

## **COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

**NOTE:** ANY CHANGES TO A CSD MUST GO THROUGH ALL OF THE RELEVANT APPROVAL PROCESSES, INCLUDING LTPC.

<b>Academic School/ Department:</b>	Communications, Arts & Social Sciences
<b>Programme:</b>	Performance and Theatre Arts
<b>FHEQ Level:</b>	6
<b>Course Title:</b>	American Drama: The Beautiful and The Damned
<b>Course Code:</b>	THR 6250
<b>Course Leader:</b>	<b>Dr. M. Barclay</b>
<b>Student Engagement Hours:</b>	120
Seminar / Tutorials:	15
Screenings:	5
Field-trips:	5
Lectures / Presentations:	20
Independent / Guided Learning:	75
<b>Semester:</b>	<b>Fall and/or Spring</b>
<b>Credits:</b>	12 UK CATS credits 6 ECTS credits 3 US credits

### **Course Description:**

Restless self doubt entered the American soul in the early 20<sup>th</sup> 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 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

**Prerequisite:** ARW 4195

### **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, playwrights such as Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller and will trace key moments and players through the examination of

new plays that were created in this period and how this impacted on American Dramatists such as Tony Kushner at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and beyond.

### **Programme Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, the students will have achieved the following programme outcomes.

A1, A3, A4, A5, A6, A7, A8, A9, A11, B1, B2, B3, B6, C1, C2, C3, C9, D1, D8.

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification. This is located at the Departmental page of the portal.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

- Students should be able to demonstrate a systematic understanding of the knowledge base relating to the theories and concepts of Modern American Drama and Theatre and be able to apply these to key works of Modern American dramatists, showing an awareness of different ideas, contexts and frameworks characteristic of each these writers and their plays and to apply these critically to their analysis of plays they are studying.
- Students should be able to demonstrate an ability to identify, analyze and communicate the aims and intentions of naturalistic and non-naturalistic American dramatists, using outside sources to expand and support critical statements in written work.
- Students should be able to demonstrate an ability to articulate ideas of character and representation through the structures of key works in drama from this period, demonstrating that they have an understanding of how a character is shaped by the dramatist and how characters impact on each other and the how the audience perceives *character* when a play is performed. These are specific to Modern American plays.
- Students should demonstrate a confidence and flexibility when utilising criticism from secondary sources with personal assessments of key works from this period, showing a basic ability to cite secondary sources and to manipulate these to support and expand a critical argument, with specific reference to American plays.
- Students should be able to apply their acquired knowledge to analyze texts in performance, taking structure, character, and directorial interpretation into account, demonstrating an understanding of the performativity of each play, and the element of audience participation as part of the overall experience of a live performance of a Modern American play.

### **Indicative Content:**

- The impact of the plays by Eugene O'Neil.
- The impact of the plays of Arthur Miller on American society.
- The failure of the American Dream, Clifford Odets.
- The search for lost perfection in the plays of Tennessee Williams.
- The impact of directors such as Elia Kazan on American Theatre.

- Edward Albee and American Theatre in the 1960s.
- The impact of AIDS on the plays of Tony Kushner.
- Terence McNally and backlash against his play *Corpus Christ*.
- The Off Broadway Stage as promoters of new writing.

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Standard Assessment Norms approved by Academic Council on 28 June 2012.

**Teaching Methodology:**

Students will usually be required to read a play in advance of each week's class, this may be 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:**

Plays by Eugene O'Neil

Plays by Clifford Odets

Plays by Arthur Miller

Plays by Tennessee Williams

Plays by Edward Albee

Plays by Terence McNally

Plays by Tony Kushner

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

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Change Log for this CSD:

Major or Minor Change?	Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or LTPC)	Change Actioned by Academic Registry
