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## Independent Study Online Course Syllabus

**Course Number: LIT 914**  
**Course Title: American Drama**

Online       Distance Learning

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**Instructor:** Elaine Reimer-Paré  
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**Units: 3**  
**Grade Level: 9-14**

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### Course Description

This online course, designed primarily for teachers at the secondary level, provides the structure and incentive to read and think about some of the great plays from American literature. These works have contributed to the very nature of our thought and culture, and have influenced the overall development of American literature.

Teachers will be asked to read five plays selected from a list of outstanding representatives of the genre. Critical research on several of the plays and viewing of productions will enhance the student experience. Students will also prepare learning activities to use in their classroom teaching.

This course is designed to meet the objectives identified in the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts as well as the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Students will be asked to make connections between their work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

### Course Dates:

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year to complete assignments.

You have up to one year from the date of registration, and no less than three weeks (one week per credit), to complete the course.

### ***Moodle:***

This course will be delivered totally online. Moodle is a learning management system that provides students access to online resources, documents, graded assignments, quizzes, discussion forums, etc. with an easy to learn and use interface. To learn more about Moodle go to: ([http://docs.moodle.org/en/Student\\_tutorials](http://docs.moodle.org/en/Student_tutorials)). There are some student tutorials on the Center for Online Learning website at Fresno Pacific University – <http://col.fresno.edu/student>.

### ***Moodle Site Login and passwords – (or other online course access information)***

Students will need to have internet access to log onto <http://ce-connect.fresno.edu>. The username and password numbers for Moodle access will be sent to you by the university using the email address you submitted at the time of registration. The instructor will then contact you with a welcome letter and login instructions. If you need help with the username and password recovery please contact the Center for Professional Development at (800)372-5505, or (559)453-2000 during regular office hours - Mon-Fri 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

### ***Getting Help with Moodle:***

If you need help with Moodle, please contact the Center for Online Learning (COL), + by telephone 1-559-453-3460. Help by phone is available Mon-Thurs 8:00 am to 8:00pm and on Fridays from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, or by filling out a “Request Services” form at <http://col.fresno.edu/contact/request-services>. Please identify that you are with the Continuing Education/Independent Studies department.

Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. In the event that you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

### **Required texts and course materials**

There is no textbook for this course. The plays that will be studied should be easily accessible in libraries or online. Other required texts and resources are available through the course’s Moodle site.

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## Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)

Student Learning Outcomes in this course Student will be able to:	Standards Addressed *	CE program SLOs
1. Read and analyze five outstanding plays from American literature.	CCSS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
2. Sharpen skills for analyzing and understanding drama as a literary form.	CCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
3. Discover the distinctions between drama and other literary genres, as well as what they have in common.	CCSS 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, & 10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, & 4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4. Experience the value of locating and using secondary sources as a means for increasing and enriching literary insight.	CCSS 4, 7, 8, 9, 10; NBPTS Prop. 2	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
5. Develop lesson plans to effectively share drama in the classroom.	CCSS 1-10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, 3, & 4	1, 2, 4, 5, 6
6. Connect lessons to state or national standards.	NBPTS Prop. 5	1, 2, 4, 5, 6

(\* Please refer to the section on **Standards Addressed in This Course**)

## Topics, Assignments and Activities

1. Well-known playwright Edward Albee argues in “Why Read Plays?” that knowing a “play on the page” is a complete experience; one does not need to see a play performed in order to gain a full understanding and appreciation of the work. Read his argument by clicking on the link below:

[http://www.all-story.com/issues.cgi?action=show\\_story&story\\_id=85](http://www.all-story.com/issues.cgi?action=show_story&story_id=85)

In what ways do you agree or disagree with his position? Think about your own experience teaching dramatic literature. How do Albee’s reflections connect to your own experience? Have you placed more value on the text of a play or on its performance? Which form has provided a more “complete experience” for your students?

Written Response: 200 words

2. Michael Bigelow Dixon, a teacher at Goucher College in Baltimore, has compiled “thirty ways to understand a script” as a guide for students of dramatic literature. Familiarize yourself with his suggested methods by following the link below:

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<http://schooltheatre.org/education/learning/how-read-play>

Many of Dixon's ways to approach dramatic literature touch on basic literary analysis strategies that you probably have been using with your students already. As we begin our study of American drama, we will use Dixon's guide as a scaffold.

From the following list, select and read three plays that you have not read or taught in the last five years. All of these plays should be easily accessible in literary anthologies or online.

"Death of a Salesman" by Arthur Miller  
"The Crucible" by Arthur Miller  
"Our Town" by Thornton Wilder  
"The Glass Menagerie" by Tennessee Williams  
"Streetcar Named Desire" by Tennessee Williams  
"A Raisin in the Sun" by Lorraine Hansberry  
"Fences" by August Wilson  
"The Zoo Story" by Edward Albee  
"Long Day's Journey into Night" by Eugene O'Neill  
"Twelve Angry Men" by Reginald Rose  
"The Odd Couple" by Neil Simon  
"The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds" by Paul Zindel  
"The Children's Hour" by Lillian Hellman  
"Arsenic and Old Lace" by Joseph Kesselring  
"Buried Child" by Sam Shepard

For each of the plays that you read, choose **three** different methods from Dixon's guide that would be particularly effective strategies to use when teaching the play. Consider which approaches would be most appropriate for the specific play and which ones would be most helpful for your students.

In response to each play, write three paragraphs (one for each of Dixon's strategies). Explain why these particular methods would be effective and how you could use them to lead students to a deeper understanding of the play. Make sure that your response includes specific references to the play as evidence of your attentive reading.

Written Responses: 500 words each (one three-paragraph response for each play)

3. While we want our students to be independent readers and thinkers, we recognize the value of learning from others, as well. **Read two additional plays** from the list provided in Topic 2 and consult secondary sources for more insight into these texts. Understanding critical responses to dramatic literature can strengthen our confidence when we teach and enrich the learning experience of our students.

Go to a library (or use the Internet) to read comments about the plays by at least **two literary scholars**. Your sources may be short essays or chapters; you are not expected to read entire books! Take brief notes on observations focusing on the plays, rather than the playwrights. Identify the source of your information by including the title of the article or book and the author. Notes need not be written into essay form but should equal about 300 words per play.

You may wish to do more research on a play you plan to teach. Because all of the playwrights on the list are well known, you should have no trouble finding information about their works.

Written Response: 300 words per play (2 plays)

Forum Contribution: In a couple of sentences, share your response to one of the two plays that you read. What do you appreciate about the play? What questions or critiques could you offer? Include the name of the play in your title and respond to at least one colleague's post.

4. Select one of the five plays you have read so far and view it performed live, if possible, or recorded. How well does the performance reflect the "play on the page?" (Albee, Topic One). In your response, identify the most significant insights that arise from the contrast of the two experiences.

Written Response: 500 words

5. How can you invite your students to become more involved with the content and themes of the play? How can you challenge them to think critically and to ask thoughtful questions about the text? How can a creative, hands-on activity engage student audiences with the action on the page?

*Once when I was teaching "The Glass Menagerie," I invited students to write poems on the lids of shoeboxes, just like poor Tom who scratched out his poems on lids while trying to survive his unfulfilling warehouse job. The next day, we created our own menagerie as we wallpapered the classroom with our odd assortment of multi-colored poetic lids.*

Consider some of these ideas for inspiration:

- Create a soundtrack for several scenes
- Design the set for one scene
- Write an editorial expressing your opinion about a controversial issue raised in the play
- Create a scrapbook that reflects one character's experiences and memories
- Develop a music playlist for one of the characters: What 10 songs would this character have on his/her iPod?
- Write a letter to another student in the class about the play; exchange letters and respond

- Hold a talk show discussion about an issue or event in the play; invite the “guests” to come as characters from the play
- Design an online profile for a character (in theory). What pictures and/or comments would be on his/her page? What is his/her status? Are there updates?

Choose one of the two plays that you read for Topic #3. Share your understanding of the play through a **creative project**; you may use one of the ideas listed above, or you may develop your own. The project should demonstrate a critical reading and understanding of the play, as you would expect from your own students. Be sure to make your activity one that you could adapt easily for your classroom. Your completed project could serve as a model for your own students; it will demonstrate your expectations for the assignment and the potential for creativity.

When you upload your activity, please identify the play you chose and include a brief explanation of your project. If you chose to create a three-dimensional project or one that cannot be uploaded to this Moodle site, please send a picture of your project or the appropriate link to me by e-mail. Have fun!

Forum Contribution: In two or three sentences, share what you chose to do for your creative activity and what you learned through the process. Be sure to include the title of the play in the heading of your post. Read the strategies of your colleagues and post comments in response to at least two.

6. Build a collection of audio/visual resources that you would consider using in your classroom. Focus on two or three plays that you might teach in the future and gather links to video excerpts and other resources that would enrich your students’ understanding of the play, playwright, historical context, character development, setting, or thematic issues. Consult teaching resources, YouTube, libraries, educational sites, colleagues, etc.

In the glossary, share at least three resources you have discovered that could enrich your teaching of American drama. For online resources, provide the URL. Write a brief annotation explaining the scope and value of each resource.

Written Response: 50 words (per response)

7. Design a teaching unit around ONE of the plays you have studied in this course. Although the plans for this unit need not be in exhaustive detail, they should include at least the following elements:
  - a) goals and objectives for the unit
  - b) Common Core State Standards addressed by the unit
  - c) background preparation for students
  - d) student/teacher activities with estimated time blocks
  - e) methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth

As you develop your lesson plans, consider how you will engage students with the characters, content, and themes of the play.

- Review Michael Dixon's guide for students of dramatic literature (Topic 2). How can your lessons address some of the areas where students might struggle?
- Is the vocabulary or setting of the play particularly difficult or foreign for your students? (Topic 2)
- Can you integrate a visual or technological element into your activities to engage students? (Topic 4, 6)
- Is there a hands-on or creative activity that could help students better understand the play? (Topic 5)
- Would secondary research encourage students to ask deeper thinking questions? How can you invite larger interpretive questions from your students? (Topic 3)

Consider some of these challenges as you plan your dramatic unit.

## **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue. URL <http://www.fresno.edu>

## **Grading Policies and Rubric**

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

“Why Read Plays?” reflection:	5%
Responses to three plays:	25%
Notes on critical readings:	15%
Forum reflection on a play:	5%
Reflections on viewing a play:	10%
Creative Activity/Forum Contribution:	10%
Resource Collection:	5%
Lesson plan for teaching one play:	25%

Total scores determine the final grade:

90-100% = A

80-89% = B

79 or below = no credit

The discernment between an A or a B is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubrics). Coursework falling short of a quality equaling a B or a Credit Grade will be returned with further instructions.

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All assignments must be completed in order to receive a grade. In addition, all assignments are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

### Grading Options

Course participants have the option of requesting a letter grade or a credit/no credit when submitting the online grade request form. Students will submit the grade form when coursework has been completed. (Instructions will be provided for online grading by the instructor.)

### Grading Rubrics for Assignments:

<b>Type of Assignment</b>	<b>90%-100% Exceptional</b>	<b>80%-89% Adequate</b>	<b>Below 79% Not Acceptable</b>
<b>Written Responses</b>	Student's written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts.	Student's written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts.	Student's written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort.
<b>Lesson Plans</b>	Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals.
<b>Research</b>	Research accesses multiple sources, including those available via the internet. Web descriptions	Research accesses a limited range of sources. Web descriptions demonstrate adequate engagement with site	Research fails to access relevant sources; internet resources are not explored adequately. Web descriptions

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	demonstrate thorough engagement with site information.	information.	demonstrate little engagement with site.
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## Standards Addressed in This Course

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the **Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS)**. The Anchor Standards for Reading (Grades 6-12) are listed here:

### Key Ideas and Details

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

### Craft and Structure

4. Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

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## **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions**

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

### **Proposition I: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning**

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.
- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom.
- They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

### **Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.**

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

### **Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.**

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

### **Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.**

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

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**Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.**

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

**Final Course Grade and Transcripts**

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Center for Professional Development website (<http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>) to “Submit Grade Form”. Once the instructor fills out the grade form online, students may log back in to request their Grade Report as well as order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information see the Independent Studies Policies and Procedures that were sent to you when you received your course materials, or in your online course. They are available, also at <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd> - under General Information > CPD Policies.

**Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

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**CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

CE 1. Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
CE 2. Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
CE 3. Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.

CE 4. Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
CE 5. Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
CE 6. Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.

## FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>Student Learning Outcomes Oral Communication:</b> Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
<b>Written Communication:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
<b>Content Knowledge:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
<b>Reflection:</b> Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
<b>Moral Reasoning:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian world-view.
<b>Service:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
<b>Cultural and Global Perspective:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
<b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
<b>Information Literacy:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.