



JOHN CABOT UNIVERSITY
COURSE CODE: "EN 399-A"
COURSE NAME: "Special Topics in English Literature: Desire, Escape, and Identity: Queer Drama of the American South"
SEMESTER & YEAR: Fall 2023
SYLLABUS
INSTRUCTOR: Carlos Dew s

EMAIL: cdew s@johncabot.edu

HOURS: MW 7:30 PM-8:45 PM

TOTAL NO. OF CONTACT HOURS: 45

CREDITS: 3

PREREQUISITES: Prerequisite: EN 110 with a grade of C or above. In addition, students must have completed one other English literature class or have Junior standing.

OFFICE HOURS:

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

An in-depth treatment of a current area of special concern within the field of English Literature. Courses offered previously include: Dickens and Englishness; Race, Class, Gender, Culture: The American Dream in Literature; The Innocents Abroad: Perceptions of Italy in American, European and British Writing; Topics in World Literature: Masterpieces in Western Fiction. This is a reading and writing intensive course. Students in 300-level literature classes are required to produce 5-6,000 words of critical writing. *May be taken more than once for credit with different topics.*

SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:

An in-depth treatment of a current area of special concern within the field of English Literature. Courses offered previously include: Dickens and Englishness; Race, Class, Gender, Culture: The American Dream in Literature; The Innocents Abroad: Perceptions of Italy in American, European and British Writing; Topics in World Literature: Masterpieces in Western Fiction. This is a reading and writing intensive course. Students in 300-level literature classes are required to produce 5-6,000 words of critical writing. *May be taken more than once for credit with different topics.*

The Fall 2023 iteration of the course will examine the themes of desire, escape, and identity in the drama of the American South during the 20th century. In particular the course will examine LGBTQ+ writers from the American South who wrote work in response to their experience in the South and their desire for escape due to their identity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

An in-depth treatment of a current area of special concern within the field of English Literature. Courses offered previously include: Dickens and Englishness; Race, Class, Gender, Culture: The American Dream in Literature; The Innocents Abroad: Perceptions of Italy in American, European and British Writing; Topics in World Literature: Masterpieces in Western Fiction. This is a reading and writing intensive course. Students in 300-level literature classes are required to produce 5-6,000 words of critical writing. *May be taken more than once for credit with different topics.*

By the end of the course, students will have significant knowledge of the most significant American plays written by queer writers of the American South from 1944 to the present. Students will understand the historical, social, and political context for LGBTQ+ writers living in or original from the American South. Students will be familiar with the major critical responses to these plays and be able to write significant criticism in response to the plays studied in the course.

TEXTBOOK:

| Book Title | Author | Publisher | ISBN number | Library Call Number | Comments | Format | Local Bookstore | Online Purchase |
|--------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------|-----------|------------------------|-----------------|
| The Glass Menagerie | Tennessee Williams | Dramatists | 9780822204503 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| Member of the Wedding | Carson McCullers | New Directions | 9780811216555 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| A Streetcar Named Desire | Tennessee Williams | New Directions | 9780811216059 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| The Grass Harp | Truman Capote | Dramatists | 9780822204763 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| A Raisin in the Sun | Lorraine Hansberry | Samuel French | 9780573614637 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |

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|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|----------------|--|--|-----------|------------------------|--|
| Ballad of the Sad Cafe | Edward Albee | Dramatists | 9780822200925 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| My Blue Heaven | Jane Chambers | TNT Classics | 9780935672039 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| How I Learned to Drive | Paula Vogel | Dramatists | 9780822216230 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| Some Men | Terrence McNally | Dramatists | 978-0822222453 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| Southern Baptist Sissies | Del Shores | Samuel French | 9780573633454 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |
| Slave Play | Jeremy O. Harris | Theatre Communications Group | 9781559369787 | | | Hard Copy | Almost Corner Bookshop | |

REQUIRED RESERVED READING:

NONE

RECOMMENDED RESERVED READING:

NONE

GRADING POLICY**-ASSESSMENT METHODS:**

| Assignment | Guidelines | Weight |
|--|------------|--------|
| Midterm Exam | | 25 |
| Response Essays (10-15 x 250 words each for total of 2500 to 3750 words) | | 25 |
| Seminar Paper (3000 to 3750 words) | | 30 |
| Participation | | 20 |

-ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

A Work of this quality directly addresses the question or problem raised and provides a coherent argument displaying an extensive knowledge of relevant information or content. This type of work demonstrates the ability to critically evaluate concepts and theory and has an element of novelty and originality. There is clear evidence of a significant amount of reading beyond that required for the course.

B This is highly competent level of performance and directly addresses the question or problem raised. There is a demonstration of some ability to critically evaluate theory and concepts and relate them to practice. Discussions reflect the student's own arguments and are not simply a repetition of standard lecture and reference material. The work does not suffer from any major errors or omissions and provides evidence of reading beyond the required assignments.

C This is an acceptable level of performance and provides answers that are clear but limited, reflecting the information offered in the lectures and reference readings.

D This level of performances demonstrates that the student lacks a coherent grasp of the material. Important information is omitted and irrelevant points included. In effect, the student has barely done enough to persuade the instructor that s/he should not fail.

F This work fails to show any knowledge or understanding of the issues raised in the question. Most of the material in the answer is irrelevant.

-ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS:

Students are required to attend all scheduled class meetings and to participate in all classroom activities. Students are allowed only two absences (no questions asked, no excuses needed). However, each additional absence beyond the two allowed will result in the reduction of the final grade for the course by 5%. Students with more than seven total absences will fail the course. Please refer to the university catalog for the attendance and absence policy.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

As stated in the university catalog, any student who commits an act of academic dishonesty will receive a failing grade on the work in which the dishonesty occurred. In addition, acts of academic dishonesty, irrespective of the weight of the assignment, may result in the student receiving a failing grade in the course. Instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs. A student who is reported twice for academic dishonesty is subject to summary dismissal from the University. In such a case, the Academic Council will then make a recommendation to the President, who will make the final decision.

STUDENTS WITH LEARNING OR OTHER DISABILITIES

John Cabot University does not discriminate on the basis of disability or handicap. Students with approved accommodations must inform their professors at the beginning of the term. Please see the website for the complete policy.

SCHEDULE

Note: This is an example schedule. The actual schedule for the term will be provided during the first week of the term.

Week 1 Course introduction: desire, escape, identity.

Week 2 Williams, Tennessee. *The Glass Menagerie*. 1944. Theme: the poet must escape, a memory play.

Week 3 McCullers, Carson. *Member of the Wedding*. 1946. Theme: the sensitive girl needs a place in which to thrive, escape to the north.

Week 4 Williams, Tennessee. *A Streetcar Named Desire*. 1947. Theme: the drag/trans protagonist, shame, sex, and flight

Week 5 Capote, Truman. *The Grass Harp*. 1951 (novel)/1952. Theme: the treehouse as internal exile for queer folk.

Week 6

Week 7 Midterm exam.

Week 8 Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*. 1959. Theme: intersectionality, diaspora, race, and ghosts of the South

Week 9 Albee, Edward. *Ballad of the Sad Café*. 1951 (novel)/1963. Theme: Tragic queer love in an imagined Southern space

Week 10 Historical pause. Stonewall: Will it ever arrive down here?

Week 11 Chambers, Jane. *My Blue Heaven*. 1981. Theme: an imagined northern haven.

Week 12 Vogel, Paula. *How I Learned to Drive*. 1998. Theme: another escape, another memory play.

Week 13 McNally, Terrence. *Some Men*. 2006. Theme: looking back, an historical retrospective of the 20th century.

Week 14 Shores, Del. *Southern Baptist Sissies*. 2000. Theme: escaping with their souls, gay men, the American South, and religion.

Week 15 Final examination week.