[PS/3529/.N5/Z62726/1988]

Williams

- Bloom, Harold, ed. *Modern Critical Views: Tennessee Williams*. New York: Chelsea House, 1987.
[PS/3545/.I5365/Z843/1987]
- Crandell, George W., ed. *The Critical Response to Tennessee Williams*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1996.
[PS/3545/.I5365/Z616/1996]
- Gross, Robert F., ed. *Tennessee Williams: A Casebook*. New York: Routledge, 2002.
[PS/3545/.I5365/Z84514/2002]
- Lyle Leverich, *Tom: The Unknown Tennessee Williams*. New York: Crown, 1995. [PS/3545/.I5365/Z736/1995]
- Paller, Michael. *Gentlemen Callers: Tennessee Williams, Homosexuality, and Mid-Twentieth-Century Broadway Drama*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005. [PS/3545/.I5365/Z799/2005]

Films

- Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman*. Prod. Robert F. Colesberry. Dir. Volker Schlöndorff. Perf. Dustin Hoffman, Charles Durning, Kate Reid, Stephen Lang, John Malkovich. Karl-Lorimar Home Video, 1986.
[PS/3525/.I5156/D424/1986]
- Bus Stop*. Prod. Buddy Adler. Dir. Josh Logan. Perf. Marilyn Monroe, Don Murray, Arthur O'Connell, Betty Field, Eileen Heckart. 1956. Twentieth Century Fox, 1984. [PS/3517/.N265/B824/1956]
- Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Prod. Lawrence Weingarten. Dir. Richard Brooks. Perf. Elizabeth Taylor, Paul Newman, Burl Ives, Judith Anderson, Jack Carson, Madeleine Sherwood. 1958. MGM/UA Home Video, 1989.
[PS/3545/.I5365/C3724/1958]
- Picnic*. Prod. Fred Kohlmar. Dir. Joshua Logan. Perf. William Holden, Kim Novak, Rosalind Russell. 1955. Columbia TriStar Home Video, 1989. [PS/3517/.N265/P5241/1955]
- Tennessee Williams' Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. Prod. Phyllis Geller. Dir. Jack Hofsis. Perf. Jessica Lange, Tommy Lee Jones, Rip Torn, Kim Stanley, Penny Fuller, David Dukes. Showtime Entertainment/American Playhouse, 1984. [PS/3545/.I5365/C3724/1984]

Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

The following schedule is tentative and subject to change as the course develops. Always bring this Course Guide and

assigned texts to class. As well, always read and study the literature closely for *detail*, and be prepared for a quiz or impromptu in-class writing exercise on any given day. Specific knowledge of plot is assumed.

Week 1

R 18 Aug Introduction to the course; Topic: “American Drama at the Turn of the Twentieth Century”

Week 2

T 23 Topic: “Elements of Drama”

R 25 O’Neill, *The Iceman Cometh* (1946): Act 1; assign Essay 1

Week 3

T 30 *The Iceman Cometh*: Act 2

R 1 Sept *The Iceman Cometh*: Act 3

Week 4

T 6 *The Iceman Cometh*: Finish; “Proper Paper Presentation” (handout)

R 8 Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947): Miller, “Introduction”; scenes 1-3

Week 5

T 13 *A Streetcar Named Desire*: Scenes 4-8

R 15 *A Streetcar Named Desire*: Finish

Week 6

T 20 **Essay 1 due at start of class**; reading TBA

R 22 Topic: “How to Write a Comparative Analysis” (handout); assign Essay 2

Week 7

T 27 Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949): Act 1; Miller, “Tragedy and the Common Man” (handout)

R 29 *Death of a Salesman*: Act 2

Week 8

T 4 Oct *Death of a Salesman*: Finish

R 6 Inge, *Come Back, Little Sheba* (1950): “Foreword” and act 1

Week 9

T 11 *Come Back, Little Sheba*: Finish

R 13 **Fall Break—No Class**

Week 10

T 18 Miller, *The Crucible* (1953): Bigsby, “Introduction” and page 2

R 20 **Essay 2 due at start of class**; assign Essay 3

Week 11

T 25 *The Crucible*: Act 1

R 27 *The Crucible*: Acts 2-3

Week 12

T 1 Nov *The Crucible*: Finish

R 3 Inge, *Picnic* (1953): Act 1

Week 13

T 8 *Picnic*: Act 2

R 10 **Essay 3 due at start of class**; reading TBA

Week 14

T 15 *Picnic*: Finish

R 17 Williams, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955): Albee, "Introduction," and act 1

Week 15

T 22 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*: Act 2

R 24 **Thanksgiving Break—No Class**

Week 16

T 29 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*: Finish; essays by Parker and Williams

R 1 Dec Inge, *Bus Stop* (1955): Act 1

Week 17

T 6 *Bus Stop*: Finish

R 8 Last day of class: Review for Final Exam; course evaluations.

Week 18

T 13 **Final Exam, 11:00 Section:** 10:30 A.M.-1:00 P.M.

F 16 **Final Exam, 9:30 MWF Section:** 7:30-10:00 a.m.