

English 4304-31559
English 5304-31749
Tennessee Williams
M-F 9.40-11.10 am
Summer 2010

Dr. R.-J. Frontain
Office: Irby 317G
Office Phone: 450-5130
Office Hours: M-F 9-9.30 am

TEXTS

Tennessee Williams, *Plays 1937-1955*. Ed. Mel Gussow and Kenneth Holdi[t]ch. New York: Library of America, 2000.
-----, *Plays 1957-1980*. Ed. Mel Gussow and Kenneth Holdi[t]ch. New York: Library of America, 2000.
-----, *Collected Stories*. New York: New Directions, 1985.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Tennessee Williams is generally acknowledged as the greatest playwright, excepting Eugene O'Neill, that the United States has thus far produced. In addition, he was a poet and short story writer of distinction. A major innovator in dramatic form, Williams invested post-war American theater with a style of "poetic realism" that infused his frank treatments of sexual need and despondency with a lyricism not to be found in American theater before him. The grandson of an Episcopalian clergyman and himself deeply imbued with the language and ethics of the Judeo-Christian Bible, Williams's sympathies lay with the mutilated and dispossessed who struggle to preserve beauty in a world overcome by capitalist greed and the brutal exercise of power. As a result, Williams's theater is oftentimes as shockingly violent as it is poetically delicate.

This semester we will pay especial attention to contemporary film adaptations of Williams's plays. Inasmuch as the original theatrical performances were attended by a relatively select audience in New York City- -at the time one of the most socially liberal communities in the United States- -they were less likely to be censored than when they circulated as films to smaller, more conservative towns. A comparison of the film adaptations made of Williams's plays with the original theater texts reveals a good deal specifically about the challenges that post-war American popular culture was able to accept, and more generally about the role of drama as a social force.

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

M 7 June Introduction to Course: "The Lady of Larkspur Lotion" (*Plays* I.329)
T 8 June Mapping Williams's Imaginative Universe: "Twenty-seven Wagons Full of Cotton" (CS 43), "The Mysteries of the Joy Rio" (CS 99), "One Arm" (CS 175), "Hard Candy"

(CS 335), and “The Mattress by the Tomato Patch” (CS 359)
W 9 June “
R 10 June *Battle of Angels*, Acts 1-2 (*Plays I.287*)
F 11 June “ Act 3 and “The History of a Play”

M 14 June “Portrait of a Girl in Glass” (CS 110), “The Resemblance between a Violin Case and a Coffin” (CS 270), *The Glass Menagerie* Scenes 1-5 (*Plays I. 393*)
T 15 June *Glass Menagerie* Scenes 6-7
W 16 June *A Streetcar Named Desire* Scenes 1-5 (*Plays I.467*)
R 17 June “ Scenes 6-11
F 18 June Comparison of film and play

M 21 June *Summer and Smoke* Part I (*Plays I.565*) and “Miss Coynte of Greene” (CS 484)
T 22 June “ Part II
W 23 June MIDTERM EXAMINATION
R 24 June *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* “Person-to-Person” and Act I (*Plays I.873*); “Three Players of a Summer Game” (CS 303)
F 25 June “ Acts 2-3 and “Act 3: Broadway Version”

M 28 June *Suddenly Last Summer* (*Plays II.99*) and “Desire and the Black Masseuse” (CS 205)
T 29 June “
W 30 June *Sweet Bird of Youth* “Foreword” and Act 1 (*Plays II. 149*) and “Two on a Party” (CS 383)
R 1 July *Sweet Bird* Acts 2-3
F 2 July *The Night of the Iguana* Act 1 (*Plays II.327*) and “The Night of the Iguana” (CS 229)

M 5 July HOLIDAY
T 6 July *Night of the Iguana* Acts 2-3
PAPERS DUE AT START OF CLASS
W 7 July *The Milk Train Doesn’t Stop Here Anymore* Scenes 1-3 (*Plays II.489*) and “Man Bring This Up Road” (CS 347)
R 8 July *Milk Train* Scenes 4-6
F 9 July FINAL EXAMINATION

COURSE OBSERVATIONS

1. Be present, be on time and be prepared. Summer term moves quickly, so one cannot afford to fall behind. Every summer class meeting is the equivalent of one and third class meetings on a TR cycle or almost two meetings on a MWF cycle. One must be present for the entire 90 minutes of the meeting to be counted present. Students who miss more than two classes may be dropped for non-attendance or find their final grade reduced..
2. Because a summer term moves so quickly, it is difficult to fit in more than two exams and a single paper. Thus, to provide students with as broad a basis for their final grade as possible, quizzes will be administered on a regular basis. Student who arrive late or attempt to leave early will not receive credit for the quiz.
3. On July 6 undergraduates will submit a 5-7 page analysis of *The Mutilated* (*Plays II.583*) and graduate

students a 10-12 page paper on either *Small Craft Warnings* (Plays II. 707) or *Out Cry* (Plays II. 771). The paper will analyze the play in question in the context of Williams's other work.

4. The final grade will be computed as follows: midterm examination (20%), final examination (30%), quiz average (25%) and term paper (25%).

Course Guidelines (rev. 8/09)

1. Spirit of education. Addressing a convention of high school teachers, James Baldwin observed that “the purpose of education is, finally, to create in a person the ability to look at the world for himself, to make his own decisions, . . . to decide for himself whether there is a God in heaven or not. To ask questions of the universe, and then learn to live with those questions, is the way he achieves his own identity.” There are only two ways for a student to approach a class: actively, by working with as much energy and commitment as possible, taking maximum advantage of the opportunities presented by the material and instructor; or passively, by suffering through a class, hoping that a safety net of some kind (sloped grades, last minute extra credit assignments, etc.) will save one from disgrace.

Sustained and intense engagement with the course materials and ideas is the single-most important prerequisite to an A. Decide from the outset of the term either to take the course seriously or to drop it. Keep up with the reading, and come prepared to discuss the ideas that engage or trouble you. Never dismiss an author's ideas out of hand, but come prepared with evidence from the text to support any objections you may have. Take notes, mark significant passages in your textbook for easy reference, and make certain that you understand clearly the major ideas of the course. In a literature class, where the first act of interpretation is to read the text aloud, everyone will be called upon to read aloud in the course of the semester; a student uncomfortable doing so must find a way to negotiate this hurdle.

Take an active role in your education, not a passive one. Passive students not only rarely succeed, but invariably are unhappy in the process.

2. Decorum. Put the success of the course and consideration of your classmates before your own convenience, doing nothing that distracts the instructor or disrupts a colleague's concentration.

* You only have time for what you put first. Do not “multi-task” in the classroom. Turn off all beepers, cell phones, palm pilots, Blackberries, i-pods, watch alarms, etc. *before* entering the room. Should one go off during class, distracting others-- or should a student be observed occupied with such a device-- it will result both in the student being counted as absent and in the forfeiture of all credit on any graded assignment that day. Keep such equipment out of sight-- in a purse, a pocket, or a book bag-- the entire period. Should one be in evidence during a quiz or exam, it will result in an automatic Failure on that assignment.

* Students who work on a laptop in class risk distracting their colleagues. Only those special needs students whom the Office of Disability Services has certified as dependent upon the classroom use of a laptop computer may presume the right to employ one in the classroom and should confirm this with the instructor on the first day of term. Otherwise, the lectures/discussions sponsored by this instructor are such as permit easy note-taking in textbook and notebook.

* Conduct private conversations, read the newspaper, do homework, eat snacks, and catch up on sleep *outside* the classroom. Visit the restroom *before* coming to class; do not burden the class with your daycare problems; and discuss personal matters with the instructor *outside of*, not during, class.

* Disruptive behavior--that is, any behavior which interrupts or impedes another student's learning process--will be penalized as an absence and result in the forfeiture of all credit on any graded assignment that day. *Seriously* or *persistently* disruptive behavior may result in removal from the course.

3. Attendance. If you are able to pass this course without attending class, then you should either test out or transfer to a section that you find more challenging. Attendance is defined as being present and engaged for the full 50 or 75 minutes of the class period. After the third absence on a TTH or MW rotation, or the fourth on a MWF rotation, a student will be dropped for non-attendance or find his/her final grade penalized (5 points per absence on a TTH or MW rotation, 3.3 points per absence on a MWF rotation). Remember that you only have time for the activity that you put first, and by signing up for this course you are agreeing to make this class your first priority during the specified time period. While the instructor is always willing to work with a student in the event of a legitimate emergency such as the death of a family member or a student's sudden hospitalization, you should schedule dental appointments, elective surgery, court appearances, family celebrations, work, and any other non-emergency activity outside of class time. Unless he or she is taken suddenly ill, under no circumstance may a student leave class early. Remember that no other instructor has the right to preempt your attendance in this class.

Disrupting class by entering late is distracting to both the instructor and your fellow students. Be seated at the start of class, with your notebook and your pen poised to begin. Tardiness will be treated as an absence and will prevent the student from receiving credit for any quiz administered that day. Keep a written record of your absences/tardies so that you know your precise status.

The university allows students whose scholarship depends upon their participation in certain activities to miss class for scheduled events. These students *must* present the instructor with a printed schedule of such events the first week of term, and propose in writing how those absences will be made up (for example, by submitting in advance of the absence a 500-word essay on that day's reading assignment, the grade on which may be substituted for a pop quiz that day). To avoid any confusion at the end of the term, such an arrangement must be approved in writing by the instructor at least one week before the first university sanctioned absence.

Multiple sections of heavily subscribed courses render make-up exams difficult to create and administer, so unless a student is hospitalized for an emergency procedure shortly before the exam or has documented evidence of an emergency *accepted in advance of the exam by the instructor as such*, there will be no make-up exams. It is the student's responsibility to communicate with the instructor in advance of, or at the time of, the exam. Any make-up exam approved in advance by the instructor will be administered 3-5 pm on the last day of final exams--that is, during the only time in exam week when no other exam is scheduled. It is the student's responsibility either to resolve potential conflicts well in advance of the exam in the exam's favor or to drop the course; never presume upon the instructor to resolve your conflict for you.

In the event of a personal emergency, Student Services will communicate with a student's instructors on his/ her behalf, thus relieving the student of that burden. Information regarding Student Services is available in the Student Handbook.

4. Legibility. The first requirement of communication is that your message is legible; do everything possible to ensure that your message can be received. Always write in blue or black ink pen, and make corrections neatly and clearly. Illegible penmanship signals that the writer cannot be bothered to make the effort to be understood, which excuses the reader from making an effort in return; negotiate penmanship

problems by double spacing or printing in block letters. Remember that it is the writer's responsibility to ensure that the message is accessible, *not* the reader's.

5. Writing skills. The second requirement of communication is that the message can be understood. Every student at UCA has had eight years of elementary school training, four years of secondary school training, and at least two semesters of freshman composition or their equivalent before taking English 2305 or above. Thus, no student has any excuse not to write standard English grammar, to punctuate properly, and to spell correctly. Any student who begins the term with problems remaining in his/her writing is encouraged to seek from the University Writing Center the tutorial assistance that will remedy these problems before the semester advances so far, and so much ground is lost, that a successful semester's grade becomes impossible.

6. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty. Plagiarism, which is the failure to acknowledge any verbal or ideational indebtedness on a formal writing assignment, will result in a zero being awarded the paper. If a documented paper is required, be certain to keep readily available all research notes, drafts, and/or hard copies of the paper in its various stages of evolution until after a final grade has been assigned and accepted. Avoid even the appearance of possible impropriety during an exam or quiz: leave books and notebooks closed and out of sight; do not let your eyes stray to another's paper; do not leave the room while the exam is in progress; speak only to the instructor or the exam proctor; do not bring a cell phone into an exam room. A grade of zero will be assigned to any quiz or exam the integrity of which has been opened to question in any way; serious cases will be referred to the university authorities for discipline, which may include expulsion from the university.

7. Preparation and timely submission of assignments. Outside work is due at the start of the specified period; late work will be penalized at the instructor's discretion, generally one letter grade per day past deadline. Students who put off work on a paper invariably suffer last minute difficulties with unavailable library materials, temperamental computers, empty printer cartridges, and corrupted files. Complete your research well in advance of your due date, lay in an ample supply of appropriate paper, and make certain that you have a printer cartridge in reserve. Do not wait to consult the instructor on a problem until the day before the paper is due. Master the requisite MLA documentation format. Leave yourself ample time to proofread your hard copy. You and you alone are responsible for the condition and submission of your paper.

8. Communication with instructor. Keep the instructor informed in a timely manner about any problems that you are having; your failure to do so may preclude his being able to help you to your satisfaction. His office hours at the head of the syllabus. (Should you lose your syllabus, you may download another copy from the English department web page.) It is always best to conduct course business in person, but if you cannot come by his office remember that on a busy day he may only check his e-mail <RJFrontain@uca.edu> upon opening his office in the morning, so may not see your message for another 24 hours. When e-mailing the instructor, be certain to include your name and some indication of your business in the subject line; the instructor does not open messages the identity of whose sender or the purpose of which is not immediately apparent. Do not waste the instructor's time requesting electronically or over the phone information available in the syllabus.

9. FERPA. A federal act guaranteeing the privacy of every student specifies that an instructor cannot discuss a grade or any other confidential matter with anyone other than the student in an insecure medium. The university counsel interprets the latter to include telephone and e-mail. Thus, a student wishing to discuss his or her academic standing should seek the instructor out during his office hours or make an appointment to meet at some another mutually convenient time. The instructor cannot discuss a student's

academic standing with a third party (for example, a parent, roommate, or spouse), even with the student present, unless both the student and the third party have signed a FERPA agreement, which can be found on the university's webpage.

10. Return of graded papers. The rate at which papers will be corrected, graded, and returned to students depends upon two factors: 1) the number of students in the class; and 2) the strength of student writing and argument. Thus, the greater the number of students in the class and the less polished their efforts, the greater the length of time required by a serious instructor. In general, the instructor makes every effort to return quizzes within one week and exams or critical papers within two weeks.

11. Grade scale.

- A (90-99) = excellent
- B (80-89) = superior
- C (70-79) = adequate
- D (60-69) = inadequate or barely acceptable
- F (0-59) = unacceptable

Sample unit conversion scale:

- C+/B- = 79
- C+ = 78
- C+/C = 77
- C/C+ = 76
- C = 75
- C/C- = 74
- C-/C = 73
- C- = 72
- C-- = 71
- C-/D+ = 70

Keep all graded quizzes, exams, and papers easily available for consultation until *after* the final grade has been recorded, both so that you may compute your average at any point in the semester, and so that any dispute over the final grade's computation may be efficiently resolved.

12. Withdrawal. It is always wise to speak with the instructor before withdrawing from any class in order to make certain that there is no confusion regarding your status, and to preempt your being dropped for non-attendance in the interim between the student's making a decision and executing it. After the second graded assignment of the term has been returned, a student's withdrawal grade will reflect the student's class average on the documented date of withdrawal. Keep track of your average so that you know exactly where you stand at any point in the semester.

13. Handbook policies. The University encourages students to familiarize themselves with all policies listed in the Student Handbook, but especially the University's Sexual Harassment Policy and all academic policies. In addition, the University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need accommodation under this act due to a disability, contact the Office of Disability Support Services at 450-3135. Remember that the instructor cannot certify you as disabled, and that he is able to make accommodations only *after* hearing formally from DSS. Such accommodations are not retroactive.