

THEA 320 Special Topic: Scriptwriting

Trimester 1 2013

4 March to 3 July 2013

20 Points



Tennessee Williams at his desk in 1948. Photograph: W Eugene Smith/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

TRIMESTER DATES

Teaching dates:	4 March to 7 June 2013
Easter break:	28 March to 3 April 2013
Mid-trimester break:	22 to 28 April 2013

WITHDRAWAL DATES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds>

NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator Lori Leigh lori.leigh@vuw.ac.nz 463 6712 FT77/Room 304

Programme Administrator Cathy McCullagh cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz 463 5359 FT83/Room 202

CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

Lectures

Mondays and Wednesdays 3.10 – 6pm FT77 Rm 305

TEACHING LEARNING SUMMARY

The two classes each week will alternate lecture material with a collaborative inter-active learning laboratory, with regular student participation.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional communication about the course will be available on the course notice board at 77 Fairlie Terrace, as well as by Blackboard.

If you are not going to use the Victoria email address set up for you, you must set a forward from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

COURSE PRESCRIPTION

This course provides grounding in dramaturgical principles and approaches to both the reading and the writing of scripts for live performance. Students will develop an understanding of narrative and collage forms with particular emphasis on structure. The course will explore strategies for development of action, image, character dialogue and scenographic potential.

COURSE CONTENT

This course provides a practical and theoretical approach to writing scripts for performance. It will proceed from writing exercises to developing a ten-minute play with an option to work on a longer piece of dramatic writing as a final project.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students successfully completing this course should be able to:

- a) Understand and apply some of the basic principles of dramaturgy, both generally in everyday life, and in the making of aesthetic performance.
- b) Understand the fundamentals of playwriting to develop scripts.
- c) Develop the habit of writing frequently and consistently.
- d) Work with collaborators in performance processes in relation to dramaturgical principles.
- e) Be familiar with the process of giving and receiving constructive feedback in a creative workshop environment.
- f) Understand the process of rewriting, revision, and drafts.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours across the trimester. The classes are participatory throughout, and six hours attendance per week is expected. The remaining time will be spent developing and completing the assignments that are spread evenly through the length of the course. It should be noted here that a principle in the learning will be the idea of drafting, i.e., completing second/third versions of a creative assignment.

GROUP WORK

Though there is no group assignment, per se, this class fosters a collaborative environment where students are expected to read, listen to, and feedback on each other's work.

READINGS

Essential texts:

Spencer, Stuart. *The Playwright's Guidebook*. New York: Faber and Faber, 2002.

Bradbury, Ray. *Zen in the Art of Writing*. Santa Barbara: Joshua Odell Editions, 1996.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 11 February to 15 March 2013. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks Easterfield Building. You can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to you or they can be picked up from the shop. You will be contacted when they are available.

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

This course is internally assessed, with assessment comprising written assignments and a class contribution component which includes a writing journal. More detailed information on assignments will be given in class and posted on Blackboard.

Assignment 1. Contribution/Writing Journal (25%): This includes attendance, discussion of readings and lecture material, sharing of writing, reading of peers' scripts and constructive criticism of work presented, and other activities such as warm-ups and in-class writing exercises. This assessment includes maintaining a writing journal which you are required to bring to every class. The journal will be a repository where you will record notes, observations, ideas, newspaper clippings, images, and other raw material for writing as directed.

Due: The writing journal will be periodically checked in class and the contribution mark will be awarded at the end of the term.

Assignment 2. Writing Portfolio (25%): In this assignment, students will complete short writing exercises in throughout the term focussing on various tools of playwrighting such as action, conflict, characterisation, dialogue, impulse. These assignments will be submitted to the instructor online via Blackboard and also brought into class to be shared. Please bring appropriate copies (one per character) to class on due date.

Due: As per schedule on the course programme and in class

Assignment 3. Ten-minute play (20%): Students will complete a ten-minute play (10 pages maximum). Drafts will be workshopped in class. You must bring appropriate copies (one per character) to class when the rough draft is due.

Due: Rough draft due in class 8 April; Second draft due via Blackboard on 17 April by 12pm noon.

Assignment 4. Final Project (30%): For this assignment, students will have the option of completing a second ten-minute play, writing a one-act script (30 pages maximum), or beginning a full-length play (30 pages maximum). Students will workshop their writing in class (on assigned days after mid-term break) and receive feedback from both the instructor and peers to aid in the process. A final draft of the project will be submitted via Blackboard.

Due: 27 May via Blackboard by 12pm noon

The marking criteria for all these assignments will be based on (1) the quality, imagination, and originality of the piece presented, and (2) the sense that each assignment conveys of elements of thought and craft that have been presented as components within the teaching. All assignments (with the exception of the writing journal) must be typed, properly formatted, and free of spelling, grammar, and typographical errors. *The Playwright's Guidebook* includes examples of standard manuscript format.

Relationship Between Assessment and Learning Objectives

- 1) Assignment 1 relates to learning objectives a), c), d), e), and f).
- 2) Assignment 2 relates to learning objectives a), b), c), and e).
- 3) Assignments 3 and 4 relate to learning objectives a), b), c), d), e), and f).

ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS

Assignment cover sheets and extension forms can be found on Blackboard or outside the Administration Office in 83 Fairlie Terrace.

COLLECTING MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

Your marked assignments will be returned to you electronically via Blackboard or by your lecturer. Any uncollected assignments can be picked up from the Programme Administrator after the last day of teaching. Assignments will be held in the Administration office until the end of the following trimester. You need to show your student identification to collect marked assignment from the Administration office.

EXTENSIONS AND PENALTIES

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. Issues of workload do not constitute exceptional and unforeseen circumstances. If you require an extension, you must complete an extension request form (available on your course Blackboard site) prior to the assignment due date. This must be accompanied by relevant documentation (e.g. a doctor's certificate) where appropriate. Tutors cannot grant extensions.

Work submitted after the deadline will be penalised by a 2.5 percent deduction from your total mark per work day. Late work also receives only minimal comments from your marker.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

To gain a pass in this course you must:

- a) complete all the written assignments proposed.
- b) consistently attend the twice-weekly classes. Lecturer to be given prior notice of intended absence. Medical certificate required for absence from two or more consecutive classes.

CLASS REPRESENTATIVES

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. You can find out more information on Class Representatives on www.vuwsa.org.nz.

STATEMENT ON LEGIBILITY

You are expected to present work that meets appropriate standards. Work submitted during the course (i. e. work that is internally assessed) should be typed or prepared on a computer. Where handwritten work is required you are expected to write clearly. If this is deemed 'illegible', you will be given a photocopy of the work and asked to transcribe it to an acceptable standard (preferably typed) within a specified time frame.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study.

Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at

www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies
THEATRE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE THEA 320

THEA 320 Course Programme

PG= Playwright's Guidebook

Zen=Zen in the Art of Writing

*Reading due means the assigned reading is to be completed before and will be discussed in class.

Week 1	4 March	Course Introduction. What makes a good play?
	6 March	Being Dramatic. <i>Reading Due: "EF's Visit to a Small Planet" (distributed in class); PG p.114-125; Zen "The Joy of Writing"</i> Writing Entry #1 Due: PG Exercise 5 #1, p.125 and Exercise 6: Writing From An Image, p.138
Week 2	11 March	Structure. Action. Motivation and Subtext. <i>Reading Due: PG p.21-56; Zen "Run Fast, Stand Still"</i> Writing Entry #2 Due: PG Exercise #1: The Action Scene, p.47
	13 March	Structure. Action. Motivation and Subtext.
Week 3	18 March	Conflict. Stakes. Event. <i>Reading Due: PG p.57-107</i> Writing Entry #3 Due: PG Exercise 2: The Conflict Scene, p.72 OR Exercise 3: The Event Scene, p.95
	20 March	Beats, Scenes, Acts.
Week 4	25 March	Impulse. Character. <i>Reading Due: PG, 126-137, p.170-202; Zen "How to Keep and Feed a Muse"</i> Writing Entry #4 Due: Character work
	27 March	Impulse. Character. Ten-minute play.
Week 5	1 April	Break—No Class.
	3 April	Break—No class.

School of English, Film, Theatre, & Media Studies
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Week 6 **8 April** Journey of the Play. Ten-minute play.
Reading Due: PG p.204-218; Zen "The Secret Mind"
Writing Due: DRAFT OF Ten-minute play (in class)

10 April Ten-minute play lab. Writing the longer script.

Week 7 **15 April** Playwright's Workshop.
Reading Due: PG p.231-241 (Feedback)

17 April Playwright's Workshop.
Writing Due: Assignment 3: Ten-minute play (via Blackboard by 12pm noon)

MID -TRIMESTER BREAK
Monday 22 April to Sunday 28 April 2013

Week 8 **29 April** Playwright's Workshop.
1 May Playwright's Workshop.

Week 9 **6 May** Playwright's Workshop.
8 May Playwright's Workshop.

Week 10 **13 May** Playwright's Workshop.
15 May Playwright's Workshop.

Week 11 **20 May** Playwright's Workshop.
22 May Playwright's Workshop.

Week 12 **27 May** Playwright's Workshop.
Writing Due: Assignment 4: Final Project (via Blackboard by 12pm noon)

29 May Playwright's Workshop.

Week 13 **3 June** Queen's Birthday—Public Holiday
5 June Course Wrap-up. Looking ahead.