

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3490G (001)
American Drama: Home Sweet Home
Winter 2018**Dr. Alyssa MacLean**Email: alyssa.maclean@uwo.ca

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Office: Arts and Humanities 1G33

Office Hours: Wed 11-12:30, Thurs 1:30-3:00,

and by appointment

Class Location: P&AB 150**Class Time:** Tuesdays 11:30 am -12:30 pm,

Thursdays 11:30 am-1:30 pm

Antirequisite(s): English 2460F/G.

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both of English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description:

This course will focus on the idea of home in the United States. The living room is perhaps the most ubiquitous of settings in American drama, but it is a complex space, a battleground upon which larger conflicts in American culture are staged. Derived from the eighteenth-century parlor (a room that was named after the French word *parler*), the living room's purpose in the twentieth century was to receive guests and support the moral growth of the family by encouraging discussion and self-improvement. The living room's emergence as the center of the middle-class household in the nineteenth century happened at the same time that theatre became a popular form of middle-class entertainment in the United States.

Over the course of the semester, we will read plays, criticism, and theoretical readings that will help us consider such questions as: what conflicts are staged in the home in different periods of American history? How does the home define the concepts of work and leisure, male and female, old and new, poor and rich, foreign and domestic, public and private, comfort and danger? How are larger national or social ideologies (for example, the American dream or the concept of race) articulated through the home? How is the nation a home? Focusing on the home will also allow us to consider the intersection of different genres and periods of American theatre, including the realist play (*Trifles*), the family drama (such as *A Raisin in the Sun*), the black comedy (*Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*), and the musical (*Hamilton: The Revolution*).

Objectives:

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

- Identify key dramatic traditions and texts in the US noting their key literary characteristics, their historical period, their intellectual tradition, and their relation to each other
- Insightfully and persuasively analyze dramatic texts, in both oral and written contexts, using appropriate textual evidence, literary and dramatic terms, scholarly criticism, theoretical concepts, historical contexts, and insights from class discussions
- Collaborate with peers to produce short performances of the plays in the syllabus; communicate artistic choices and reflections to the class
- Appreciate different scholarly approaches to the study of US drama, including readings by scholars in New Historicism, New Criticism, gender studies, and race studies
- Conduct specialized research using library databases
- Read, summarize and cite secondary sources responsibly; use interpretations of scholarly sources to generate new readings of plays
- Respond constructively to peer review, situate ideas within the context of an existing critical discussion, and develop an original, incisive, and unified argument in a longer research paper

Required Course Materials:

Susan Glaspell *Trifles* (1916). ISBN 978-1502417947

Thornton Wilder *Our Town: A Play in Three Acts* (1938). ISBN 978-0060512637

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). ISBN 978-0811216029

Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (1949). ISBN 978-0140481341

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959). ISBN 978-0679755333

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (1962). ISBN 978-0451158710

Christopher Durang, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* (2010). ISBN 978-0802122384

Houston, *Tea* (1983). ISBN 978-0822221036

Bruce Norris, *Clybourne Park* (2010). ISBN 978-0865478688

Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: The Revolution* (2016). ISBN 978-1455539741. Please also download the album and listen to the musical—we will be using both in class.

On reserve at the Film Library in the basement of AHB:

Trifles (Dir. Moran, 1976)

Our Town (Dir. Sam Wood, 1940)

Our Town (Dir. James Naughton, 2003)

A Streetcar Named Desire (Dir. Elia Kazan, 1951)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Dir. Mike Nichols, 1966)

Methods of Evaluation:

The final mark for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Class participation and attendance	5%
Company assignment #1	10%
Company assignment #2	10%
Short essay (4-5 pages)	15%
Research paper (7-8 pages)	25%
Final exam (cumulative)	35%

A student must receive a passing mark for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing mark for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam marks average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default mark of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Contact information:

I will normally respond to emails within 48 hours. I'm happy to discuss your ideas anytime during office hours; if you can't come to campus, I'm also available by phone during that timeframe (my office number is at the top of the syllabus). If you can't attend my regular office hours please contact me and we can set up an appointment.

Timetable (tentative):

You are expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to the first class in which a work is being discussed. Readings are subject to change. Please bring hard copies of assigned readings to class.

Please note that readings may be modified with consent of the class, but they will not vary significantly in page length if they are changed.

Tues Jan 9:	Introductions. Glaspell, <i>Trifles</i>
Thurs Jan 11:	Glaspell, <i>Trifles</i> . Class will only be from 11:30-12:30 today. Download the following article on JSTOR: Ben-Zvi, Linda. "'Murder, She Wrote': The Genesis of Susan Glaspell's 'Trifles.'" <i>Theatre Journal</i> 44.2 (1992): 141-162.

Tues Jan 16:	<i>Trifles</i> Wilder, <i>Our Town</i>
Thurs Jan 18:	Wilder, <i>Our Town</i> Download this essay on the MLA database: Klaver, Elizabeth. "The Cemetery as Public Space: <i>Spoon River Anthology</i> and Act 3 of <i>Our Town</i> ." <i>Genre</i> 48.1 (2015): 99-118.
Tues Jan 23:	<i>Our Town</i> Begin Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Thurs Jan 25:	Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> Download the following article on OWL: Richard Parker, "America the Beautiful," from <i>The Myth of the Middle Class</i>
Tues Jan 30:	Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i>
Thurs Feb 1:	Company 1 presents on <i>Our Town</i> or <i>Trifles</i> Williams, <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
Tues Feb 6:	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i>
Thurs Feb 8:	Company 2 presents on <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> or <i>Death of a Salesman</i> Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> Critical reading TBA
Tues Feb 13:	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> SHORT ESSAY DUE
Thurs. Feb 15:	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> <i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i>
Mandatory class visit to <i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i> at the Palace Theatre on Thursday Feb. 15 at 8 pm; tickets are 15\$ plus tax, payable to Prof. MacLean. If you can't see this production on this day you must arrange to go to an alternate performance on another night. <i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i> is showing Feb 15-25.	
Tues Feb 20:	No class: reading week
Thurs Feb 22:	No class: reading week
Tues Feb 27:	<i>Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike</i> Albee, <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> (please finish the play. Warning: it's long)
Thurs Mar 1:	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> Betty Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," from <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> : https://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/FeminineMystique.pdf
Tues Mar 6:	<i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> Another reading TBA
Thurs Mar 8:	Company 1 presents on <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?</i> or <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> Discussion about the research paper
Tues Mar 13:	Houston, <i>Tea</i>
Thurs Mar 15:	Houston, <i>Tea</i> Company 2 presents on <i>Tea</i> or <i>Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf</i> (or <i>Clybourne Park</i> or <i>Hamilton</i>, if you're willing to present on Apr. 5)
Tues Mar 20:	Bruce Norris, <i>Clybourne Park</i>
Thurs Mar 22:	<i>Clybourne Park</i>

Tues Mar 27:	Miranda, <i>Hamilton</i> . Please listen to the musical first (available on iTunes). Then, read the play and as many of the footnotes and extra materials that you can.
Thurs Mar 29:	<p>Research paper draft exchange</p> <p><i>Hamilton</i> con't</p> <p>Read these short opinion pieces:</p> <p>Ahmir Questlove Thompson, "Questlove on 'Hamilton' and Hip-Hop: It Takes One," <i>Rolling Stone</i>, September 28, 2015. https://www.rollingstone.com/culture/news/questlove-on-hamilton-and-hip-hop-it-takes-one-20150928#ixzz42KHsvmf2</p> <p>Lyra D. Monteiro, "Race-Conscious Casting and the Erasure of the Black Past in Lin-Manuel Miranda's <i>Hamilton</i>", in <i>The Public Historian</i> 38.1 (February 2016), pp. 89-98. Find using library catalogue so that you can see the entire pdf.</p> <p>James McMaster, "Why Hamilton is Not The Revolution You Think It Is," available through Howlround: http://howlround.com/why-hamilton-is-not-the-revolution-you-think-it-is</p>
Tues Apr 3:	<p><i>Hamilton</i></p> <p>RESEARCH PAPER DUE</p> <p>Read excerpts from the <i>Federalist Papers</i> posted on OWL</p>
Thurs Apr 5:	<i>Hamilton</i>
Tues Apr. 10:	Review
Apr 12-30	Exam period; exam date TBA

Overview of Course Assignments

Attendance:

Attendance is expected in this class, and if you want to do well, you need to come to class regularly. If there is a reason why you are not attending class, please come and speak to me about it. The process for requesting academic accommodation on medical or other grounds is described in the "Accommodations" section near the end of this syllabus.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays as soon as possible, and no later than one week before a test or two weeks before a major exam. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through departmental, Deans' and Faculty advising Offices.

Participation:

This class depends upon regular and active participation from all students: this involves reading the course texts carefully before class, **bringing texts to class**, preparing questions for class discussion, listening actively, and responding thoughtfully to other students. You must bring your assigned text to class (please print out documents distributed via OWL).

In this class we will often be discussing difficult or sensitive topics. Good decorum and civil behavior is expected from all students at all times. Please be collegial and understanding towards your peers.

Your participation mark is designed to measure your attendance, participation, and evidence of consistent preparation and active learning. Unannounced in-class participation assignments or OWL discussions may be given over the course of the year. They will vary in format but will require brief responses to questions about the assigned reading. Failure to come to class, and failure to come to class prepared enough to ask a question or participate in a discussion, will negatively affect your participation grade.

Essays:

There are 2 essays due for this class: one short essay (4-5 pages) and a final research paper (7-8 pages) which will require a draft exchange. Papers in English should be written in MLA format. Further details of these papers will be announced later in the course. I encourage you to discuss your papers with me in office hours as you work on them. On the day the essay is due, please submit a hard copy of your essay in class and upload a copy of it to Turnitin.com via OWL.

Late policy:

The penalty for late papers will be 2% per day. Extensions may be granted in the case of a documented personal or medical emergency; I do not give extensions for computer/email or printer problems.

If you are submitting a paper late, you must upload it to OWL and put an identical copy in the essay drop box outside the English department in AHB 2G02. **Both copies must arrive on the same day.** Late penalties will be applied for each day of the week, including weekends and holidays. If a paper is submitted over the weekend it will count as a Sunday submission.

Company Performances:

This assignment is modelled after ones designed by Kim Solga in Theatre Studies. In some classes, we will forgo the formalities of a traditional university lecture and get down to the business of performance. I will be dividing the class into groups with roughly eight students each. In select weeks you, the students, will run an hour of class.

Our performance hour will begin with a scene study presentation by the group designated, for that week, as THE COMPANY. Each Company will be required to do two presentations over the course of the term. More details on this assignment will be provided in a handout in the first days of class.

Exams:

This course will have a final exam. Students must pass both term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term mark) automatically fail the course.

MORE COURSE POLICIES:

Electronics in the classroom:

Please be respectful by turning off your cellphone (unless you're responsible for a dependent or you're dealing with a family emergency; if this is so, alert me before class begins). The use of laptops and other electronics in class is forbidden unless these devices are being used to engage with class material. If you want to use a computer to take notes, please request an appointment to discuss the matter with me. Any use of electronics for non-course-related purposes will result in one warning and, should a second incidence arise, removal from the course.

Intellectual property:

The sale or distribution of class notes, handouts, slides, rubrics, and other material to individuals or groups who are not registered in the class (including commercial websites) is prohibited.

Accommodations:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at

http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

For further types of academic accommodation including accommodation for students with disabilities, students in reserve forces, students observing religious holidays, please see

<http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2015/pg111.html>. If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see the SSD to arrange for a formal request for accommodation and inform me as soon as possible. We can then discuss the best solution.

Academic Offences:

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

If you need help:

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Other services:

Wellness Centre: www.wec.uwo.ca

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Office of the Ombudsperson: www.westernu.ca/ombuds