

EN 4933/6933, Survey of Contemporary Literature
Fall 2010, TH 2-3:15

R. West

BOOKS:

A. R. Ammons, *The Selected Poems: Expanded Edition*

Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*

Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*

Brooks McNamara, ed., *Plays from the Contemporary American Theater*

(From this anthology we'll read Beth Henley's *Crimes of the Heart*
and August Wilson's *Ma Rainey's Black Bottom*.)

Eudora Welty, *Collected Stories*

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We will examine work by eight American, British, and Canadian authors active in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. Class discussion will often focus on these issues:

- Questions of value(s). Why is a given work worth reading? What behaviors and ways of thinking and feeling does it seem to espouse?
- Theory vs. praxis. What kind of aesthetic does an author articulate in essays, interviews, and elsewhere—and how does that relate to his or her artistic practice?
- Tradition vs. innovation. How does a contemporary literary work participate in the history of its genre?
- Questions of canonicity. How does a contemporary work (or a contemporary author) become widely regarded as “major”?

COURSE WORK:

Three exams, two papers, and a reading journal.