

## Special Topics: Contemporary American Drama – THEA 4485 01 D/W

Fall Semester 2005

### Independent Study

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Office Hours: T & TH 2:00 - 4:00, M & W 2:30-5 and by appointment.

**Course Description:** THEA 4485: Contemporary American Drama studies selected plays from 1990 to the present.

**Readings:** Material for this course is posted on WEB CT and the plays are listed in the schedule. An asterisk \* denotes that the play is available **online** through American Theatre Magazine. I have a copy of each play here at the office. My copies of the texts **MUST NOT** leave Martha Munro.

### Degree Learning Outcomes:

- Students will demonstrate that they are familiar with a representative selection of plays, indicated by a demonstrable knowledge of selected plays, theatrical conventions, and theatrical movements important in the modern theatre.
- Students will develop skill in analyzing plays, using theatre technology, and conducting research.
- Students will have the ability to apply the skills they learn in courses to a variety of work and social environments.

### Learning Objectives:

- To improve written communication skills.
- To understand the roll of writing as part of a learning process
- To be able to write a cohesive argument on a thoroughly research topic.

### ASSIGNMENTS

All readings, quizzes and discussion questions must be completed by the Monday following the day on which they are assigned. The assignment for *Holes* is listed on Tuesday, August 23, 2005. All assignments related to *Holes* are due by August 29, 2005.

### WEB CT Quizzes

There will be a quiz on each of the plays assigned.

### WEB CT Discussion Questions

Response questions on the plays and related articles are designed to allow students to explore a variety of topics related to the plays that articles. Responses should be between 500-750 words. To avoid having internet failure cause a loss of work, I suggest that you type the response in Word on your computer and then cut and paste the response into WEB CT.

## **Paper**

Each student will write one ten page paper on a subject pertaining to contemporary drama. This paper is to be original, well thought-out, and type written. The paper will have a four parts: a formal proposal which give the scope of this project, an annotated bibliography, a first draft which will be returned with suggestions, and finally a final draft. Paper assignment due dates are marked on your schedule. Late assignments will loose 5 points for every class day beyond the deadline. A checklist explaining the grading criteria is attached to the syllabus. The final draft of the paper must be submitted as a hard copy and delivered to my office.

## **Midterm**

There will be a midterm exam pertaining to all the material assigned and/or covered in class from the beginning of the semester until midterm.

## **Final**

There will be a final exam pertaining to all the material assigned and/or covered in class from the midterm to the end of the semester.

## **Grading Scale**

A	100-90
B	89-80
C	79-70
D	69-60
F	59 and below

## **Grade Breakdown**

Discussion Questions	25%
Quizzes	15%
Midterm	15%
Formal Paper	25%
Final	20%

## SCHEDULE

DATE	READING	ADDITIONAL ASSIGNMENTS
August 23	Louis Sachar's <i>Holes</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
August 30	Diane Son's <i>Stop Kiss</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
September 6	Alfred Uhry's <i>The Last Night of Balleyhoo</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
September 13	August Wilson's <i>Jitney</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
September 20	Nilo Cruz's <i>Anna and The Tropics</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
September 27	Edward Albee's <i>Three Tall Women</i>	<b>Paper Proposal Due</b>
October 4	Naomi Wallace's <i>In the Heart of America</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
October 11	Midterm	<b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b>
October 18	Rebecca Gilman's <i>An Almost Holy Picture</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
October 25	Suzan Lori Parks' <i>In the Blood</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
November 1	David Lindsey Abaire's <i>Fuddy Meers</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
November 8	<i>James Joyce's The Dead</i> * by Richard Nelson & Shaun Davey	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions <b>First Draft Due</b>
November 15	Tony Kushner's <i>Angels in America</i> *	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
November 22	Lisa Loomer's <i>The Waiting Room</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions
November 29	Margaret Edson's <i>Wit</i>	Article, Quiz, and Discussion Questions <b>Final Draft Due</b>
December 6	Final Exam	

## **Research Paper Grading Criteria**

## **Contemporary U.S. Drama**

This is a formal writing assignment

Your paper will be graded on a 100 point scale.

A=90-100

B=80-89

C=70-79

D=60-69

F=59 and below

Each of the following elements is worth 10 points.

### **Introduction**

1. The opening paragraph provides specific information needed for the reader to understand the paper's topic. (Answer the questions Who, What When and Where)
2. The thesis is included in the paper's introduction and presents an original idea or argument.

### **Body**

3. The body of the paper has two or more separate support points that advance the argument of the thesis.
4. Specific concrete example/evidence is provided to support each point, and the evidence is well documented.
5. The argument is well developed, thoroughly discusses the thesis and progresses in a clearly organized and logical fashion.

### **Conclusion**

6. The conclusion answers the question, argument or problem posed in the thesis and is adequate in length to bring the argument to completion.

### **Mechanics**

7. The grammar, punctuation, and spelling are correct and the sentence structure is sophisticated, varied and to the point.

### **Overall**

8. The facts presented in the paper are correct and the assertions are well supported.
9. The paper is properly documented and contains both endnotes and a complete bibliography.
10. The proposal, annotated bibliography, and rough draft are complete and handed in on time.

**Note: Failure to document an author's ideas or words can be construed as plagiarism and may result in a grade of 0 for your paper. If you have any questions, please see me.**

## ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA

A: The essay will receive a grade of A if it has mature, thoughtful, original, clearly expressed and well-developed ideas; it concentrates on a strong central idea, is well organized, and has a well-developed thesis. The major ideas are developed logically and supported by concrete, specific evidence. The essay has an effective style and uses a sophisticated, appropriate vocabulary; it has appropriate topic sentences, transitions, a consistent tone; it addresses a clear audience. The prose is apt and sometimes memorable. Finally, it contains few errors, none of which seriously undermines the effectiveness of the paper for educated readers.

B: The essay will receive a B if it has clearly stated ideas in the form of a thesis and topic sentences and is logically and concretely developed. The essay should contain an effective introduction and conclusion. The ideas are presented in a thorough, complex manner and in logical, organized order; sentence structure is clear and varied; finally, it has no serious sentence errors such as comma splices, fragments, fused sentences, or errors in agreement. It may, however, lack the sophistication, vocabulary, or maturity of thought of an A paper.

C: The essay will receive a grade of C if it demonstrates college-level proficiency. It adequately conveys a thesis, supports the central idea by some evidence, and is organized clearly and logically. The evidence is perhaps obvious and lacks originality. Paragraphs are clearly divided; although the transitions may be mechanical, they do foster coherence. The sentence structure may be correct but shows limited competence with sentence variety. The paper may have few serious but some mechanical errors that betray an inadequate sentence sense. Finally, it may contain grammatical errors that reveal unfamiliarity with the conventions of edited American English.

D: The essay will receive a grade of D if it fails to convey or sustain a central idea. The ideas may be poorly chosen or insufficiently limited. There may be no sense of a particular audience addressed, evidenced by inconsistent vocabulary and tone. Organization may be seriously flawed in the following areas: paragraphs may not be logically divided or appropriately developed; topic sentences may be unclear or missing; transitions are missing or incorrect; introductions are misleading, and conclusions may stray off the argument or are simply nonexistent. Frequently, it may have consistent and numerous mechanical or grammatical errors. The syntax and diction may be so flawed that sentences become incomprehensible. Lack of proofreading can turn an otherwise adequate paper into a D paper.

F: The essay will receive an F if it does not deal with an assigned topic; even if it is coherently and correctly written. It may have not stated or may not have sustained a central idea; it goes off in several directions. The paper may read choppily, lack sentence variety, is not developed adequately and so falls seriously short of minimum length requirements. It may be plagiarized. It is plagued by one or more of the organizational deficiencies of the D paper. It will most probably contain numerous and consistent errors in grammar or mechanics that hamper understanding by the reader.