

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

Department of ENGLISH

Title of Course:	Course Number:	ENG 384
ENGLISH 384: MODERN AMERICAN DRAMA	Class Hours per Week:	3
	Lab Hours:	0
	Credits:	3

A. Description

The development of the American theatre since the rise of realism is traced through 1920s dramas by O'Neill, Howard and Rice; comedies of manner by Barry and Behrman; socially conscious plays of the 1930s by Odets, Sherwood and Hellman; and post-war dramas by Williams and Miller.

B. Prerequisites and/or Corequisites

English 201 or English 121

C. Student Outcomes

Students will

- Discuss course content in a range of critical contexts.
- Demonstrate knowledge of themes and genres of course texts.
- Critique the complexities and differences among course texts.

D. Required Texts and/or Supplementary Materials

Some recommended texts are the following:

Six Modern Plays, ed. A. Halline (Modern Library)
Plays from the Contemporary American Theater, ed. B. McNamara (Mentor)
Nine Plays by Black Women, ed. Margaret Wilkerson (Mentor)
Hispanic Theater in the U.S., N. Kanellos (Arte Publico)
Twenty-Three Plays: an Introductory Anthology, ed. O. Reinert (Scott, Foresman)
Famous American Plays of the 1930s, ed. Baym et al. (Laurel)

E. Evaluation and Requirements of Students

Students will read about ten plays and discuss them in class, often reading passages aloud. Quizzes may be given on the most important reading assignments, or students may be asked to keep a journal recording their responses to key scenes and characters. A long term paper or a series of short essays will be assigned. Students who show interest in creative writing will be encouraged to do some playwriting of their own. Final grades will be based on the final examination and the midterm and the grades on essays, with some weight also given to class participation, which may include small group discussion or oral reports.

College Attendance Policy

At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the number of hours a class meets in one week. For example, you may be enrolled in a three-hour class. In that class, you would be allowed 4 hours of absence (not 4 days). In the case of excessive absences, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an F or WU grade.

Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. BMCC is committed to providing equal access to all programs and curricula to all students.

BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC's web site, www.bmcc.cuny.edu. For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).

F. Outline of Topics

Week 1: Introduction: Course Procedures and Overview

Weeks 2-4: Background: the Origins and the 1920s

- A. The Theater in America
- B. The 1920s: Maxwell Anderson, Elmer Rice, Sidney Howard, Philip Barry
- C. Eugene O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*

Weeks 5-8: Plays of the 1930s

- A. Social Conscience: Odets, Saroyan, Hellman
- B. Comedies of Manners: Behrman
- C. Satire: Kaufman and Hart, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*
- D. Tragedy: Anderson, *Winterset*

Weeks 9-11: Plays of the Postwar Period

- A. Family Themes: Miller, *Death of a Salesman*; Williams, *The Glass Menagerie*; Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*
- B. Comedy: Heggen/Logan, *Mister Roberts*

Weeks 12-14: Directions in Contemporary Theater

- A. Ethnic Theater: August Wilson, *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*; *Fences*
- B. Absurdist Social Criticism: Albee, Durang, Henley
- C. Realistic Drama: Kopit, Gurney, Howe