BOOKS:

One or two plays, to be determined.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
We’ll examine work by several English-language authors active in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, focusing 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. practice. What 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 form or genre?
- Questions of canonicity. How does a contemporary work (or a contemporary author) become widely regarded as “major”?

WRITTEN WORK:
There will be two exams, two papers (8-10 pp. each), and a reading journal.