

LIT3043 sec. 9117 Black Drama T 5-6 (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM) LIT 0127, R 6 (12:50 - 1:40 PM) TUR 2303  
Office HOURS 4318 TUR, Tuesday 1:55 – 2:45 PM and Thursday 1:55-2:45 PM by appointment only  
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What makes dramas written by Black American playwrights and theater collectives different from those written and or performed by such dramatists and collectives as Arthur Miller, Sam Shepard, Richard Foreman, Laurie Anderson, Judith Malina and Julian Beck's Living Theatre and Peter Brook's International Centre of Theater Research? Using recent theoretical and political debates on performance and the construction of identity, the class will trace the historical trajectory of African American theater from the 1950s to the present.

The course covers representative works from the Theater of the Black Experience, the Black Arts Movement, the Free Southern Theatre, and the African American avant-garde and experimental stage. Assigned readings may include works by Amiri Baraka, Ed Bullins, P. J. Gibson, Lorraine Hansberry, Langston Hughes, Adrienne Kennedy, Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Stew, August Wilson, Tracey Scott Wilson, George C. Wolfe, and such performance artists as Fred Holland, Robbie McCauley, John O'Neal, Whoppi Goldberg, and Anna Deavere Smith.

In writing the analytical group-paper or in the group-dramatic performance, student-groups must create a gumbo-like analysis/performance of the lived, imagined, and performed elements found in the assigned dramas.

### **I. REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Lorraine Hansberry A Raisin in the Sun (NY: Signet, 1959)  
LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka). Dutchman and The Slave (NY: William Morrow, 1964)  
Lynn Nottage. Crumbs From the Table of Joy and Other Plays (NY: Theatre Communications Group, 2004)  
Ed Bullins, The Taking of Miss Janie (1975) in William B. Branch, Black Thunder: An Anthology of Contemporary African American Drama (NY: Penguin, 1992)  
Anna Deveare Smith. Fires in the Mirror (NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1993)  
Anna Deveare Smith. Twilight: Los Angeles 1992 (NY: Anchor/Doubleday, 1994)  
Stew. Passing Strange: The Complete Book and Lyrics of the Broadway Musical (NY: Applause Books, 2009)  
James Baldwin. Blues for Mister Charlie: A Play (NY: Signet, 1964)  
August Wilson. The Piano Lesson (NY: Penguin, 1990)  
August Wilson. Fences (NY: Penguin, 1986)  
Samuel A. Hay. African American Theatre: An Historical and Critical Analysis (NY: Cambridge UP, 1994)

**Note: Assigned and recommended texts and readings are held at the Reserve Desk on the second floor of Library West. Check the Reserve List for this course to see if any assigned essays or plays are available as PDF files on ARES (ELECTRONIC RESERVE) section on the Smathers Library Website. Look under Reid and this course's section number.**

### **II. COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

1) Pop Quizzes on weekly readings as well as film(s) screened in the previous class [10 points@ 2pts - 3pts each)  
2) Individual 5-minute oral presentation and 5 min Q&A. Instructor assigns each student their oral presentation of a required reading (5 minutes) Due Week 3 (21 JAN) – Week 11 (17 MAR) **(10 points)**

The grade on the presentation is based on the following criteria:

A. The importance of the material presented to the class. Students must make brief references to primary scenes in a particular literary work (or film) to illustrate important issues and support their argument.

B. The clarity of the written and oral work. Here, "clarity" refers to smooth oral delivery, correct use of descriptive terminology and grammar.

C. The student's ability to pose important questions to the class at the end of their oral presentation. Students must introduce the argument/thesis of their oral presentation based on their assigned section.

3) Students are responsible for a typed 1-page outline of their 5-minute discussion. **[10 points]**

The outline is due on the day when the student presents her/his 5-minute discussion.

4) **MIDTERM EXAM TUESDAY 25 FEBRUARY 50MINS [20 points]**

5) **15-MINUTE GROUP Dramatic Performance Tues. 14 and Thurs. 16 April (WEEK 15)**

GROUP DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

**20 points**

5-minute Q&A on the DRAMATIC PRESENTATION

**10 points**

**III. ATTENDANCE**

The only excusable absence is one that results from an illness that is documented by a written and signed physician report. Two non-excused absences lower the student's cumulative grade by minus 10 points, Three non-excused absences give the student an E, a failing grade for the course.

**IV. LATE WORK**

All written work and oral presentations are due **during** the class period. Students receive minus 2 points for EACH DAY (INCLUDING WEEKENDS AND HOLIDAYS) when any assignment is late. **NOTE:** A medical excuse **will not** be accepted to explain the late delivery of any written assignment or film/video project.

V.		GRADING SCALE			
A	100.00-90.00	40.00-36.00	20.00-18.00	10.00-09.00	2.00-1.80
A-	89.99-87.00	35.99-34.80	17.99-17.40	08.90-08.70	1.78-1.74
B+	86.99-84.00	34.79-33.60	17.20-16.80	08.69-08.40	1.72-1.68
B	83.99-80.00	33.59-32.00	16.60-16.00	08.39-08.00	1.66-1.60
B-	79.99-77.00	31.99-30.80	15.99-15.40	07.99-07.70	1.59-1.53
C+	76.99-74.00	30.79-29.60	15.20-14.80	07.69-07.40	1.52-1.48
C	73.99-70.00	29.59-28.00	14.79-14.00	07.39-07.00	1.47-1.40
C-	69.99-67.00	27.99-26.80	13.99-13.40	06.99-06.70	1.39-1.34
D+	66.99-64.00	26.79-25.60	13.39-12.80	06.69-06.40	1.33-1.28
D	63.99-60.00	25.59-24.00	12.79-12.00	06.39-06.00	1.27-1.20
D-	59.99-57.00	23.99-22.80	11.99-11.40	05.99-05.70	1.19-1.14
E	56.00	22.79-00.00	11.39-00.00	05.69-00.00	1.13-0.00
	Cumulative	Performance and Q&A	student presentation 20pts, MIDTERM 20pts	presentation outline 10pts	ten or more quizzes worth 1-3pts for a total of 10pts

**VI. COURSE OUTLINE and READINGS:**

READINGS LISTED ON A PARTICULAR DAY SHOULD BE READ **BEFORE** THAT CLASS MEETS. POP QUIZZES WILL COVER THESE ASSIGNED READINGS AS WELL AS ANY FILMS SCREENED IN THE LAST CLASS. **ALL READINGS FOR WEEK TWO MUST BE READ BEFORE CLASS MEETS**

\* Denotes that Readings are held on **RESERVE IN LIBRARY WEST AT CHECK OUT DESK OR ON ARES E-RESERVE AS DOWNLOADABLE 'PDFs' [ACROBAT READER FILES]**

**WK 1**

- JAN 07 T-- **Course Introduction and INTEGRATIONIST DRAMAS WITH A WOMANIST TWIST** - Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959); Samuel A. Hay, *African American Theatre*, introduction and chap. 1. **ON RESERVE IN LIBRARY WEST**
- JAN 09 R-- **NO CLASS VIEW IN LIBRARY** -: Woody King, Jr., *Black Theatre: The Making of A Movement* (1978) 114mins

**WK 2 THE BLACK ARTS MOVEMENT**

- JAN 14 T-- **SCREEN:** Anthony Harvey, *Dutchman* (1967) 55mins LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), *Dutchman* (1964), Scenes 1 and 2.
- JAN 16 R-- Hay, *African American Theatre*, chap. 2. **ON RESERVE IN LIBRARY WEST** and Leslie Catherine Sanders, *The Development of Black Theater in America*, chap. 3 (**on electronic reserve in library see ARES PDF**)  
 .--- Analysis of Play and its screen adaptation. Dramatic Form and Politics of Production and Distribution

**WK 3 THEATER OF THE BLACK FEMALE EXPERIENCE**

- JAN 21 T-- Lynn Nottage, *Crumbs From the Table of Joy and Other Plays*, Act 1, sc 1- 6
- JAN 23 R-- *Crumbs From the Table of Joy and Other Plays*, Act 2, sc. 1- 4 and epilogue

**WK 4 MUSICAL DRAMA, AFRICAN AMERICAN EX-PAT & SELF-DISCOVERY**

- JAN 28 T-- Stew and Heidi Rodewald, *Passing Strange: The Complete Book and Lyrics of The Broadway Musical*  
**SCREEN: PASSING STRANGE** (dir. Spike Lee, 2010) 135mins
- JAN 30 R-- **SCREEN: PASSING STRANGE** (dir. Spike Lee, 2010) 135mins remaining scenes

**WK 5 TELLING A BLACK STORY: 'THE BLOOD'S MEMORY' – JAMES BALDWIN**

- FEB 04 T-- James Baldwin, *Blues for Mister Charlie* (1964), pp. xiii- Act 1
- FEB 06 R-- *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Act 2

**WK 6**

FEB 11 T-- *Blues for Mister Charlie*, Act 3

FEB 13 R--SCREEN:

**WK 7 TELLING A BLACK STORY: 'THE BLOOD'S MEMORY' – AUGUST WILSON**

FEB 18 T--August Wilson, *The Piano Lesson* (1987, Act 1, sc. 1 -2).

---SCREEN: *The Piano Lesson* (1995) 99 minutes.

FEB 20 R-- *The Piano Lesson*, Act sc. 1 – 5.

**TELLING A BLACK STORY: 'THE BLOOD'S MEMORY' – AUGUST WILSON**

**WK 8 MIDTERM EXAMINATION (50mins, 20pts)**

FEB 25 T-- **MIDTERM EXAMINATION (50mins, 20pts)**---August Wilson, *Fences* (1985), Act 1, sc. 1 – 4.

FEB 27 R--SCREEN: *A CONVERSATION WITH AUGUST WILSON* (1992) 22 minutes. August Wilson articles on E-RESERVE;

**WK 9 SPRING BREAK MONDAY 2 March – FRIDAY 6 March**

**WK 10 THE SIXTIES**

MAR 10 T-- Ed Bullins, *The Taking of Miss Janie* (1975) in William B. Branch, *Black Thunder* and Leslie Catherine Sanders, *The Development of Black Theater in America*, ch. 4 (on reserve in library).

MAR 12 R-- *The Taking of Miss Janie*,

**WK 11**

MAR 17 T-- Anna Deavere Smith, *Fires in the Mirror*, and articles on Anna Deavere Smith (ARES).

MAR 19 R-- *Fires in the Mirror*,

**WK 12 BLACK PERFORMANCE**

MAR 24 T-- -Anna Deavere Smith, *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992* and articles on Smith (ARES).

MAR 26 R-- *Twilight: Los Angeles, 1992*,

**WK 13**

MAR 31 T--NO CLASS

**GROUPS MEET IN CLASSROOM TO PREPARE THE FINAL DRAMATIC PROJECT**

APR 02 R-- NO CLASS

**GROUPS MEET IN CLASSROOM TO PREPARE THE FINAL DRAMATIC PROJECT**

**WK 14**

APR 07 T-- 10-MINUTE GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND 5-MINUTE Q & A (20PTS)

APR 09 R-- 10-MINUTE GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND 5-MINUTE Q & A (20PTS)

**WK 15**

APR 14 T-- 10-MINUTE GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND 5-MINUTE Q & A (20PTS)

APR 16 R--10-MINUTE GROUP PRESENTATIONS AND 5-MINUTE Q & A (20PTS)

**WEEK 16**

APR 14 T--**LAST CLASS MEETING**