

ENGLISH 234 American Drama Spring 2016
Monday and Wednesday 10:20-11:30A Zinzendorf 103

Instructor: Dr. Nicole Tabor, taborn@moravian.edu

Office Location and Phone: 304 Zinzendorf Hall, (610) 625-7842

Drop-In Office Hours: Mon 9:15-10:15 & 2:25-3:25 and Wed 9:15-10:15 and also by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this class we will closely read American plays with significant attention to dramatic form. It will be useful to historicize these texts' formal innovation(s) in order to consider how dramatic literature helps us understand American identity. Each play will illuminate a new way of seeing unique to its period in time. Some of the course's more recent texts reflect the enormous contributions of women and people of color to American drama. Developing and interrogating questions of national identity will complicate our understanding of drama as a unique literary genre. Our readings, discussions, and writing assignments will offer the opportunity to develop questions at issue for our American discourse community. Writing especially will provide the chance to develop your own line of inquiry regarding specific texts.

COURSE GOALS:

- Develop a sophisticated vocabulary of key terms to closely read, discuss and write about American drama
- Enrich our textual experience of American drama through critical consideration of Performance Studies
- Deepen our understanding and appreciation of multicultural contributions to American drama
- Work collaboratively to generate challenging questions at issue for our discourse community
- Design and implement an intellectually substantial research project drawing on original argumentation, writing, and research which substantiates claims utilizing American drama as textual evidence
- Utilize life experiences to make connections between American drama and national identity

REQUIRED TEXTS:

1. *American Drama: Colonial to Contemporary* by Watt and Richardson
2. *Twilight Los Angeles 1992* by Anna Deveare Smith
3. *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner

ASSIGNMENTS

PERCENT OF FINAL GRADE:

First Essay	20
Second Essay	20
Third Essay	20
Reading Journal	20
Oral Presentations	10
Class Participation	10

ESSAYS: You are required to compose three argumentative essays. The first essay will be 3-4 pages, essay two will be 6-7 pages and the final essay will be 15 pages in length. You will develop the final essay from an abstract and rough draft. These essays will be thesis-driven and follow MLA guidelines. Essays will be evaluated primarily on the quality of your ideas and the thoroughness of your critical argument (including appropriate citations of the text). Organizational, grammatical, and other writing matters will, however, also affect your grade. We will discuss these essays in further detail throughout the term.

READING JOURNAL: You will write a one-page journal entry for each play. This entry will consist of two parts. In part one you will briefly summarize the plot and part two will consist of a discussion question. These questions are useful in generating class discussion and essays from our readings. Please refer to the handout "Discussion Questions as Post-reading." You may be asked to read from your response in class. You will also write a two part journal entry (summary/discussion question) for the MCTC live production of *Getting: Complete!* These journals will be checked each class period and collected twice during the term.

ORAL PRESENTATION: You will be required to give one group presentation on an assigned play. Your group will summarize the play, ask the class significant discussion questions related to your text, and create a handout. Your presentation will also historicize the play. A sign-up sheet will be circulated in class.

PARTICIPATION: Our classroom comprises a *discourse community*, in which we gain knowledge and insight through mutual inquiry as a result of both verbal and written interaction with others in the class. This interaction will take the form of co-operation as well as respectful disagreement. As a member of this discourse community, you will be expected to contribute intelligently and frequently to the discussion. Along with speaking, effective participation requires active and open-minded listening to others. Respond to and interact with your peers, not just with me. The more you participate, the more interesting, exciting,

and rewarding this class will be. Always bring your textbook and notes to class. Expect to read passages aloud and closely investigate details of the texts we are studying. There will be unannounced quizzes and in-class writings throughout the term. You will also be required to attend a revision conference. I highly encourage you to visit me during office hours (or make an appointment) to discuss your paper ideas or any other questions or concerns related to the course.

ENGLISH MAJORS: In preparation for creating an English Major Portfolio in your Senior Capstone Seminar, please save both digital and hard copies of your work for this class, including drafts with peer and instructor comments.

POLICIES:

Grades. It is within the instructor's purview to apply qualitative judgment in determining grades for any assignments and for the final course grade.

Format. All written work should include your name, the course number and instructor (Tabor), the date, and the assignment in the upper right-hand corner. Any pages after the first should be numbered and stapled. All work must be typed using a reasonable 12-point font, double-spaced, and conventional margins (one inch). No electronic assignments accepted without special arrangement.

Deadlines. Reading responses, quizzes, and other daily assignments will not be accepted late including assignments due to absence. Assignments are due during the class period of the due date. Extensions may be given on essays, provided that a student asks for the extension at least one week in advance. Unless an extension is given, late essays will be reduced by one letter grade for each day that passes after the due date, e.g. an A becomes a B if one day late.

Access for Students with Disabilities. Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact the Academic Support Center, located in the lower level of Monocacy Hall, or by calling [610-861-1401](tel:610-861-1401). Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center.

Plagiarism. All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please see the Student Handbook if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Attendance. It is your responsibility to sign the attendance sheet at each class. Your final course grade will be dropped by 10% for each unexcused absence after the third. Arriving to class more than 2 minutes late will count as 1/3 of an absence. A note from a doctor's office is required for an excused absence.

Tentative Reading Schedule. Readings are to be completed on the day assigned. The schedule is subject to change. (* = Journal entry due)

Week One

Mon Jan 18 Introduction

Wed Jan 20 **The Contrast* by Royall Tyler
Critical Reading: Jeffrey Richards, *Early American Drama*

Week Two

Mon Jan 25 *The Contrast* by Royall Tyler

Wed Jan 27 **Metamora* by John Stone

Week Three

Mon Feb 1 *Metamora* by John Stone

Wed Feb 3 *Metamora* by John Stone
Essay One Due

Week Four

Mon Feb 8 **Shenandoah* by Bronson Howard

Wed Feb 10 *Shenandoah* by Bronson Howard
Critical Reading: Donald Shiach, *Contexts in Literature*

Week Five

Mon Feb 15 **Trifles* by Susan Glaspell

Wed Feb 17 **Thesis Workshop**

Week Six

Mon Feb 22 **Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry

Wed Feb 24 *Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
In Focus Spotlight - *Getting*: COMPLETE!*

Week Seven

Mon Feb 29 **Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams
Critical Reading: David Krasner, American Drama 1945-2000
Reading Journal Due

Wed Mar 2 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* by Tennessee Williams
Essay Two Due

Week Eight

Mon Mar 7 Spring Recess, No Class

Wed Mar 9 Spring Recess, No Class

Week Nine

Mon Mar 14 Library Visit: Primary and Secondary Sources
Abstract Due

Wed Mar 16 **Getting Out* by Marsha Norman

Week Ten

Mon Mar 21 *Getting Out* by Marsha Norman

Wed Mar 23 **The Woman Who Was a Red Deer Dressed for the Deer Dance* by Diane Glancy
Rough Draft Due

Week Eleven

Mon Mar 28 **Conferences**

Wed Mar 30 **Conferences**

Week Twelve

Mon Apr 4 **Oleanna* by David Mamet

Wed Apr 6 **Angels in America* by Tony Kushner

Week Thirteen

Mon Apr 11 *Angels in America* by Tony Kushner
Critical Reading: Tony Kushner and Bertolt Brecht

Wed Apr 13 *Selections from *For Colored Girls* by Ntozake Shange

Week Fourteen

Mon Apr 18 **Twilight Los Angeles, 1992* by Anna Deveare Smith
Reading Journal Due

Wed Apr 20 *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992* by Anna Deveare Smith

April 21, 22, 23 and 24, *Getting*: COMPLETE!* At the Arena Theatre

Week Fifteen

Mon April 25 Holiday Break, No Class

Wed April 27 Conclusions and Evaluations
Essay Three Due