

Dr. George S. Diamond
Spring 2007

Zinzendorf 307 – 610-861-1391
M-Th 1:30-3:00 PM

English 234 American Drama and Theatre

I. The object of American Drama and Theatre is to trace the development of plays, playwriting, acting, directing, stagecraft, and theatre architecture in America from Colonial times to the present, and to read, analyze, compare and contrast plays representative of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

II. Students will read representative works, participate in class discussions, and compose five projects*: Project I, a textual/technical play analysis; Project II, a report on a significant theatrical figure; Project III, a mood/atmosphere play analysis; and Project IV, a character analysis of a play; and Project V, a summary of original reviews of a given play. Project 1 will be worth 16 points; Project 2,3,4 14 points each; Project 5 worth 10 points. In addition there will be a mid-term and a final, each worth 15 points, and a critique of THE LARAMIE PROJECT worth 2 points. (*Specific description of Projects will be in accompanying handouts.)

III. Attendance policy for English 234 is based on the attendance statement in the Moravian College Catalog: read, date, sign, and submit the accompanying paper.

IV. All students are expected to attend a performance of THE LARAMIE PROJECT, presented by the Moravian College Theatre Company and submit a one page critique of the play. Cost, dates, and times will be announced after the term begins.

V. There are, at least, two American dramas produced at nearby colleges. Any student who sees those plays or any other produced American dramas will receive extra credit of 4% on their final grade, after they have submitted a playbill or program with the ticket stub attached and a one page critique of the production.

VI. Papers and examinations are expected to adhere to a minimum quality of standard English and adhere to the Statement on Academic Honesty, found in both the College Catalog and the Student Handbook.

Texts:

Albee, Edward. *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?*

O'Neill, Eugene. *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

Wasserstein, Wendy, *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES*

Watt, Stephen and Gary A. Richardson, *AMERICAN DRAMA AND THEATRE*

COLONIAL TO CONTEMPORARY. Cambridge, MA. Heinle & Heinle Publishers, 2003

Williams, Tennessee, *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE*. (distributed)

Reading Assignments:

UNIT ONE

“Introduction” 1-5

“Beginnings” 8-18

“Civil War to WWI” 147-156

Plays;

Royall Tyler’s *THE CONTRAST* (1787)

Dion Boucicault *THE OCTOROON* (1859)

James A. Herne *MARGARET FLEMING* (1890)

Report Topics:

1. Augustin Daly
2. David Belasco
3. The Syndicate: Hayman, Klaw, Erlanger, Nixon, & Zimmerman
4. Steele MacKaye
5. Mrs. Minnie Maddern Fiske

UNIT TWO

“Modern” 338-358

Plays:

Lillian Hellman *THE CHILDREN’S HOUR* (1934)

Clifford Odets *WAITING FOR LEFTY* (1935)

Eugene O’Neill *LONG DAY’S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT* (1940)

Eugene O’Neill *THE ICEMAN COMETH* (1946)

Arthur Miller *ALL MY SONS* (1947)

Tennessee Williams *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* (1947)

Report Topics:

6. Provincetown Playhouse
7. Robert Edmund Jones
8. Washington Square Players/Theatre Guild
9. Civic Repertory Theatre (La Gallienne)
10. Margaret Webster
11. Federal Theatre Project
12. Eugene O’Neill
13. Neighborhood Playhouse
14. Mercury Theatre (Welles & Houseman)
15. The Group Theatre
16. Actor’s Studio
17. Stella Adler
18. Jo Mielziner
19. Off Broadway

UNIT THREE
“Contemporary” 720-735

Plays:

Edward Albee *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?* (1962)
Sam Shepherd *THE TOOTH OF CRIME* (1972)
David Rabe *STREAMERS* (1976)
Ntozake Shange, *SPELL #7* (1979)
August Wilson *MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM* (1984)
Wendy Wasserstein *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES* (1988)
David Mamet *OLEANNA* (1992)

Report Topics:

20. Off-Off Broadway
21. New York Shakespeare Festival (J. Papp) &/or other Shakespeare Festivals
22. guerrilla theatre & the happening
23. regional theatre

CLASS SCHEDULE

1. M Ja 14 Course Introduction;
2. W Ja 16 American Theatre, an overview.
3. F Ja 18 American Theatre, an overview.

4. W Ja 23 Reeves Library Visit
5. F Ja 25 *THE CONTRAST* (1787) Discussion & Analysis
6. M Ja 28 *THE OCTOROON* (1859) Discussion & Analysis

7. W Ja 30 *MARGARET FLEMING* (1890) Discussion & Analysis
8. F Fb 1 Reports 1, 2, & 3

9. M Fb 4 Reports 4, 5, & 6
10. W Fb 6 Reports 7, 8, & 9
11. F Fb 8 Reports 10, 11, & 12

12. M Fb 11 Reports 13, 14, & 15
13. W Fb 13 Reports 16, 17, & 18
14. F Fb 15 Reports 19, 20, & 21

15. M Fb 18 Reports 22, 23, & 24
16. W.Fb 20 *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR* (1934)
17. F Fb 22 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis

18. M Fb 25 *WAITING FOR LEFTY* (1935)
19. W Fb 27 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis
20. F Fb 29 *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT* (1940)

21. M Mr 10 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis
22. W Mr 12 *THE ICEMAN COMETH* (1946)
23. F Mr 14 Character Analysis/Visual & Mood Analysis

24. M Mr 17 *ALL MY SONS* (1947)
25. W Mr 19 Mid-term Examination

26. M Mr 24 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis
27. W Mr 26 *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* (1947)
28. F Mr 28 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis

29. M Mr 31 *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?* (1962)
30. W.Ap 2 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis
31. F Ap 4 Reeves Library Research in Drama Reviews

32. M Ap 7 *THE TOOTH OF CRIME* (1972)
33. W Ap 9 *STREAMERS* (1976)
34. F Ap 11 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis

35. M Ap 14 *SPELL #7* (1979) & *OLEANNA* (1992)
36. W Ap 16 *MA RAINEY'S BLACK BOTTOM* (1984)
37. F Ap 18 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis

38. M Ap 22 *THE HEIDI CHRONICLES* (1988)
39. W Ap 24 Character Analysis/ Visual & Mood Analysis
40. F Ap 26 Course Evaluation Forms/Drama Reviews Due.

At the conclusion of English 234 American Drama And Theatre the student should be able to:

1. Have a fundamental knowledge of the variety and breadth of dramas written and produced in America from Colonial times to the end of the twentieth century;
2. Have a fundamental knowledge of the individuals and forces responsible for the development of American Drama and Theatre;
3. Have an understanding of how a conjunction of forces—political, economic, social, psychological, even environmental, and so forth—effected the development of American Drama and Theatre;
4. Have a fundamental knowledge of the variety and breadth of philosophical, critical, and historical works that define and analyze American dramatic works;
5. Demonstrate competence in devising perceptive oral and written analyses of dramatic texts, working well with others, and demonstrate competence in a variety of other written and oral assignments.

