

English 392, 20th Century American Novel
CRN 13044, Fall 2013
Mondays & Wednesdays 8:30 – 9:50 a.m.
Lillis Hall 111

Instructor: Kristy Bryant-Berg PhD

Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 10-11:30 a.m. or by appointments

Office Location and Phone: PLC 343, 541-346-3975

Email: kbryantb@uoregon.edu (I don't routinely check my email on weekends so plan well in advance when emailing for clarifications or additional help.)

Course Objectives

This course develops appreciation and understanding of 20th century American novels by examining a small but provocative sampling to exemplify notable trends. We will explore both modernist roots reshaping the American novel and contemporary highlights that also challenge the novel's form while increasingly complicating American identity. Each novel will be examined, not only individually for accurate comprehension, but also in relation to each other to build an overall sense of how 20th American novels address and/or suppress the national sins spawning and haunting American culture. Brief lectures and supplementary in-class readings will be used periodically to provide background about each author's larger work and identify central concerns and controversies surrounding each novel; our class discussions will be geared to inspire development and strengthen support of your unique interpretations through careful attention to form as content.

Required Texts

My Antonia by Willa Cather

The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner

Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

Bless Me Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya

Beloved by Toni Morrison

Painted Drum by Louise Erdrich

Note: Access to the internet and a University of Oregon web account are requirements of this course because announcements and assignments will be distributed periodically through email and/or the blackboard class site, which requires an email account for access.

Course Requirements and Grading

1. Writing Journal: Many of our class discussions will include brief writing journal exercises to help you begin organizing your thoughts in response to the assigned novels and developing your interpretations; all of these writing journal entries should be chronologically organized and will be due on the last day of class. Although some of these exercises may be informal, your responses will be graded based on **evidence of careful consideration of the writing prompts and assigned questions, accurate and thoughtful integration of specifics from the novels, and overall thoroughness** for 5% of your final grade.
2. Participation in Discussion & In-Class Activities: Since this class relies heavily on close-reading discussions, the active engagement of everyone is crucial. For the purposes of this course, active engagement has three main components: **respectful and attentive listening to the comments and ideas of others, significant contribution to in-class discussions, and productive participation in the various in-class activities, such as group work or writing exercises, assigned over the course of the term.** If you feel you may have a problem meeting these criteria, please come see me during the first week of the term. Active participation in discussions and class activities, **combined with any quizzes which may be given**, will represent 10% of your course grade.
3. Panel Discussions: Once during the term, along with several of your fellow classmates, you will be required to participate in a panel responding to the assigned novel. Together, the student panelists will lead a discussion of the portions of the novel assigned for the day, roughly fifteen minutes per panelist. These panels must be completed on the specified due dates. Each member of the panel will also submit a list of proposed discussion questions and materials, due for instructor approval, the class meeting prior to the panel due date. **In the event that this prep work is not submitted on time, a late penalty (10% of the assignment score)** will be deducted from the overall assignment grade. This panel discussion will be worth 10% of your course grade.

4. Midterm Exam: The midterm will require both identifications and close reading of brief passages from the first three novels. (15%)
5. Final Exam: The final will require both identifications and close reading of brief passages from the last three novels. (15%)
6. Short Essay (3-4 pages): The short essay will require a clear thesis supported by careful close reading of assigned passages from one of the first three assigned novels. (15%)
7. Final Essay (5-6 pages): The final essay will require a clear thesis supported by careful close reading of assigned passages from two assigned novels, at least one of which must be from the second half of the term. (30%)

Policies

1. Attendance: More than two unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your final course grade by one grade step (from a B to a B-, for instance) per absence **regardless of the cause**; therefore, it will be your responsibility to budget your absences in case of illness. In addition, please note that class will start promptly, and if you arrive after class begins, you will be considered late. Four late appearances equal one absence and will affect your grade accordingly. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes late, you will be marked as absent. **When you miss a class or are late, it is your responsibility to check with your classmates or myself to find out what you have missed, such as mandatory class activities or announcements regarding schedule changes.**
2. Honesty: **Plagiarism is unacceptable in this class under any circumstances and the University policies regarding plagiarism will be strictly enforced.** All work submitted for this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented using MLA format. Please refer to the "Format and Documentation" handout and the summary of the Code of Student Conduct in the *Schedule of Classes*. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the University of Oregon. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. **In the interests of ensuring academic honesty, each of the two essays will need to be submitted to SafeAssign for an anti-plagiarism scan in addition to submitting hardcopies for grading.**
3. Class Environment: Because your primary opportunity to practice your close reading skills will be during our class discussions, your participation and attentiveness in class are crucial to your learning, and will affect your grade. **Remember to bring the assigned readings and relevant materials to class.** The use of cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, or any other distracting electronic devices during class will significantly lower your participation grade, and the user of any such device may be asked to leave and receive an absence for the day. Likewise, verbally attacking your peers, carrying on private conversations, reading the newspaper or working on assignments for other courses **do not contribute to attentive participation and will affect your grade accordingly.**
4. Late Work: If you are ill or unable to attend class, I will accept course work delivered by a peer or by email **only** if it is delivered **before** the end of class time on the due date. Because the course is cumulative, **I will not be able to accept late essays!** Therefore, it is better to turn in incomplete work on time rather than nothing at all, as you may at least be eligible for partial credit. Likewise, exams must be taken on the scheduled date and cannot be made up, except in the event that I am promptly notified of a documented medical emergency. In addition, please note that I will not be accepting any computer based excuses. It is your responsibility to start your work early enough so that even if computer problems arise you will still be able to get your work done on time.
5. Format: **All assignments for this course must be typed, double-spaced, and have standard font and size** (Arial or Times New Roman in 11 or 12 point) **and one-inch margins all around.** Please see the "Format and Documentation" handout for complete instructions. Failure to follow any of the formatting guidelines, as specified in the "Format and Documentation" handout, may lower your grade for the assignment at least one full grade (from an A to a B, for instance) or more.
6. Incompletes: No incompletes will be granted except in the case of documented emergency. In the event an undergraduate student is forced to take an Incomplete, she or he will have one calendar year to make up the incomplete mark assigned by a UO faculty member. Failure to make up the Incomplete at the end of one calendar year will result in the mark of "I" automatically changing to a grade of "F" or "N."

7. Access: The University of Oregon strives to create inclusive learning environments. If you have a disability (physical or learning) which you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can make arrangements, if necessary, for your full access to all classroom activities. You may also wish to contact Disability Services in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or disabsrv@uoregon.edu.
8. Registration: The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb.
9. Syllabus: Be sure to read the syllabus carefully, if you have any questions or concerns after reading it please contact me during the first week of class. Your continued enrollment in this class indicates that you understand and accept the expectations and requirements as detailed in this syllabus.

Schedule of Events & Due Dates (subject to change at Instructor's discretion)

Note: All articles are to be read before the class period for which they are assigned.

Week 1

Monday (9/30) – Discuss Syllabus and Schedule of Events

Wednesday (10/2) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book I & II)

Week 2

Monday (10/7) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book III & IV)

Wednesday (10/9) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book V)

Week 3

Monday (10/14) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (April Seventh, 1928)

Wednesday (10/16) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (June Second, 1910)

Week 4

Monday (10/21) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (April Sixth, 1928 & April Eighth, 1928)

Wednesday (10/23) – Class Discussion: *Of Mice and Men* (Sections 1-3)

Week 5

Monday (10/28) – Class Discussion: *Of Mice and Men* (Sections 4-6)

Wednesday (10/30) – **Midterm Exam**

Week 6

Monday (11/4) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Uno-Siete); **Short Essay is due by the end of class**

Wednesday (11/6) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Ocho-Catorce)

Week 7

Monday (11/11) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Quince-Veintidos)

Wednesday (11/13) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Part I: Sections 1-9)

Week 8

Monday (11/18) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Part I: Sections 10-18)

Wednesday (11/20) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Parts II & III)

Week 9

Monday (11/25) – Class Discussion: *Painted Drum* (Part I)

Wednesday (11/27) – Thesis and Outline Workshop for Final Essay

Week 10

Monday (12/2) – Class Discussion: *Painted Drum* (Part II)

Wednesday (12/4) – Class Discussion: *Painted Drum* (Part III); **complete Writing Journal is due**

Wednesday (12/11) – Final Essay is due in PLC 343 before noon

Friday (12/13) 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (Lillis Hall 111) – Final Exam (no advance exams will be offered)