

COURSE SPECIFICATION
DOCUMENT

Academic School/Department:	CASS
Programme:	Performance and Theatre Arts
FHEQ Level:	6
Course Title:	American Drama: the Beautiful and the Damned
Course Code:	THR 6205
Course Leader:	Michael Barclay
Student Engagement Hours:	120
Lectures/Presentations:	20
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Field-trips and Screenings:	10
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
Semester:	Fall/Spring
Credits:	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

Course Description:

Restless self doubt entered the American soul in the early 20th Century, the American Dream was beginning to look tarnished. Playwrights such as Eugene O’Neil, Clifford Odets, Arthur Miller, Tennessee Williams and Edward Albee examined the underbelly of the dimming Dream in their dramatic writing. The *American Century* exploded in a devastating apocalypse in Tony Kushner’s epic drama *Angels in America*. This course examines the major players in American drama in the 20th Century.

Prerequisites: ARW 4195 or GEP 4180

Aims and Objectives:

The essential aim of the course is to examine drama in performance. The movement which started with the plays of Eugene O’Neil was to prove revolutionary and resulted in an explosion of new playwrights and plays on Broadway in New York in the 1940s and 50s. The course will examine the contribution of The Group Theatre, the influence of the American Musical, the impact of directors such as Elia Kazan and playwrights such as Tennessee Williams

and Arthur Miller. The course traces key moments and players through the examination of new plays that were created in this period and explores how this impacted on American Dramatists such as Tony Kushner at the end of the 20th Century and beyond.

Programme Outcomes:

6A (iii), 6A (iv), 6B(iii); 6C (i), 6C(iv); 6D(iv)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes is found in the Programme Specification. This is maintained by Registry and located at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the theories and concepts related to modern American drama and theatre and apply these to the key works within their socio- cultural and political contexts.
- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the impact of naturalistic and non-naturalistic approaches of American dramatists and their impact on contemporary practice.
- Demonstrate the ability to use a variety of ideas and information in order to produce detailed analyses of competing perspectives and to provide critical appraisals of the debates within the area drawing on a wide range of secondary sources.
- Demonstrate the ability to locate their own normative views in relation to the performativity of the plays studied and the experience of a live performance of a contemporary American play.

Indicative Content:

- The impact of the early 20th century poetic dramatists on American theatre.
- The failure of the American Dream in 20th century American drama.
- The search for lost perfection in mid 20th century American drama.
- The impact of naturalist and realist directors on American Theatre
- The impact of AIDS on the late 20th century American drama.
- The Off Broadway Stage as promoters of new writing.

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board.

Teaching Methodology:

Students will usually be required to read a play in advance of each week’s class, this may augmented by critical or theoretical reading. The focus on participation in class is supported by allocating specific areas of study; for example, character, themes, historical background to individual students.

Bibliography:

See syllabus for complete reading list

Indicative Texts:

Krasner, David, *American Drama 1945-2000*, Blackwell Publishing, 2006.

Shiach, Don, *American Drama 1900-1990*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Please Note: The core and the reference texts will be reviewed at the time of designing the semester syllabus

Change Log for this CSD:

Major or Minor Change?	Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
Major	Rewrite of Programme Outcomes Learning	LTPC 30/5/14	
Major	Revision of Learning Outcomes	LTPC 30/5/14	
Minor	Revision of Aims & Objectives	LTPC 30/5/14	
Major	Revision of Indicative Content	LTPC 30/5/14	
Minor	Updating of Indicative Texts	LTPC 30/5/14	