

English 3328-001 American Literature 1865 to the Present

Fall 2021 Tuesday and Thursday 11:20—12:45 CRN 93855

Professor Theron Britt

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TEXTS:

Robert S. Levine *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*

Shorter Ninth Edition, Volume 2: 1865 to the Present ISBN13: 9780393264531

Don DeLillo *White Noise* ISBN 978-0-143-10598-5

Course syllabus and other materials will be posted on *eCourseware*.

AIMS AND ORGANIZATION:

This course will trace the development of American literature from themes of self-reliance and American individualism and exceptionalism associated with the realism of the nineteenth century, on through to literary movements that questioned these American literary values and opened up questions of class, race, and gender. These literary movements after realism include naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism. A key part of the story common to these different literary modes of American literature has to do with the confrontation of the American individual—a self often figured as divorced or apart from specific social circumstances—with society's destructive attempt to regulate her or his individuality. And so as a way to organize a large body of work, we will examine how succeeding generations of writers engaged with or modified this common image of the individual struggling with social constraint. We will examine how American writers, faced with the prospect of inventing new ways to understand and represent a quickly changing social order, constructed, critiqued, or manipulated both the dominant narratives of American life and the received narratives of literary history.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of American literature from the Civil War to the present.
- Identify important American writings, writers, movements, and themes from the Civil War to the present and relate these works to their historical context.
- Understand basic periods of American literature. Specifically, students should be able to understand the development of American literature from 19th century realism on into to naturalism, modernism, postmodernism, and contemporary literary movements.
- Interpret and analyze both orally and in writing, the works of important American writers after 1865, with attention to both breadth of coverage and depth of analysis.

OUR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES: Our class will be in person. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has upended all our lives for over a year, it may be that the University will mandate certain precautions in the Fall 2021 semester (e.g. social distancing in the classroom). If so, we will adapt as needed.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the aesthetic differences between realist, modernist, and postmodernist American literature
- Utilize contemporary modes of literary analysis including techniques of close reading
- Explain how issues of class, race, and gender have been presented in American literature from the post-Civil War era to the present
- Write a short (five pages) scholarly paper about a literary work
- Correctly use the conventions of scholarly citation

ASSIGNMENTS, WRITTEN WORK, and GRADES: The course will be graded on the basis of **1,000 points** as follows:

- **Three midterm exams** of equal weight, each worth **200 points**. The midterm exams will be equally weighted and focused on the assigned readings and class discussions. Typically, the exams will have three specific questions for you to answer.
- **Frequent quizzes over the reading**, worth a total of **100 points**.
- **Three short response papers** (two pages) over the reading material, worth a total of **150 points** submitted to a Dropbox folder in *eCourseware*. Response papers will be approximately two pages (double-spaced) and will be on assigned topics designed to encourage you to think about the reading material *ahead of class* and formulate a response that you can share with others. Students will have several days to write a response paper. However, response papers turned in after the date for which they are due will suffer significant point reduction.
- **Discussion posts** in response to a specific prompt about the weekly readings, worth a total of **150 points** (15 points each).
- **Attendance and participation** are required.
- **Optional or Bonus Paper Assignments.** To substitute for a missed quiz or just to improve your grade you will have two options to write short papers (3-5 pages) on the material that was missed, or for extra credit (25 points each), one in the first half of the semester, and one in the second half. The optional short papers for extra credit will be on assigned topics. These short papers are expected to conform to the *MLA Handbook, 8th edition* Works Cited citation format. You can either buy the *Handbook* or look up what you need online. See: https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html
- **Plus/minus grading.** Note that final grades will be rated on the plus/minus scale as follows: an "A+" 966-1000; an "A" 935-965; an "A-" 900-934; a "B+" 866-899; a "B" 835-865; a "B-" 800-834, and so on.

- **Preparation.** This class will cover a broad range of issues and texts and consequently means that you have a good amount of reading to do. You are expected to do your reading *before* each class period.
- **Your written work** may be submitted to **Turnitin.com** for an evaluation of the originality of your work and, where appropriate, proper use and attribution of sources. By taking this course, you agree that all written assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included in *Turnitin.com's* restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: In general, late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangements, though exceptions may be made for medical, financial, or familial emergencies. If a problem arises that makes it difficult to impossible for you to finish an assignment on time, the earlier that you are able to contact me about it the better, as this class moves quickly through the reading material and the writing assignments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work submitted for the class must be your own, and you are not allowed to use previously submitted academic work to fulfill requirements. If you use the work of others in your assignments (including anonymously published analyses, comments, or postings on websites), you must acknowledge and accurately cite their contributions. Plagiarism of any kind or extent will result in failure on the assignment and other consequences as per University policy, which can include failure in the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university. For further information, please see “Academic Dishonesty” at the website for Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: For further information on University policies regarding classroom conduct, plagiarism, and other issues, please see the website for the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS: Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities. Students who have a disability or condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to contact **Disability Resources for Students** (DRS) to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modification or accommodations. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to all students with disabilities who present a memo from DRS. Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to discuss your specific needs with me in private. Students with disabilities should also contact DRS at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880 or at www.memphis.edu/drs. DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION: The CWC serves all members of the University of Memphis (UofM) community (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become successful writers and speakers. CWC consultants are trained in writing- and speech-tutor methodology and can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing or speech in any stage of development. While the CWC welcomes the opportunity to assist clients with their writing and/or speech, it does not function as an editing service. While COVID-19 continues to demonstrate its presence, all CWC consulting will take place via Upswing, UofM's online academic support online platform. Students can schedule online appointments via Upswing by visiting the following link: <https://memphis.upswing.io/>. Once logged in, students should search "writing" in the search bar and scroll all the way down. By choosing "writing" or "Center for Writing and Communication," CWC consultations will populate first. ***Students are strongly encouraged to use CWC consultants whenever possible, rather than Upswing consultants.***

SYLLABUS

WEEK 1	Introduction
WEEK 2	Bret Harte "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (e-copy) Harte "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (298-305) Mark Twain "The Notorious Jumping Frog . . ." (101-105)
WEEK 3	William Dean Howells "Editha" (307- 317) Robert Frost, poems t.b.a.
WEEK 4	Stephen Crane "The Open Boat" (584-600) Jack London "To Build a Fire" (628-639) First Midterm Exam
WEEK 5	Susan Glaspell <i>Trifles</i> (743-752) Edith Wharton "The Other Two" (498-512) Kate Chopin "The Story of an Hour" (425-427)
WEEK 6	F. Scott Fitzgerald "Winter Dreams" (965-980) William Faulkner "Barn Burning" (1004-1016)
WEEK 7	Richard Wright "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" (1060-1069) Eudora Welty "Petrified Man" (1094-1103)
WEEK 8	Flannery O'Connor "Good County People" (1340-1353) Second Midterm Exam
WEEK 9	Fall Break
WEEK 10	Philip Roth "Defender of the Faith" (1435-1456) John Barth "Lost in the Funhouse" (copy)
WEEK 11	Joan Didion "The White Album" (ecopy) Raymond Carver "Cathedral" (1495-1505)
WEEK 12	Maxine Hong Kingston from <i>The Woman Warrior</i> "No Name Woman" (1507-1515) Third Midterm Exam

WEEK 13	Don DeLillo <i>White Noise</i> Don DeLillo <i>White Noise</i>
WEEK 14	Don DeLillo <i>White Noise</i> Don DeLillo <i>White Noise</i>
WEEK 15	Sandra Cisneros "Woman Hollering Creek" (1588-1597) Jhumpa Lahiri "Sexy" (1650-1665)
WEEK 16	Junot Diaz "Drown" (1666-1673) Study Day FINAL EXAM