CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Reading in-depth of one or more major American writers.

TEXTS:  
- Our Town, Thornton Wilder  
- The Heiress, Ruth and Augustus Goetz  
- Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller  
- Desire Under the Elms, Eugene O'Neill  
- A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams  
- A Soldier's Play, Charles Fuller

THEME: The American Dream

N.B. This plan is flexible. I expect few changes, if any, in course content. It is virtually impossible to plan a course that is interactive down to the minute. This is a close estimate of where we hope to be as the term progresses. If we finish one play early, we should be ready to move on to the next. Questions will be distributed to suggest topics for each play.

Mon. – June 30—Introductions of ourselves, course expectations, filling out of bio cards; begin The Heiress, Ruth and Augustus Goetz.

Tu. – July 1—The Heiress

Wed. – July 2—cushion for The Heiress (if necessary). If not, we will go to the library first instead of the classroom. Mrs. Nora Allred will work with us on locating sources for our papers/projects. This orientation is very important, as many students do not know how to use the library, especially how to look up sources for literary material.

Th. – July 3—Our Town, Thornton Wilder

Mon. – July 7—Our Town

Tu. – July 8—Our Town (cushion). At least six students will be asked to be ready to present their papers on today. You will be asked to sign up earlier. Papers average 750 words, each. With a few exceptions (generally arranged prior to the class), I will accept some papers of 1,000 words, each. If most students write papers of that length, it will be impossible to give instant feedback since most of our time will be eclipsed in responding to papers. You may also do a project. I expect most students to spend seven (7) minutes presenting their papers or projects, verbatim. I need an extra copy at the time of presentation, please. NOTE THE LATTER PART OF THE SYLLABUS FOR MORE DETAILS. WHAT YOU CHOOSE TO WRITE ABOUT (OR CREATE) IS UP TO YOU. THERE ARE GUIDELINES, HOWEVER.

Wed. – July 9—Papers/Projects (10 students)

Th. – July 10—Papers/Projects (10 students)

(next page, please)
SYLLABUS

Mon. – July 14—Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
Tu. – July 15—Death of a Salesman
Wed. – July 16—complete Death of a Salesman. Begin Desire Under the Elms, Eugene O'Neill
Th. – July 17—Desire Under the Elms

Mon. – July 21—conclude Desire Under the Elms. (Six students should be ready to present papers/projects).
Tu. – July 22—10 students papers/projects
Wed. – July 23—10 students papers/projects
Th. – July 24—A Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams

Mon. – July 28—A Streetcar Named Desire
Tu. – July 29—conclude A Streetcar Named Desire. Begin A Soldier’s Play, Charles Fuller
Wed. – July 30—A Soldier’s Play
Th. – July 31—A Soldier’s Play

Mon. – Aug. 4—Wed., August 6—Papers/Projects
Th. – August 7—TBA

GRADING POLICY: Grades are based, entirely, on the three papers/projects. They will be given equal weight and most should be 750 words, double-spaced. Two students have arranged, prior to the class, to write 1,000 words. You are requested to use a size 14 font, under the Americans with Disabilities Act. I sometime give two grades and will, if you insist, average it to one. I give two grades in the best interest of the student. One grade is often given for content, and the other, for writing skills/grammar. I MUST APPROVE ALL PAPER TOPICS!

GRADING CRITERIA: Attached to this syllabus on the last page.

INDEPENDENT STUDY: I regret that I cannot accept any independent studies, due to my total workload.

PERSONAL COUNSELING: Students with serious personal problems are strongly encouraged to seek professional counseling through the university counseling center, which is located just outside of Walker in the white building to the left, when one is on the side of the building opposite the Rozsa Center. If you wish to share why personal problems are impacting on your academic work, I do not wish to dissuade you. It is even helpful for me to understand, but I am an academic counselor, only, and am strongly urged by professional ethics not to enter into personal counseling regarding personal problems.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I expect three cuts, per term, whatever the reason. Exceptional circumstances may warrant more with you or me, but only serious illness, death, court cases should prevent your coming to class. If you have five absences, I will contact the Associate Dean of Students to suggest that you drop. Even with good reason, the relationship between teacher and student is strained. I will also understand job interviews, plant trips, etc.

(next page, please)
You have choices of:

1. a critical paper (only if you know how to write one), supported by three articles found in refereed journals, generally indexed in the MLA Bibliography. Mrs. Allred will demonstrate how to locate articles in MLA. Articles found in JSTOR will require my approval.

2. a performance analysis of an actor's work we study in class. You will need three reviews from quality newspapers or magazines. One source you might use (for plays done in the last twenty years) is Lexis Nexis. Current Biography (where most entries are not in the computer) is an excellent place to begin. Infotrac in another good source.

3. a historical or social analysis of a play, undergirded by theory, history of statistical data from a reputable source.

4. a creative project, with a scholarly narrative, including, but not limited to music, puppetry, multi-media projects, a website, a drawing, a painting, or photography. A good poet may wish to write an original poem, based on the plays studied in this class. You should work with your strongest of your seven intelligences. All creative projects should show research in three scholarly articles. You may also do scene or costume design.

5. You may do one personal paper (out of three assignments), perhaps on Our Town. For example, you may write on your hometown. This is the only paper where second person is acceptable.

I MUST APPROVE ALL TOPICS IN ADVANCE. If you wait until the day before the assignment is due, I will not have time to think. I will always be willing to consider topics any day, a few a day, hopefully. I can also take email and I can see people in my office. You need to come with an idea, however, and you should have looked to see what articles are available, for sure. Articles coming from INTERLIBRARY LOAN in summer are high risk.

You may seek help in The Writing Center, next door to this classroom. You may also seek help from a Reference Librarian. Students doing night work will not have the same level of help, if any, from either The Writing Center or The Library.

N.B. The MLA Bibliography is only good for critical papers, not for either of the other categories/genres of writing suggested.

Thank you for taking my class!
GRADING CRITERIA
Glenda E. Gill

No set of criteria can include all the characteristics of every forceful and convincing piece of writing or speaking. However, the purpose of this form is to help you learn to incorporate certain elements of effective communication in all your papers and speeches.

CONTENT

Central idea: clear; limited; implications of situation carefully considered? adapted to audience? Support: sufficient, relevant? specific? sources attributed as needed?

ORGANIZATION


EXPRESSION

Tone: indicates involvement with subject? (I hold that tone is the single most important element in writing.) Appropriate to purpose and audience? Appropriately maintained? Sentences: clear? concise? varied? patterns suitable for reading and/or listening? Word Choice: accurate? appropriate to audience?

DELIVERY

Conveys involvement with audience and subject: animation? (Is your delivery alive and enthusiastic?) Are gestures appropriate? Do you have too many gestures? Are they overdone? Eye contact? Too much reliance on notes? Are you familiar with the piece you are presenting? Voice: articulation clear? appropriate projection? intensity? rate?

MECHANICS (Writing and speaking)

Punctuation? Spelling? Usage: tense? subject-verb agreement? (This can be very serious.) Do you write in fragments? (This is a serious problem.) Documentations: form correct? We use the MLA Handbook as our guide. It can be purchased. I recommend the Fourth Edition. It is also available on the World Wide Web. It is in the library and in The Writing Center.