

English 392
20th Century American Novel
Winter 2014

Professor: Dr. David J. Vázquez
Office: 263 PLC
Phone: 541-346-1051
Email: vazquez@uoregon.edu

Class time: Tues, Thurs. noon - 1:20 pm, 360 Condon
Office Hours:
Tuesdays, 9:00 am - 10:00 am
Thursdays, 9:00 am - 10:00 am and
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm or by appointment

Course Description:

To paraphrase author Juan González, this course will take us on a ‘new journey’ through the American story. We will read a variety of novels that document various experiences that question what it means to be ‘American.’ Our readings will include canonical and non-canonical novels that also trouble the genre of the novel itself.

Course Goals:

1. Introduce the history, scope, and major critical trends in the 20th-Century U.S. novel.
2. Consider the ways in which U.S. novels imagine questions of race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship.
3. Develop student understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class in literary and popular culture texts
4. Deepen student understanding of the complexity of U.S. literary culture, especially the development of the novel.

Learning Outcomes

(Students will be able to...)

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the novel genre and its changes over time.
2. Demonstrate a better understanding of the construction of citizenship and social belonging in the United States.
3. Develop close reading and textual analysis skills.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of the social construction of race, gender, sexuality, and class.

Required Texts (Available at the UO Bookstore)

Baldwin, James, *Giovanni's Room*
Fitzgerald, F. Scott, *The Great Gatsby*
Morrison, Toni, *Beloved*
Okada, John, *No-No Boy*
Silko, Leslie Marmon, *Ceremony*
Wharton, Edith, *The Age of Innocence*
Whitehead, Colson, *The Intuitionist*

Requirements

1. **Read, Read, Read!** My main requirement is that you read. The reading for this course is both engaging and intensive. However, falling behind in the reading will put you at a disadvantage during class discussions. If I feel that people are falling behind in the reading, I reserve the right to give reading quizzes. I would prefer to spend our time in class discussing these interesting and provocative texts. However, I will not hesitate to give reading quizzes.
2. There is one paper required in this course. It will be a 3-5 page response paper due on Friday, March 7 at 5:00 pm via SafeAssign on Blackboard. Your task in the paper will be to provide an analysis of a theme related to the course in one or more of the texts. You may also choose to write a paper that performs a close reading on one or more of the texts. I'll provide details about the paper as the quarter develops.

3. **Two Exams:** There will be a mid-term and a final exam for the course. The final will take place at 10:15 am on Wednesday, March 19.
4. **Discussion Questions:** All students will sign up for one discussion question during the quarter. Students will introduce their discussion questions with a 3-5 minute presentation. While it should be brief, you should be prepared for a formal presentation. This means that you should be ready to get up in front of the class to explain your ideas and provide supporting cues for our discussion. Please feel free to use the chalkboard, PowerPoint, or any other A/V aids that you like. If you require any additional audio or video equipment, please notify me at least 48 hours in advance.

While your participation grade is not solely dependent on a discussion question, you cannot receive full credit for participation if you do not present a question. If you are not in attendance to present your discussion question, you will not receive credit. All discussion questions **MUST** be posted to the discussion forum on Blackboard 24 hours **prior** to your assigned time. Please plan your reading accordingly

Those **NOT** presenting on a given day are responsible for reading the discussion question prior to our class meeting. Please make sure to check the discussion question forum on Blackboard before each class.

Grading

Mid-term: 30 percent

Final: 30 percent

Papers: 25 percent

Participation: 15 percent

Participation consists of **all** of the following: reading the assigned texts on time, participating in in-class discussions, and attendance.

Policies

- Attendance and Participation are mandatory: You may not miss more than two class meetings without a documented excuse. Absences may be excused in the case of illness, serious injury, or a family or other emergency. Absences for missing the bus, oversleeping, or other preventable matters will not be excused.
 - **Participation includes oral participation**, participating in group work, completing in-class assignments, coming to class prepared (and on time), AND presenting your discussion question In order to receive full credit for participation, you should be prepared to speak at each class meeting. Participation also means that you will **ALWAYS** bring the text(s) with which we are currently working, always bring necessary writing materials, always bring your questions about the reading, and always bring a respectful and positive attitude.
- Tardiness: It is imperative that you get to class on time. I will also respect this aspect of our time. We all have tight schedules. Please respect me, your classmates, and most of all yourself by getting to class on time. If you are coming from a place on campus that consistently prevents you from arriving on time, please let me know ASAP so that we can make an arrangement.
- Paper Policies:
 - All written work must be typed, stapled, and double-spaced with one-inch margins on all sides.
 - Fonts should be 12 points.
 - All written work must include your name, the course, the instructor's name, and the name of the assignment in the upper left corner.
 - Page counts are vital. Papers shorter than **three full pages** will not be graded. Likewise, papers **longer than six pages** will be marked down 1/2 letter grade for each page that exceeds the limit. If you are having trouble with these limits, please see me ASAP so that we can work together on developing your paper.

- Handwritten work will not be accepted.
- Make sure to number your pages.
- Please document citations using the MLA format. You can get the MLA style guidelines online at <http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/Library/workshop/citmla.htm> or you can check the reference desk at the library.
- You are responsible for keeping a backup copy of all of your work. Backups may take the form of computer copies, hard copies, or both. In any event, make sure that you have a readily accessible copy of ALL of your work. Your computer crashing is not a valid excuse for missing an assignment.
- **Please turn your off your cell phone.**
- **No laptops, tablets, smart phones, or other electronic devices will be allowed.** The only exception to this rule will be in the case of a documented accommodation.
- Bring the assigned text to class.
- How to address me: Please feel free to call me Professor Vázquez or Dr. Vázquez. Calling me by my first name is not acceptable. I don't care for Mr. Vázquez. My preference is for Professor Vázquez.

About Making Life Easier for Each Other

This course is not designed to be competitive. In fact, a competitive atmosphere will work against the activities of the class. Many of the activities are interactive, and each individual deserves the full cooperation of everyone else. **The one rule that is sacred in this classroom is to respect everyone**—each other, me, and the authors. Disagreements will happen and ideas will be challenged, but they must be controlled and expressed *academically*—which means in a civil, well-considered, and intelligent manner. Please note that we **WILL** be discussing the political ramifications of these texts. These may include discussions that may at first *seem* unrelated to the material at hand. My hope is that you will begin to understand that **NO** text emerges in a political or aesthetic vacuum. In fact, as we will soon see, these texts have important political and social implications for our everyday lives. For this reason, please bring an open mind and a patient attitude. It is much easier to learn from each other, about each other, and about ourselves when we are listening.

Timeline

This syllabus is primarily a reading guide. As such, it may be subject to revision.

<u>Week 1:</u>	<u>Ready by This Date:</u>
Tuesday 1/7	Introduction
Thursday 1/9	Spengemann, "What is American Literature?", Hames García, "Which America is Ours?"
<u>Week 2:</u>	
Tuesday 1/14	Edith Wharton, <i>The Age of Innocence</i> Ch. 1-18
Thursday 1/16	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> Ch. 18-27
<u>Week 3:</u>	
Tuesday 1/21	<i>Age of Innocence</i> Ch. 27-end
Thursday 1/23	<i>F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby</i> , Ch. 1-5
<u>Week 4:</u>	
Tuesday 1/28	<i>Gatsby</i> 5-end
Thursday 1/30	John Okada <i>No-No Boy</i> , Ch. 1-4
<u>Week 5: Mestizaje/Midterm</u>	
Tuesday 2/4	<i>No-No Boy</i> , Ch. 4-end
Thursday 2/6	Midterm
<u>Week 6:</u>	
Tuesday 2/11	James Baldwin, <i>Giovanni's Room</i> pp. 1-148
Thursday 2/13	<i>Giovanni's Room</i> pp. 148-end
<u>Week 7:</u>	
Tuesday 2/18	Leslie Marmon Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> pp. 1-160
Thursday 2/20	Silko, <i>Ceremony</i> , pp. 160-end Guest Lecturer: Professor Kirby Brown
<u>Week 8:</u>	
Tuesday 2/25	Reading/Composition day--no class
Thursday 2/27	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> pp. 1-105
<u>Week 9:</u>	
Tuesday 3/4	<i>Beloved</i> , pp. 106-165
Thursday 3/6	<i>Beloved</i> , pp. 166-end
Friday 3/7	Submit Paper to SafeAssign on Blackboard by 5:00 pm
<u>Week 10:</u>	
Tuesday 3/11	Colson Whitehead, <i>The Intuitionist</i> , pp. 1-140
Thursday 3/13	<i>The Intuitionist</i> , pp. 140-end