

ENG 392: 20th Century American Novel, CRN: 22092
Winter 2015, T/Th 12:00 – 1:20pm, Lillis 185

Instructor: Daniel Platt

Office: PLC 235

Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday: 2:00 – 4:00, and by appointment

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Course Objectives: This course offers a survey of the American novel in the 20th century. Our reading will span from Willa Cather's 1918 novel *My Ántonia* to a yet-to-be-determined novel from 2014.

Throughout the term, we'll focus on three key goals:

- To understand the conventions of the novel as a literary form, as well as the major formal and stylistic transformations in the American novel over the past one hundred years.
- To identify central themes and concerns in these texts, to explore how those themes are represented in language, and to trace themes as they appear across multiple works over time.
- To critically examine representations of race, gender, sexuality, and citizenship in the American novel, and to interpret these representations through the economic, social, and cultural history of the United States.

As a class, we'll work toward each of these goals through careful and attentive reading, rigorous discussion, and persuasive, analytical writing.

The English Department's assessment procedure 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 Texts:

- Willa Cather: *My Ántonia*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*
- Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- Leslie Marmon Silko: *Ceremony*
- Don DeLillo: *White Noise*
- Helena María Viramontes: *Under the Feet of Jesus*
- Final Novel TBA: *2015 Tournament of Books Selection*

Grading (assignment sheets will be distributed in class and posted to Blackboard):

- First Paper 20%
- Final Paper 30%
- Book Group Presentation 15%
- Quizzes 30% (7 quizzes worth 5% each. Lowest score dropped.)
- Participation 5%

ASSIGNMENT OVERVIEWS

Papers (50%): There will be two papers for this course: the first will be due at the end of Week Five, and the second will be due at the end of Week Ten. More detailed assignment guidelines—along with a grading rubric—will be distributed soon.

Quizzes (30%): Instead of a mid-term and a final, we'll have seven in-class quizzes throughout the term. The quizzes will draw from the readings, class lectures, and discussions. Quizzes will usually occur during the first ten minutes of class and cannot be made up. I will drop your lowest score from the first six quizzes (the last quiz will automatically count). I'll give a sample quiz before the first one.

Book Group Project (15%): I will divide the class into seven book groups (one for each novel we're reading in class). Then, I will assign each book group a scholarly article related to their novel. The book group project has three parts, which will be weighted equally in the grading:

- Together, the group will write a two-page annotation of the article, including a summary of the author's argument and a discussion of how the article enriches your reading of the novel. The written assignment is due via email on the day your group presents.
- The group will make a ten-minute presentation to the class, summarizing the article, explaining its significance to the novel, and introducing some questions for small group discussion. Each group member should speak during the presentation.
- Each group member will then lead a ten- to fifteen-minute small-group discussion of the reading. I strongly recommend printing a handout for your classmates with your discussion questions and any passages from the article you may wish to discuss.

Sign-ups for book groups will happen during the first week of class. Final assignment sheet to come.

Participation (5%): I expect each student to contribute to classroom discussions of the assigned readings. You should critically read each assignment and come to class prepared with questions and comments that might help to guide discussion of the material. Please treat the ideas and opinions of your classmates with respect and attention. Disrespectful or disruptive classroom conduct will affect your participation grade. As part of your participation grade, you'll be expected to meet with me for a short conference once during the term.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty: All work submitted in this class must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. If you are in doubt about whether something needs to be cited or not, cite it. Please refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct in the *Schedule of Courses*. 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.**

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 uoac@uoregon.edu.

Attendance: Regular attendance is necessary to your success in this class. You may miss two classes without penalty. For each absence after your second, your grade will be lowered by one third of a letter (for example, from a B to a B-), unless you have contacted me and we have agreed on other

arrangements. If you need to miss a class, you are still responsible for turning in any assignments that are due on that day. Three latenesses will count as one absence.

Blackboard and Email: If you think you may have trouble accessing Blackboard throughout the term, please see me as soon as possible. I'll send any announcements I need to make to the class via email. Please be sure to check your email accounts regularly. Finally, I ask that you email all assignments to me, instead of handing in paper copies. Assignments can be emailed anytime before the start of class on the day that the assignment is due. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours.

Class Preparedness: Please be sure to bring your assigned readings to every class.

Discrimination/Inclusion: All students, faculty, and staff are expected to adhere to University of Oregon policies related to discrimination based upon ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs, and traditions. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructor and/or department head. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. Find more information at their website at <http://bias.uoregon.edu/index.html> or by calling (541) 346-2037.

Format For All Written Assignments: All assignments must be typed in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with standard (1¼ inch left and right, 1 inch top and bottom) margins and 0 pt. spacing before and after paragraphs. The first page of each paper should have a single-spaced heading that includes your name, the date, the essay assignment number, and an original title. All papers must also include a properly formatted works cited page.

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 students cannot complete some minor but essential aspect of the course due to unforeseen circumstances beyond their control.

Late Work: All work turned in after the start of class on the day it is due will be counted late. Late papers will be marked down one letter grade for each calendar day they are late. If you're absent from class the day an assignment is due, you're still responsible for emailing the assignment by the time class regularly begins.

Sexual Violence, Harassment and Survivor Support: The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

CLASS SCHEDULE	READ AND DISCUSS FOR TUESDAY	READ AND DISCUSS FOR THURSDAY
Week One	1/6	1/8
	Introduction/Syllabus/Course Goals	<i>My Antonia</i> , Book I
Week Two	1/13	1/15
	<i>My Antonia</i> , Book II	<i>My Antonia</i> , Books III – V Presentation: Book Group I
Week Three	1/20	1/22
	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , Chapters I-III	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , Chapters IV-VI
Week Four	1/27	1/29
	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> , Chapters VII-IX Presentation: Book Group II	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Chapters 1-5
Week Five	2/3	2/5
	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Chapters 6-14	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Chapters 15-19 Presentation: Book Group III ESSAY ONE DUE FRIDAY BY 5PM
Week Six	2/10	2/12
	<i>Ceremony</i> , pages 1-82	<i>Ceremony</i> , pages 83-178
Week Seven	2/17	2/19
	<i>Ceremony</i> , pages 180-Finish Presentation: Book Group IV	<i>White Noise</i> , Part I: Waves and Radiation
Week Eight	2/24	2/26
	<i>White Noise</i> , Part II: The Airborne Toxic Event	<i>White Noise</i> , Part III: Dylarama Presentation: Book Group V
Week Nine	3/3	3/5
	<i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> , Parts 1-2	<i>Under the Feet of Jesus</i> , Parts 3-5 Presentation: Book Group VI
Week Ten	3/10	3/12
	FINAL NOVEL TBA	FINAL NOVEL TBA Presentation: Book Group VII ESSAY TWO DUE VIA EMAIL BY 8AM ON THURSDAY, MARCH 19TH