N.B. This plan is flexible in the event of dangerous weather or other emergencies.

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

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
1. To expose the students to classics in the American drama canon.
2. To encourage critical thought.
3. To promote interest in performances of the plays studied.
4. To foster thoroughness.
5. To develop improved skills in oral presentations.
6. To enhance writing skills.
7. To offer creative options to the traditional critical paper.
8. To develop an appreciation for the American theatre through a study of its playwrights.
9. To learn basic research skills in library use.

TEXTS:
- Desire Under the Elms, Eugene O'Neill
- A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry
- Streetcar Named Desire, Tennessee Williams
- Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
- The Heiress, Ruth and Augustus Goetz

Tu. - Jan. 13--Introducing of ourselves, explaining course expectations, filling out of biographical index cards, starting The Heiress.
Th. - Jan. 15--The Heiress
Tu. - Jan. 20--The Heiress
Th. - Jan. 22--A Streetcar Named Desire, Williams
Tu. - Jan. 27--Streetcar for twenty minutes. At 11:30, please join us in Room G044, Douglass Houghton Hall, for library orientation. This is very important.
Th. - Jan. 29--Streetcar
Tu. - Feb. 3--conclude Streetcar. Students are asked to give 3 minute reports on one article you have read. These can be on an actor who played in The Heiress or Streetcar. Or, you may talk about a work of literary criticism or critical theory related to either play. Still, you may want to tell us about the playwright of either drama.
Th. - Feb. 5--Reports continue. Final discussion of papers/creative projects. Explanation of documentation according to the MLA Handbook. Please make a decision about your topic before today.
Tu. - Feb. 10--FIRST PAPERS/CREATIVE PROJECTS WITH WRITTEN JUSTIFICATION DUE. (eight students, per day, if current enrollment holds) Papers must be 750 words, minimum, and 1,000 words, maximum. I do respectfully request a size 14 font, under the ADA. Papers must also be double-spaced and presented verbatim, orally. Please see the end of this syllabus for more details about the nature of papers/projects.

Th. - Feb. 12--FIRST PAPERS/CREATIVE PROJECTS (eight more students).

Tu. - Feb. 17--Desire Under the Elms, Eugene O'Neill

Tu. - Feb. 19--Desire

Tu. - Feb. 24--Desire concluded. Begin 3 minute reports on actors in stage and screen productions of Desire Under the Elms. If you prefer, you may also give a report on directors who have staged/filmed the play. Reports on O'Neill are also welcome. A report on a critical paper you read which is listed in the MLA Bibliography is also a possibility.

Th. - Feb. 26--Reports continue. Begin choosing topics for second paper.

Monday, March 1 through Friday, March 5--SPRING BREAK

Tu. - Mar. 9--Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller

Th. - Mar. 11--Death of a Salesman

Tu. - Mar. 16--Death of a Salesman

Th. - Mar. 18--Three minute reports on actors, directors or literary criticism/critical theory related to Death of a Salesman. (There are no grades for reports, but they are helpful in preparing you for your papers which do count.) They also enrich the discussion/learning experience. I also welcome reports on Arthur Miller, who, as of January 2, 2004, is still alive.

Tu. - Mar. 23--Discussion of papers/creative projects. Reminder about how to handle documentation done according to the MLA Handbook.

Th. - Mar. 25--SECOND PAPERS/PROJECTS WITH WRITTEN JUSTIFICATION on either Death of a Salesman or Desire Under the Elms. (If you prefer, you may also give a report on directors.)

Tu. - Mar. 30--SECOND PAPERS/CREATIVE PROJECTS (eight or more students)

Th. - Apr. 1--A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry

Tu. - Apr. 6--A Raisin in the Sun

Th. - Apr. 8--A Raisin in the Sun

Friday, Apr. 9--GOOD FRIDAY

Sunday, Apr. 11--EASTER SUNDAY

Tu. - Apr. 13--Actors, directors, production history or literary criticism/critical theory related to A Raisin in the Sun. (3 minute reports)

Tu., Apr. 15-Tu., Apr. 20--Student conferences in my office in Walker 327. The purpose of using these two days of class is to give most students the opportunity, if needed, to present a one-page outline of the next paper, to clarify your creative project or to assist you with locating sources. You should not come as an empty fountain. Please have some ideas written down.
Th. - Apr. 22--FINAL PAPERS/CREATIVE PROJECTS ON A Raisin in the Sun (eight students, if current enrollment holds)

Tu. - Apr. 27--FINAL PAPERS/PROJECTS

Th. - Apr. 29--TBA (We almost always need a cushion for the day or two where weather will prevent most people from coming, and there will almost certainly be some people with personal crises.)

Monday, May 3--Friday, May 7--FINALS WEEK (There are no finals in this class.)

CAVEAT: A large number of students seem to have difficulty meeting deadlines. Barring a major emergency, I will not give automatic extensions for power outages, computer crashes, and failure to plan ahead. In responding to work as I do, I count on you to be ready on the day you are expected to present. Dangerous weather is also a reason that is good for your not coming. I wish to be reasonable, but if you just cannot meet deadlines, it throws my entire class off balance. This syllabus is timed; it is not possible to constantly make adjustments in it.

GRADING POLICY: I will weigh the three major papers/projects equally. In the case of borderline students, I will consider the quality of a report, but a report is not the same as an analysis or a project in which you have invested considerable effort.

GRADING CRITERIA: Please see the attached page.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I adhere to the written policy on attendance which Michigan Tech has. It says that there can be no absences, but it also has excused absences for many reasons. I expect no more than three cuts a term, on average, for illness, death, plant trips, job interviews, etc. Clearly, one or two of you may have more and I will be reasonable. Excessive absences strain the relationship between you and me and you miss valuable material that causes misunderstandings and frustration.

NATURE OF PAPERS/CREATIVE PROJECTS: You have choices of:

1. a critical paper, supported by two articles found in refereed journals, generally indexed in the MLA Bibliography.
2. a performance analysis of an actor's work we study in class. You will need two reviews from quality newspapers or magazines. An excellent place to begin is Current Biography. Most years are NOT found on line (for issues of Current Biography) and you must go to the library, but it is worth the trip.
3. a historical or social analysis of a play, informed by two sources I approve.
4. a creative project, with a scholarly narrative, including, but not limited to, music, puppetry, a website, a drawing, a painting, photography, films that are original, etc. All creative projects must show research in two scholarly articles. You may also do costume or scene design.

I MUST APPROVE ALL TOPICS AT LEAST TWO DAYS IN ADVANCE, HOPEFULLY MUCH SOONER!!
Bibliography


I strongly recommend eOneill.com as an excellent website for the study of Eugene O'Neill. There are some errors, but very few. In the event of spelling errors, the text for this class serves as the last word.

The MLA Bibliography which is online has long lists of refereed articles for each of the five works we are studying.

For performance analysis, I strongly recommend Lexis Nexis, either the newspaper section or the magazines. Current Biography is always an excellent place to begin, but most entries are not online, unlike Lexis Nexis.

Nota bene (Note well): The Heiress is a stage/screen adaptation by Ruth and Augustus Goetz of Henry James's novel, Washington Square. Especially for critical papers, Washington Square nets more hits on the MLA Bibliography than The Heiress. For stage/screen productions, The Heiress does appear in various searches on computer, including Infotrac, Lexis Nexis and even garden variety searches. I normally do not recommend the latter, but The Heiress, for all of the compelling and close to perfect acting of the film, is elusive in a search.
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

Beginning engages interest? indicated purpose? Development: thoughtful analysis apparent?
Purpose and relationship of sections clear? paragraphs coherently structured?
Ending: significance maintained? Is there a sense of closure?

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.