

English 391, 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Novel  
CRN 32095, Spring 2016  
Tuesday & Thursday 10-11:50 a.m.  
Pacific Hall 16

Instructor: Kristy Bryant-Berg PhD

Office Hours: Fridays 9a.m.- noon

Office Location and Phone: PLC 343

Email: kbryantb@uoregon.edu (I don't routinely check my email on weekends.)

### Course Objectives

This course is designed to develop appreciation and understanding of the American novel by tracing its 19<sup>th</sup> century development. The novels we will read include examples of the historical novel, the sentimental novel, the novel of manners, regionalism and realism. We will explore the 19<sup>th</sup> century roots of the American novel in relation to their historical contexts, such as the public and political demand for a uniquely American literature, and the American novel's role in propagating and critiquing belief in manifest destiny. We will examine each novel to explore how it fosters or complicates American identity and how it addresses and/or suppresses national sins. Brief lectures and supplementary in-class readings will be used to provide background about each author's larger work and a sense of the central concerns and controversies surrounding each novel, while our class discussions will be geared to develop confidence in your ability to develop and convincingly support your interpretations.

### English Department Learning Outcomes

English 391 is geared to help students develop and improve the following skills:

- 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 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

*The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper

*Hope Leslie* by Catharine Maria Sedgwick

*Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain

*The Turn of the Screw* by Henry James

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 Canvas class site, which requires an email account for access.

### Course Requirements and Grading

1. **Participation in Discussion & In-Class Activities:** Since this class relies heavily on discussion and in-class collaboration, your participation and attentiveness in class are crucial to your learning, and will affect your grade. Thus, the use of cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, laptops, or any other distracting electronic devices during class will significantly lower your participation grade, and the user of any such device will receive an absence for the day and may be asked to leave. Likewise, 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. **Remember to bring the hard copies of assigned readings and relevant materials to class.** The grading schema will be as follows: A – Always comes to class prepared and raises

the level of the discourse community through insightful class comments and focused, active listening and outstanding class work; B – Always comes to class prepared and routinely contributes thoughtfully to the discourse community through productive class comments, active listening and class work; C – Comes to class prepared to work and often contributes to the discourse community through pertinent, respectful class comments, active listening and class work; D – Is frequently unprepared for class and does not contribute respectfully to the discourse community or effectively engage in class work; and F – Is almost always unprepared for class and disrupts the discourse community or class work. If you feel you may have a legitimate difficulty meeting these expectations, please come see me during the first week of the term. Active participation in discussions and class activities, **combined with any reading comprehension/note-taking quizzes given**, will represent 10% of your course grade.

2. Writing Journal: Journal entries will be due before many of our class discussions of the assigned readings and workshops. Some of these brief writing journal exercises will help you improve your comprehension and retention of the readings, while also practicing critical reading and developing your responses to the assigned readings and the arguments they raise. Although these journal entries are less formal than the assigned essays, your responses to assigned readings will be graded based on five main criteria required for full credit: 1 – They must be written in full sentences; 2 – They must be clear and concise; 3 – They must fully answer the questions offered in the prompts; 4 – They must include accurate explanations of quotations from the assigned readings; and 5 – They must go beyond description to offer interpretations and analysis of the specific examples and quotes that are described. Other journal entries will pertain to your essay prep, such as developing questions at issue, enthymemes and outlines. There will be five journal entries (one per novel), each worth 2%, for a total of 10% of your final grade.
3. Short Essay (3-4 pages): The short essay will require a clear thesis supported by careful close reading of passages from one of the first two assigned novels. In addition to submitting hard copies for each stage of these essay cycles, the final graded essays must also be submitted online via Canvas for evaluation with the University of Oregon's anti-plagiarism program, VeriCite. **Failure to submit a copy to VeriCite will result in the lowering of the total grade for the essay cycle by one grade step.** This short essay will be worth 20% of your course grade.
4. Final Essay (5-6 pages): The final essay will require a clear thesis supported by careful close reading of passages from any two of the last three assigned novels. In addition to submitting hard copies for each stage of these essay cycles, the final graded essays must also be submitted online via Canvas for evaluation with the University of Oregon's anti-plagiarism program, VeriCite. **Failure to submit a copy to VeriCite will result in the lowering of the total grade for the essay cycle by one grade step.** This short essay will be worth 30% of your course grade.
5. Final Exam: The final exam will be cumulative and will require identifications, close reading of brief passages, and a brief in-class essay requiring synthesis from all five assigned novels. (30%)

### Policies

1. Attendance: More than three 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. Three 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 VeriCite for an anti-plagiarism scan in addition to submitting hardcopies for grading.**

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.”
6. 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](mailto:disabsrv@uoregon.edu).
7. Registration: The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb.
8. 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.
9. Trigger Alert: The required texts that will be read, examined and discussed in the assignments and classwork for this course involve instances of violence like details of battles, slavery, racism and death that some readers/viewers may find disturbing or, otherwise, offensive. Please keep in mind your current threshold for such fictional content as you consider your enrollment in this course.

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

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

Week 1

Tuesday (3/29) – Discuss Syllabus and Schedule of Events

Thursday (3/31) – Class Discussion of *The Last of the Mohicans* (Chapters 1-3)

Week 2

Tuesday (4/5) – Class Discussion of *The Last of the Mohicans* (Chapters 4-15)

Thursday (4/7) – **Journal Entry #1 is due**; Class Discussion of *The Last of the Mohicans* (Chapters 16-21)

Week 3

Tuesday (4/12) – Class Discussion of *The Last of the Mohicans* (Chapters 22-33)

Thursday 4/14) - Class Discussion of *Hope Leslie* (Preface & V.1 Chapters 1-3)

Week 4

Tuesday (4/19) – Class Discussion of *Hope Leslie* (V.1 Chapters 4-12)

Thursday (4/21) – **Journal Entry #2 is due**; Class Discussion of *Hope Leslie* (V.2 Chapters 1-5)

Week 5

Tuesday (4/26) – Class Discussion of *Hope Leslie* (V.2 Chapters 6-15)

Thursday (4/28) – Class Discussion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Chapters 1-5); **Thesis & Outline for Short Essay due for Workshop**

Week 6

Tuesday (5/3) – **Journal Entry # 3 is due**; Class Discussion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Chapters 6-20)

Thursday (5/5) – Class Discussion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Chapters 21-30); **Two page draft of Short Essay is due for Peer Review**

Week 7

Tuesday (5/10) – Class Discussion of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Chapters 31-45)

Thursday (5/12) – Class Discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapters 1-5); **Short Essay is due**

Week 8

Tuesday (5/17) – Class Discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapters 6-22)

Thursday (5/19) – **Journal Entry # 4 is due**; Class Discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapters 23-30)

Week 9

Tuesday (5/24) – Class Discussion of *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Chapters 31-43)

Thursday (5/26) – Class Discussion of *Turn of the Screw* (Chapters TBA); **Thesis & Outline for Final Essay due for Workshop**

Week 10

Tuesday (5/31) – **Journal Entry #5 is due**; Class Discussion of *Turn of the Screw*; (Chapters TBA)

Tuesday (6/2) – Class Discussion of *Turn of the Screw*; (Chapters TBA); **Three page draft of Final Essay is due for Peer Review**

Finals Week

Wednesday (6/8) – **Final Essay is due before noon in PLC 343 & to VeriCite via Canvas**

Friday (6/10) – **Final Exam is 8:00 -10:00 a.m.**