

**THE 495: Special Topics in Theatre History:
Arthur Miller and Social Drama**

Fall 2012 MWF 9:10 – 10:10
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TEXTS: *Arthur Miller, Collected Plays: 1944 – 1961; MLA Handbook; The Ride Down Mt. Morgan*

COURSE OBJECTIVES: This is a brand new course specially designed for *you*... Freshmen Theatre majors. It is designed to help make you as successful as possible in your academic studies. It is designed to thrill you and excite you by helping you become an expert on all things Arthur Miller. By the end of the semester, you will know more about Miller and his work than anyone else on campus (well, except for Dean Fuller!). You will understand what is expected in a classroom discussion. You will understand what is expected from a college-level paper. Most importantly, the class will help you understand what it means to be a theatre artist/scholar.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS: 1) Class discussions, 2) Assigned readings, 3) Two exams, 4) Quizzes on scripts, 6) Paper (with re-writes), 7) Homework activities, 8) Paper presentation

GRADES: Grades will break down into the following percentages:

Exam 1: 15%	Exam 2: 15%
Paper: 15%	Presentation: 5%
Attendance: 10%	Quizzes: 15%
Participation: 15%	Homework: 10%

ATTENDANCE: Attendance and participation in class are expected. Quizzes cannot be made up; however, the lowest quiz score will be dropped. More than three unexcused absences will lower the attendance grade by 10%/absence over three. Any student missing a class for whatever reason is responsible for finding out what was covered that day and making up any missed work. If you anticipate an absence, it is to your benefit to inform the instructor of this absence before it occurs. This is not only common courtesy, but it may enable the instructor to plan activities around your absence and/or fill you in on what you may be missing.

EXAMINATIONS: Exams will cover all assigned readings and lecture material up to the exam dates. Style of the exams will vary, but will always include both objective and subjective questions.

DISCUSSIONS:

Every effort will be made to make the discussions lively and interesting; however, the ultimate requirement for an energetic, productive and successful discussion is for all to be prepared. **If it becomes clear that many in the class are not keeping up with the reading, I will create assignments that must be completed for the day plays are discussed in class.**

SCRIPT-READING: Many of the materials we will read are challenging. Don't give up! Relish the challenge! Enjoy the new discoveries! You might also wish to get together with others in the class and read the scripts aloud. You will probably find the scripts making much more sense when read that way.

PAPER: You will choose a play by Miller not assigned for the class and write a paper that discusses how the play works as social commentary. What does Miller seem to be saying about our society? Use quotes from the play to support your points. You should also find quotes from other sources, such as Miller himself, other writers and/or critics. All sources should be properly cited using MLA Style. The paper should be typed, double-spaced, 12-point font and 5 – 7 pages long. A first draft will result in individual consultation with Dean Fuller that will lead to a revised final draft. You will also give a formal presentation of your paper to the class during the last week of the semester.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: As a community of scholars, the students and faculty at Rider University should be committed to the highest standards of excellence. We all have an individual and collective responsibility to foster integrity. To that end, I expect you to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity.

Consequences for violating academic honesty may result in a minimum grade of zero or failure for the assignment in question, or a failing grade on the exam or the entire course. Severity of penalties may depend on whether the violation is a student's first incident of academic dishonesty. See statement in The Source on Academic Conduct.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: If you need academic accommodations in this course, please make an appointment with **Services for Students with Disabilities** in the Vona Academic Annex, Room 8. The phone number is (609) 895-5492. Email is serv4dstu@rider.edu

CLASS RULES:

1. Respect for each other tops my list every time. The few "rules" that follow all stem from that important belief. Disrespect is one of the few things I don't tolerate very well. Fair warning!
2. Laptops may not be used. They are a barrier between you and full engagement with the class.
3. No cell phones. Please turn them off for the duration of class. This also means no texting. I will be respectful of you, giving you my full attention. I ask that you do the same for me. Fair? **If I see you using a cell phone, you get marked absent for that day.**
4. I love a good, lively class discussion as long as the talk is about the class topic and does not happen when I have the floor.

Tentative schedule (subject to change)

- 9/5 (W) **Welcome to Higher Education**
Course intro/Rider Values/Freshmen Questionnaire
- 9/7 (F) **College Survival**
Stress & Time Management/Rider Nuts & Bolts
- 9/10 (M) **Who was Arthur Miller?**
- 9/12 (W) **Miller's Bio continued**
- 9/14 (F) **Bio continued**
- 9/17 (M) **Why is Arthur Miller so Special?**
Clurman's Intro to Portable Miller [*handout*]
- 9/19 (W) **Writing 101**
Writing the Paper/Avoiding Plagiarism
- 9/21 (F) **Miller's First Broadway Show – A Big Juicy Flop!**
“The Man Who Had All the Luck” **QUIZ**
- 9/24 (M) “The Man Who Had All the Luck”
- 9/26 (W) **Miller's First Big Hit**
“All My Sons” **QUIZ**
- 9/28 (F) “All My Sons” & Bigsby's Intro [*handout*]
- 10/1 (M) “All My Sons”
- 10/3 (W) **An Even Bigger Hit...The American Tragedy is Born**
“Death of a Salesman” **QUIZ**
- 10/5 (F) “Death of a Salesman”
- 10/8 (M) **Time to Start Preparing for the Second Semester**
Advising/Course selection process/4-year planning/Why the Liberal Arts
- 10/10 (W) **Dustin Hoffman and the Art of Living Your Character**
Film: *Private Conversations*
- 10/12 (F) **Discuss the Films/Play**
- 10/15 (M) **Learning to Read Deeply and Critically**
“Tragedy and the Common Man” & “The Nature of Tragedy”
[*handouts*]
- 10/17 (W) **Time for Some Fun Insights**
“The Salesman Has a Birthday,” “Many Writers: Few Plays,” Excerpt
from Salesman in Beijing [*handouts*]
- 10/19 (F) Catch-Up Day

10/22 (M)	EXAM
10/24 (W)	Understanding Memory and Moving On “A Memory of Two Mondays” QUIZ
10/26 (F)	“A Memory of Two Mondays”
10/29 (M)	Fear and Our Inclination to Assume the Worst “Kidnapped” [<i>handout</i>]
10/31 (W)	Understanding Miller’s Fight Against the Red Scare “The Night Ed Murrow Struck Back” [<i>handout</i>]
11/2 (F)	Picking the Brain of “The Crucible’s” Director Guest: Trent Blanton
11/5 (M)	Miller’s Satirical Voice “A Modest Proposal” [<i>handout</i>]
11/7 (W)	TBA
11/9 (F)	Arthur Miller and Marilyn Monroe Film: <i>The Making of “The Misfits”</i> Paper 1st draft DUE
11/12 (M)	Investigating Empathy “The Ride Down Mt. Morgan” QUIZ
11/14 (W)	“The Ride Down Mt. Morgan”
11/16 (F)	Individual Conferences TBA/Paper consultations
11/19 (M)	TBA/Paper consultations
11/21 (W)	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break
11/23 (F)	NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break
11/26 (M)	Arthur Miller and the Holocaust Film: <i>Playing for Time</i>
11/28 (W)	Film: <i>Playing for Time</i>
11/30 (F)	Film: <i>Playing for Time</i>
12/3 (M)	Paper presentations Final draft DUE
12/5 (W)	Paper presentations
12/7 (F)	Paper presentations
12/13 (TH)	Final Exam at 9:00 a.m.