

## THEA 222 Special Topic: Scriptwriting

**Trimester 1 2014**

3 March to 2 July 2014

**20 Points**



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

### IMPORTANT DATES

Teaching dates:	3 March to 6 June 2014
Easter/Mid-Trimester break:	18 April to 4 May 2014
Last assessment item due:	26 May 2014
Withdrawal Dates:	Refer to <a href="http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds">www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds</a> . If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to <a href="http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats">www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats</a> .

### CLASS TIMES AND LOCATIONS

#### Lectures

Mondays and Wednesdays	3.10 – 5.00pm	FT83/203
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### NAMES AND CONTACT DETAILS

<b>Course Coordinator:</b>	Lori Leigh	<a href="mailto:lori.leigh@vuw.ac.nz">lori.leigh@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 6712	77FT Room 304
<b>Programme Administrator:</b>	Cathy McCullagh	<a href="mailto:cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz">cathy.mccullagh@vuw.ac.nz</a>	463 5359	FT83/Room 202

## 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.

## PRESCRIPTION

This course provides grounding in dramaturgical principles and approaches to both the reading and the writing of scripts for theatre. Students will develop an understanding of dramatic structure. The course will explore strategies for development of action, character, dialogue, idea, stage directions and scenographic potential.

## COURSE CONTENT

This course provides a practical and theoretical approach to writing scripts for performance. It will proceed from writing exercises, including scenework, to developing a short play as a final project.

## COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES (CLOS)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. Understand and apply some of the basic principles of dramaturgy in the making of a script for performance.
2. Understand the fundamentals of playwriting such as structure, dramatic action, motivation, subtext, and conflict to develop scripts.
3. Develop the habit of writing frequently and consistently.
4. Work with collaborators to apply dramaturgical principles to performance processes.
5. Develop the skills and vocabulary for giving and receiving constructive critical feedback in a creative workshop environment.
6. Understand and utilize the process of rewriting, revision, and drafts.

## TEACHING FORMAT

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

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- a) complete all the written assignments proposed. Please note that no assignments will be accepted after 16 June.

b) Attend approx. 85% of the twice-weekly classes (no more than 3 absences). Lecturer to be given prior notice of intended absence. Medical certificate or comparable documentation required for absence from two or more consecutive classes.

## WORKLOAD

The expected workload for a 20 point course is 200 hours over the trimester or 13 hours per teaching week. The classes are participatory throughout, and four hours attendance per week is expected. Therefore, roughly 30% of the hours is class attendance. The remaining time (9 hours per teaching week) will be spent reading class materials including scripts of peers (2-3 hours), and developing and completing the assignments that are spread evenly through the length of the course (6-7 hours). This time includes preparing your working (printing, etc.) for workshopping. 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.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 <b>Feedback and Workshop:</b> You will be assigned a writing partner. This assessment includes reading of peers' scripts and constructive criticism of work presented. You will be marked on the quality of your critique of your peers' writing (your skills and vocabulary to talk about new writing).	10%	1, 3, 4, 5	<b>Awarded at the end of the trimester</b>
2 <b>Writing Portfolio:</b> In this assignment, students will complete short writing exercises throughout the term focussing on various tools of playwriting such as action, conflict, characterisation, dialogue, impulse.	30%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	<b>As per schedule in Course Programme</b>
3 <b>Writing Journal:</b> 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. The journal will be formally submitted and marked twice in the trimester.	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	<b>Submitted twice: Wednesday 2 April, in class; Wednesday 14 May, in class or via Blackboard</b>
4 <b>Short Play:</b> Students will complete a ten-minute play or a one-act play (10 pages minimum). A final draft will be submitted, but drafts (due as assigned) will be workshopped in class and rewritten which contribute to the final mark.	40%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	<b>Monday 26 May, 12pm noon, via Blackboard</b>

This course is internally assessed, with assessment comprising written assignments and a feedback and workshop mark. More detailed information on assignments will be given in class and posted on Blackboard. Though there is no group assignment, per se, this class fosters a collaborative environment where students are expected to read and listen to each other's work.

**Marking Criteria:** These assignments will be marked 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. Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be available to students on assignment sheets distributed in class and via Blackboard.

### SUBMISSION AND RETURN OF WORK

Work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by Turnitin the online plagiarism prevention tool.

Electronic assignments are submitted as a MS Word file through Blackboard. How to name your file and step-by-step instructions can be found on Blackboard in the "Assignments and Turnitin" section.

Your marked assignment will be found on Blackboard in the same section.

Hardcopy assignments are submitted in the drop slot outside the administration office: **83 Fairlie Terrace** or in class. Attach an assignment cover sheet or extension form, found on Blackboard or outside the administration office. Remember to fill in the lecturer's name.

Your marked assignment will be handed back by your lecturer electronically via Blackboard or in class if hardcopy. 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

In exceptional and unforeseen circumstances an extension may be granted. 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.

**No assignment without an extension will be accepted after Wednesday 25 June 2014. The Course Coordinator will not give an extension beyond Wednesday 25 June 2014.**

## Penalties

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.

## MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT AND/OR ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Additional expenses for this course include the cost of printing and photocopying the appropriate number of scripts for class.

## SET TEXTS

Stuart Spencer, *The Playwright's Guidebook* (New York: Faber and Faber)

You can order *textbooks and student notes* online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz).

## RECOMMENDED READING

Additional readings will be distributed in class or posted on the course Blackboard site. You are, of course, encouraged to read and see plays throughout the trimester.

## CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

This course has been adapted from the 300-level scriptwriting paper (THEA 320).

Student feedback on University courses may be found at

[www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

In week six or seven of the trimester your class representative will be invited to a meeting with the Programme staff. In week five your class representative will ask the class for any feedback on this course to discuss at this meeting.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

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**THEATRE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE THEA 222ST**

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute:  
[www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)
- School website: [www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/seftms)

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THEATRE PROGRAMME COURSE OUTLINE THEA 222ST

**THEA 222ST COURSE PROGRAMME**

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>3 March</b>  <b>5 March</b>	Course Introduction. What is a playwright? What makes a good play?  Being Dramatic.  <b>Reading Due:</b> Jose Rivera's "36 Assumptions"; "The Joy of Writing"; PG p.1-20, p.114-125. <b>Writing Entry #1 Due (Writing Portfolio).</b>
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>10 Mar</b>          <b>12 Mar</b>	Structure. Action. Motivation. Subtext.  <b>Reading Due:</b> PG p.21-56; <i>Affair Play</i> by Jessica Goldberg; <i>Handsome</i> by Diana Son. <b>Writing Entry #2 Due:</b> PG Exercise #1  Structure. Action. Motivation. Subtext
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>17 March</b>          <b>19 March</b>	Conflict. Stakes. Event.  <b>Reading Due:</b> PG p.75-107. <i>Wedding Duet</i> by Lauren Wilson. <b>Writing Entry #3 Due:</b> <i>The Conflict Scene</i> , p.72.  Beats, Scenes, Acts.
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>24 March</b>          <b>26 March</b>	Character.  <b>Reading Due:</b> PG p.126-137. <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i> by Samuel Beckett. <b>Writing Entry #4 Due:</b> <i>Character Work</i> .  Character.
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>31 March</b>          <b>2 April</b>	Ideas.  <b>Reading Due:</b> <i>Last Tuesday</i> by Donald Margulies.  Journey of the Play. The Short Play.  <b>Writing Journal Submission #1 Due in class.</b>
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>7 April</b>          <b>9 April</b>	Playwriting Workshop. Feedback.  <b>Reading Due:</b> PG p.231-241 ( <i>Feedback</i> )  Playwriting Workshop.
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>14 April</b>          <b>16 April</b>	Playwriting Workshop.  Playwriting Workshop.

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<b>Mid Trimester Break: Friday 18 April to Sunday 4 May 2014</b>		
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>5 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
	<b>7 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>12 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
	<b>14 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.  <b><i>Writing Journal Submission #2 Due in class.</i></b>
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>19 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
	<b>21 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>26 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.  <b><i>Writing Due: Short Play (Assignment 4) via Blackboard by 12pm noon</i></b>
	<b>28 May</b>	Playwriting Workshop.
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>2 June</b>	NO CLASS (Queen's Birthday)
	<b>4 June</b>	Course Wrap-up. Looking ahead.
<p>*Reading due means the assigned reading is to be completed before and will be discussed in class. PG= <i>The Playwright's Guidebook</i>. Additional reading may be assigned in class and via Blackboard.</p>		