

ENG 392 20th Century American Novel

Instructor: Dr. Bethany Jacobs
e-mail: bjacobs@uoregon.edu
Office: 213 PLC
Office Hours: T/TH 10:00-12:00 and by appt.
Office Phone: (541) 346-3924

Term: Fall 2014
CRN: 12227
Class Location: Lillis Hall 175
Class Time: T/TH 8:30-9:50

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course will examine the formal and thematic strategies of the 20th Century American novel, and seek to expand our understanding both of what the American Novel is, and what it means to be an “American.” This is a loaded identity category which the 20th century literary canon has not always represented holistically. One of our projects will be to debate the value and drawbacks of trying to determine what makes a novel specifically American. The fraught history of the 20th century will have bearing on that goal, as we consider the impacts of World Wars I and II, the Holocaust, Japanese internment, Civil Rights and Black Nationalist struggle, globalization and capitalism, and increasing environmental anxiety. To this purpose, we will read six novels which represent a breadth of American identities and concerns. We will also read narrative theory and theories of U.S. identity, in order to broaden our understanding of the novel in the unique context of American history and the 20th century. This course is reading and writing intensive, and will invariably give back to you exactly as much as you give to it.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

The Department’s assessment procedure for the Undergraduate English Major is built around six desired learning outcomes:

- 1) read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
- 2) draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
- 3) perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic, and other cultural texts;
- 4) write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
- 5) employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
- 6) employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis.

REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS

- *Herland* (1914) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- *Passing* (1929) by Nella Larsen
- *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952) by Ernest Hemingway
- *White Noise* by Don DeLillo (1985)
- *The Lone Ranger & Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993) by Sherman Alexie
- *Locas* (1997) by Yxta Maya Murray
- Access to UO webmail and Blackboard (BB). Additional course readings will be posted on BB.

COURSE WORK AND GRADING

Grade Breakdown

Preparedness & Professionalism

Class Participation	15%
Discussion Groups	15%

Written Work

Close Reading Essay	25%
Paper Proposal	15%
Final Essay	30%

Class Participation

This class is predicated upon the strong communication of ideas both in writing and in discussion. Your active participation in discussions is essential. Your participation grade also reflects your class preparedness (doing all the reading) and your professionalism (for example, in course correspondence and classroom behavior).

Discussion Groups

Early in the term I will divide you into six discussion groups. Your group will be responsible for giving an in-class presentation on a piece of scholarly criticism that is applicable to our discussions as a class. This piece of scholarship will be available on Blackboard, and the course schedule will tell you what day your presentation is due. Presentations should include not merely an overview of the article's argument and "plot," but a discussion of how this piece of scholarship broadens our understanding of the novel we are reading at the time. Presentations should be no more than 20 minutes, and ALL group members must participate. I encourage you to meet early with your group and/or me to begin planning for your presentation.

Close Reading Essay

Your mid-term for this course is a 1,000-1,200 word close reading essay (3-4 pages). We will discuss this assignment in more depth during Week 3, but you should bear in mind that you must have a draft of this paper ready for peer review in Week 4.

Paper Proposal

In Week 9 you will turn in a 300 word paper proposal (1 page) detailing the argument you intend to make in your Final Essay. We will discuss this assignment in more depth later in the term, but you should bear in mind that your final essay must incorporate at least two outside scholarly sources, and that your paper proposal should include explanation of those sources and how they will contribute to the argument of your paper.

Final Essay

Your final essay will be 1,500-2,000 words (5-7 pages) and will make an argument relevant to one of our course texts. We will discuss strategies for writing a strong final essay later in the term.

COURSE POLICIES

Access: The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me in week one if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You may also wish to contact the Accessible Education Center in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Attendance: Attendance is required. You may miss two class meetings for any reason. Additional absences will each lower your course grade by 1/3. For example, three absences will reduce a B- to a C+, four absences will reduce a B- to a C, and so on. You are responsible for anything you miss if you are not in class, and you are responsible for turning in assignments on time whether or not you attend class. If you are absent, arrange to get notes from a peer. Do NOT email me asking me to review for you what you have missed.

Formatting Guidelines for Written Work: All written work must be typed and double-spaced using a reasonable 11 or 12-point font and 1 inch margins. You must date all your work, and put your last name and page number on each page following the first page (if the paper is only one page long, you do not need page numbers). The heading on your first page must be single space and include your name, the course name, and the date. If possible, print your work double-sided in order to conserve paper. Use MLA format for quoting and citing sources. For an example of proper formatting, see Example Essay Format on Blackboard.

Etiquette: Rudeness and unprofessionalism in class will not be tolerated. TURN OFF all cell phones before class and refrain from unnecessary chatter and other distracting behaviors. Texting during class is not allowed. If I see you using your phone during class, you will be marked absent without notification.

Late Work: The Due Dates on the Course Schedule are hard deadlines. I do not accept homework assignments late. Unexcused late essays will drop 1/2 of a letter grade for each DAY they are late. Extensions on essays are negotiable if you request them at least 24 hours in advance of the Due Date. If you must miss class, please turn in your homework before our class meeting, or arrange to have a classmate bring it.

Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. In cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources.

Incompletes: The Director of Undergraduate English Studies must approve requests for the grade "Incomplete" in advance of the end of the quarter. Such approval will be granted only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed by students through unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

Course Schedule: I may change, add, or substitute assignments or topics as appropriate to our work as a class. It's important for you to not only come to class every session but also to stay aware of when and what assignments are due.

ENG 392 Schedule of Assignments

Date	Week	Reading Assignment	Writing Assignment	Discussion Group
9-30	1-1			
10-2	1-2	Gilman: chapters 1-5 BB: Warhol		
10-7	2-1	Gilman: chapter 6-end		
10-9	2-2	BB: Rich		Group 1
10-14	3-1	Larsen: Part I		
10-16	3-2	Larsen: Part II		
10-21	4-1	BB: Ellison		Group 2
10-23	4-2		Close Reading Draft due to peers via email on 10-22 by 5pm	
10-28	5-1	Hemingway: all	Close Reading Paper due via email on 10-27 by 5pm	
10-30	5-2	BB: Morrison		Group 3
11-4	6-1	DeLillo: Part I & II		
11-6	6-2	DeLillo: Part III		
11-11	7-1	BB: Sandoval		Group 4
11-13	7-2	Alexie: - p.129		
11-18	8-1	Alexie: p.130-end		
11-20	8-2	BB: Moretti		Group 5
11-25	9-1	Murray: Part I	Paper Proposal Due	
11-27	9-2	Thanksgiving Holiday: No Class		
12-2	10-1	Murray: Part II		
12-4	10-2	BB: Anderson & Brown		Group 6
12-9	11-1	Finals Week: No Class	Final Paper Due	