Four Mid 20th Century American Plays
Their Impact on Theater and the World

Syllabus Winter Term, 2020 OLLI BOULDER
5 Week course - Wednesdays 9:30am-11:30am beginning January 15, 2020

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In this course, we will discuss four important American plays, specifically, the historical and cultural influences of the times in which they were written, their impact on the playwrights who wrote them and on the theater and the world going forward.

Readings:  
Our Town (1938) by Thornton Wilder
The Glass Menagerie (1944) by Tennessee Williams
The Crucible (1953) by Arthur Miller
A Raisin in the Sun (1959) by Lorraine Hansberry

Any publication of the above plays will suffice for the class, but I do find that the publications by Penguin Classics and A New Directions to be the most accessible, especially regarding the information provided in their introductions and Notes on the Play.

Most publications should be readily available at Barnes and Noble, abebooks.com, or at your local libraries.

Introductory Note: Starting Week 2, please be prepared to discuss each of the plays in successive weeks in the order listed below.

Week 1 — January 15th — Introduction to the Course: a general discussion regarding the major historical and cultural events of the first part of the 20th Century and a review of theater in America during that time

Week 2 — January 22nd — A discussion of Our Town by Thornton Wilder (1897-1975)

Week 3 — January 29th — A discussion of The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams (1911-1983)

Week 4 — February 5th — A discussion of The Crucible by Arthur Miller (1915-2005)

Week 5 — February 12th — A discussion of A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965)