

UC 11848 12F ✓

CBM003 ADD/CHANGE FORM

APPROVED MAR 27 2013

Undergraduate Council  
 New Course  Course Change 2014  
 Core Category: WID Effective Fall 2013

or  
 Graduate/Professional Studies Council  
 New Course  Course Change  
 Effective Fall 2013

1. Department: THEA College: CLASS
2. Faculty Contact Person: Robert Shimko Telephone: 832-851-7180 Email: rshimko@uh.edu
3. Course Information on New/Revised course:
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
THEA / 2344 / AMERICAN DRAMA
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Short Course Title (30 characters max.)  
THEA / 2344 / AMERICAN DRAMA
  - SCH: 3.00 Level: SO CIP Code: 50.0505.0003 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0
4. Justification for adding/changing course: To meet core curriculum requirements
5. Was the proposed/revised course previously offered as a special topics course?  Yes  No  
 If Yes, please complete:
  - Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title:  
\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_
  - Course ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date (currently active row): \_\_\_\_\_
6. Authorized Degree Program(s): BFA IN THEATRE
  - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in the College/Department?  Yes  No
  - Does this course affect major/minor requirements in other Colleges/Departments?  Yes  No
  - Can the course be repeated for credit?  Yes  No (if yes, include in course description)
7. Grade Option: Letter (A, B, C ...) Instruction Type: lecture ONLY (Note: Lect/Lab info. must match item 3, above.)
8. If this form involves a change to an existing course, please obtain the following information from the course inventory: Instructional Area / Course Number / Long Course Title  
THEA / 2344 / AMERICAN DRAMA
  - Course ID: 46093 Effective Date (currently active row): 1182010
9. Proposed Catalog Description: (If there are no prerequisites, type in "none".)  
 Cr: 3. (3-0). Prerequisites: Consent on instructor Description (30 words max.): Survey of drama in the United States from the seventeenth century to the present, representing a broad variety of periods, styles, and perspectives.
10. Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Print/Type Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## REQUEST FOR COURSES IN THE CORE CURRICULUM

Originating Department or College: School of Theatre & Dance, CLASS

Person Making Request: Robert Shimko

Telephone: 3-1243

Email: rshimko@uh.edu

Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 09-01-12

Course Number and Title: THEA 2344

Please attach in separate documents:

Completed CBM003 Add/Change Form with Catalog Description

Syllabus

List the student learning outcomes for the course (Statements of what students will know and be able to do as a result of taking this course. See appended hints for constructing these statements):

Students will become conversant with the major periods, movements, figures, debates, and events in the history of American theatre. Students will grapple with the issue of canonicity in theatre: how and why certain dramatic works are selected to stand out among others as especially worthy of attention and production in today's multicultural society. Students will understand that writing is contextual and develop skills in research, textual analysis, and persuasive writing specific to theatre. Students will be able to construct a coherent, non-obvious thesis statement for a critical essay; that essay will demonstrate a clear understanding of the conventions, standards, and methods of scholarly writing within the discipline of theatre studies. Students will be able to make a clearly written, thoroughly researched, and correctly documented argument about the theatrical qualities and cultural significance of a selected play.

Component Area for which the course is being proposed (check one):

Communication

American History

Mathematics

Government/Political

Science

Language, Philosophy, & Culture

Social & Behavioral Science

Creative Arts

WID Component Area Option

Life & Physical Sciences

Competency areas addressed by the course (refer to appended chart for competencies that are required and optional in each component area):

Critical Thinking

Communication Skills

Empirical & Quantitative Skills

Teamwork

Social Responsibility

Personal Responsibility

Because we will be assessing student learning outcomes across multiple core courses, assessments assigned in your course must include assessments of the core competencies. For each competency checked above, indicated the specific course assignment(s) which, when completed by students, will provide evidence of the competency. Provide detailed information, such as copies of the paper or project assignment, copies of individual test items, etc. A single assignment may be used to provide data for multiple competencies.

#### Critical Thinking:

The major written assignment in this course is a 12-15 page, researched, critical introduction to an American play of the student's choice (students are expected to read multiple extracurricular plays in consideration for this project). This means that students create a critical frame for readers to understand multiple aspects of their chosen play: its historical context, the author's life and other works, its dramatic structure, its production history, its theatrical qualities, and its cultural significance. The ultimate aim of the paper is to argue for the inclusion of the student's chosen play in the canon of American drama. The idea of canonicity (in our usage, the way certain works are deemed standard or essential to a working knowledge of American drama) deeply informs this course. We examine historical and current debates surrounding the idea of canonicity itself. The final paper allows students to make a well-thought-out contribution to this discourse.

#### Communication Skills:

In the same 12-15 page paper listed above, students will demonstrate their ability to communicate effectively in writing. In addition, as part of the in-class revision process, students will verbally communicate the argument of their paper first to a small group of peers and then to the class as a whole.

#### Empirical & Quantitative Skills:

Click here to enter text.

#### Teamwork:

Students will self-conduct (with instructor oversight) peer review sessions in which they read and offer constructive feedback on rough drafts of one another's research papers.

#### Social Responsibility:

The major research paper described above requires each student to construct a specific, persuasive, and personal argument for the inclusion of a chosen play in the canon of American drama. This assignment requires students to consider and then articulate the social relevance of their chosen play (as it relates to the representation of issues including race, class, gender, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, disability, etc.) as a major criteria of the assignment. This means thinking about, discussing, and writing

about the social ramifications of privileging certain works of art (and by extension, certain cultural perspectives) over others that go neglected.

Personal Responsibility:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Will the syllabus vary across multiple section of the course?  Yes  No

If yes, list the assignments that will be constant across sections:

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Inclusion in the core is contingent upon the course being offered and taught at least once every other academic year. Courses will be reviewed for renewal every 5 years.

The department understands that instructors will be expected to provide student work and to participate in university-wide assessments of student work. This could include, but may not be limited to, designing instruments such as rubrics, and scoring work by students in this or other courses. In addition, instructors of core courses may be asked to include brief assessment activities in their course.

Dept. Signature: *for Dr. Steven Walla* 

**THEA 2344: American Drama**  
**T/TH 1:00-2:30 pm Room D3 E220**

Instructor: Dr. Robert Shimko

E-mail: rshimko@uh.edu

Office: 133K Wortham

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2:30-3:30pm or by appointment.

**Course Description**

This course is a survey of drama in the United States from the eighteenth century to the present. Although this is an enormous topic, the plays we will read have been selected to represent a broad variety of periods, styles, and perspectives.

**Learning Outcomes**

I've designed this course with the following goals in mind:

- You will become conversant with many of the major periods, movements, figures, debates, and events in the history of American theatre.
- You will grapple with the issue of canonicity in theatre: how and why certain works are selected to stand out among others as especially worthy of attention and production.
- For this Writing in the Disciplines course, the writing assignments will teach students to use the shared writing conventions, practices and methods of citation for the field of theatre criticism.
- You will understand that writing is contextual and develop skills in research, textual analysis, and persuasive writing specific to theatre.
- You will be able to construct a coherent, non-obvious thesis statement for a critical essay; that essay will demonstrate your understanding of the conventions, standards, and methods of scholarly writing within the discipline of theatre studies.
- You will be able to make a clearly written, thoroughly researched, and correctly documented argument about the theatrical qualities and cultural significance of a selected play.

**Required Texts (for purchase)**

Jeffrey H. Richards, ed., *Early American Drama*

Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal*

Eugene O'Neil, *A Moon for the Misbegotten*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park*

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Maria Irene Fornes, *Fefu and Her Friends*

Luis Valdez, *Zoot Suit*

Sam Shepard, *Buried Child*

José Rivera, *Marisol*  
Suzan-Lori Parks, *Topdog/Underdog*  
Tracy Letts, *August: Osage County*

## Assignments and Grading

### Quizzes

Starting in week two, nearly every one of our class meetings will be devoted to the discussion of a particular play. At the beginning of each of these class periods, you will be given a quiz made up of **four short-answer essay questions** about the play of the day. Each individual quiz is worth **two points**. Obviously, these quizzes are meant to ensure that you are keeping up with the reading, but they are also intended to help foster lively classroom discussions by calling attention to important aspects of the plays.

### Research Paper

Your major written assignment in this course will be to research and write a comprehensive critical introduction to an American play of your choice. This means that you will create a critical frame for readers to understand multiple aspects of the play: its historical context, its author's life and other works, its dramatic structure, its production history, its theatrical qualities, and its cultural significance. The ultimate aim of your paper will be to argue for the inclusion of your chosen play in the canon of American drama. The idea of canonicity (in our usage, the way certain works are deemed standard or essential to a working knowledge of American drama) will deeply inform this course. We will examine historical and current debates surrounding the idea of canonicity itself. The final paper will allow you to make a well-thought-out contribution to this discourse.

The paper should run **12-15 double-spaced pages** (12-point Times New Roman font). You should have the play you wish to write about selected by **March 29**. The class period on **March 29** will be devoted to a workshop on framing your argument and organizing the structure of your paper. A first draft of your paper will be due **in class** on **April 26**. [Turning in the first draft on time is worth **seven points**. If you do not show up to class on **April 26** with a hard copy of your first draft, you will lose the seven points.] On **April 26**, we will do a peer-review exercise, and then each of you will be given class time to present an abbreviated version of your argument about why your chosen play merits canonical status today. This is a chance to demonstrate your research and critical thinking. The final draft of your paper is due in my mailbox by noon on **May 3**.

### Final Grade Breakdown:

Play Quizzes (24 @ 2 pts. apiece)	48
On-time submission of First Draft	7
Final Draft of Research Paper	50
Total	105

### Final Grading Scale:

A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69

B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	0-59

### **GPA Protocol**

To satisfy prerequisite and degree requirements, students must earn a minimum C (2.00) grade in each course attempted in theatre and dance (both required and elective) at the University of Houston School of Theatre & Dance. Students who receive a grade of C- or below in a School of Theatre & Dance major course must retake the course and complete it with a minimum of a C grade.

### **Course Policies**

**Class Environment:** In class, I expect you to be attentive and respectful toward your classmates. Such respect involves: arriving on time to class, silencing cell phones, refraining from texting or otherwise playing with your phone, keeping outside reading material stored away, and generally staying alert.

**Absence and Lateness:** This course follows the UH School of Theatre & Dance policy regarding absence and lateness.

- Three absences = one full letter grade deduction (i.e. a "B" becomes a "C").
- Four absences = two full letters grade deduction.
- Five absences = automatic "F" grade for the course.

Entering class after the roll has been called constitutes lateness. Lateness for two classes = one absence.

### **Course Outline**

#### **Week 1 INTRODUCTIONS**

Jan. 17 COURSE INTRODUCTION

Jan. 19 LECTURE: The Beginnings of American Drama

#### **Week 2**

Jan 24 *THE CONTRAST* by Royall Tyler

Jan. 26 *FASHION* by Anna Cora Mowatt

#### **Week 3**

Jan. 31 *UNCLE TOM'S CABIN* by George Aiken

Feb. 2 *MACHINAL* by Sophie Treadwell

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Feb. 28 *A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE* by Tennessee Williams  
Mar. 1 *BOBRAUSCHENBERGAMERICA* by Charles Mee

**Week 8**

Mar. 6 *DEATH OF A SALESMAN* by Arthur Miller  
Mar. 8 *WHO'S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?* by Edward Albee

**\*\*SPRING BREAK\*\***

**Week 9**

Mar. 20 *FEFU AND HER FRIENDS* by Maria Irene Fornés  
Mar. 22 *ZOOT SUIT* by Luis Valdez

**Week 11**

Mar. 27 *BURIED CHILD* by Sam Shepard  
Mar. 29 WORKSHOP FINAL PAPERS

**Week 12**

Apr. 3 *M. BUTTERFLY* by David Henry Hwang  
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**Week 15**

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Apr. 26 DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH PAPERS

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May 3 (Thursday) FINAL PAPERS DUE—NO LATER THAN 12:00 p.m.



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  - SCH: 3.00 Level: SO CIP Code: 50.0505.0003 Lect Hrs: 3 Lab Hrs: 0

RECEIVED OCT 12 2012

4. Justification for adding/changing

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- Does this course affect minor requirements?
- Can the course be repeated?

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10. Dean's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: 9/8/12

Print/Type Name: Sarah Fishman

*Teamwork  
assessment  
item needed  
mailed 2.04.2013*

es  No

Yes  No  
?  Yes  No  
(course description)

: Lect/Lab info. must

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