Between History and Words:  
The Interaction, Intervention, and Interrogation of Literature, History, and Authorship

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Office Hours: MON 11:30pm-2:30pm

The purpose of this course is to introduce you to the genre of literary fiction. We will be particularly interested in how history influences a text, and alternatively, how a particular text reflects and comments on a particular historical period. Our purpose is not only to see the correspondences between literature and history, but to also see how different texts, written in different historical periods, interact with each other and how this interaction influences the way we think today.

An alternative function of this class will be for you to gain the critical and analytical tools necessary to write a good argumentative English paper that proposes an idea – or thesis – and uses examples from the text to support it. You will learn, in other words, how do “read” a work of fiction: how to pick out details from a text to describe what you believe an author is trying to say.

On the way, you will learn various terms central to literary analysis such as plot, point of view, metaphor, theme, and symbolism (to name only a few). We will use these tools to examine how particular texts work. This class not only aims to improve your ability to perceptively read fiction, but to also enliven your understanding of how the genre of literary fiction reacts to, influences, and profoundly impacts our culture and our lives.

Required Texts:  
The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter 7th edition

Required Assignments:
First Paper (4-5 pages) 20%  
Second Paper (5-7 pages) 25%  
Final Exam 20%  
Quizzes 20%  
Participation and Attendance 15%

Class Policies:
ATTENDANCE: Your regular attendance is vital to this course. You may miss only two class meetings without penalty. Your final grade will drop one-third of a letter grade for each subsequent absence. You are still responsible for making sure your work is turned in on time, despite absence.

PARTICIPATION: In order for our class discussions to be stimulating and productive, students must be prepared to discuss the reading assignment on the day that it is due and be willing to actively participate. I expect each student to respond to the ideas of fellow classmates thoughtfully and considerately. Participation will heavily factor into your final grade. For example: a student that participates often, but whose final grade amounts to a B, will see his/her final grade increase to a B+ or even an A-. Conversely, an A student that does not participate at all risks earning an A- or even B+ for the course.
PAPER FORMAT: All essays must be typed, double-spaced, and stapled. You must use a twelve-point font in Times New Roman format your paper for one-inch margins. All papers must have a title. Documentation must conform to MLA Works Cited style. For questions on this style, please see me.

LATE WORK: A hardcopy of paper assignments must be brought to class on the due date. If you are going to be absent from class on the day any assignment is due, you must either see that someone else brings it for you or make arrangements with me to hand it in early. Late papers will be graded down two steps (for example, A to B+ or B- to C) per calendar day unless you have an emergency situation, you have discussed it with me, and I have granted an extension prior to the due date. Weekends and days we do not meet are included because I will accept drafts electronically in situations where they are late; it is still your responsibility to get me a hardcopy for purposes of commenting and grading.

QUIZZES: Quizzes will be frequent, if not daily. Always come to class prepared to take a reading quiz at the beginning of class. Quizzes cannot be made up.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: I am committed to providing assistance to help you be successful in this course. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. Please notify me during the first two weeks of class if you have a disability (physical, psychological, or learning) which you think may affect your performance in this class. Please request that the Counselor of Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: Plagiarism is unacceptable in this class under any circumstance and the University policies regarding plagiarism will be strictly enforced. Every portion of 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. For information on academic dishonesty please refer to the Code of Student Conduct in the Schedule of Classes. Plagiarism will result in an automatic failing grade for the course. This includes incorrect citation of works.

Course Schedule:
Wk.1: M 1/3:
  W 1/5: Introduction
    Assignment: What Comprised “Literature” in America from the “Beginnings” to 1820?
  F 1/7: American Literature from the “Beginnings” to 1820
    Assignment: Read Introduction: American Literature to 1820
    Washington Irving: Introduction, Rip Van Winkle

Wk.2: M 1/10: American Literature to 1820, Rip Van Winkle (1of2)
  W 1/12: Rip Van Winkle (2of2)
    Assignment: James Fenimore Cooper: Introduction, The Last of the Mohicans (Vol. I, Ch. 3)
  F 1/14 The Last of the Mohicans, Discuss First Paper Assignment

Wk.3: M 1/17: NO CLASS (MLK Day)
    Assignment: Poe: The Fall of the House of Usher
  F 1/21: The Fall of the House of Usher
    Assignment: Coming up with possible Paper topics and proposals (Paper #1 due in a week);
    Nathaniel Hawthorne: Introduction, The Minister's Black Veil

Wk.4: M 1/24: Coming up with possible Paper topics and proposals, The Minister's Black Veil
    Assignment: Hawthorne: The Birthmark
W 1/26: The Birthmark
F 1/28: Paper #1 Due; Critical Perspectives and Outside Sources
    Assignment: Herman Melville: Introduction, Benito Cereno

Wk.5: M 1/31: Benito Cereno (1of2)
    W 2/2: Benito Cereno (2of2)
    Assignment: Read Introduction: American Literature to 1865-1914
    Ambrose Bierce: Introduction, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge
F 2/4: American Literature to 1865-1914, An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge
    Assignment: Mark Twain: Introduction, The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County

Wk.6: M 2/7: Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County
    Assignment: Charles W. Chesnutt: Introduction, The Wife of His Youth
W 2/9: The Wife of His Youth
    Assignment: Stephen Crane: Introduction, The Open Boat
F 2/11: The Open Boat
    Assignment: Jack London: Introduction, To Build a Fire

Wk.7: M 2/14: To Build a Fire
    Assignment: Sara Jewett: Introduction, The White Heron
W 2/16: The White Heron
    Assignment: Perkins Gilman: Introduction, The Yellow Wall-paper
F 2/18: The Yellow Wall-paper
    Assignment: Read Introduction: American Literature to 1914-1945
    William Faulkner: Introduction, Barn-Burning
    Ernest Hemingway: Introduction, The Snows of Kilimanjaro

Wk.8: M 2/21: Read Introduction: American Literature to 1914-1945, Barn-Burning, The Snows of Kilimanjaro (1of3)
W 2/23: Barn-Burning, The Snows of Kilimanjaro (2of3)
F 2/25: Barn-Burning, The Snows of Kilimanjaro (3of3)
    Assignment: Read Introduction: “American Literature since 1945”
    Ralph Ellison: Introduction, Invisible Man (Chapter 1: Battle Royale)

Wk.9: M 2/28: American Literature since 1945, Invisible Man
    Assignment: Jack Kerouac: Introduction, Big Sur (Chapters 12-4)
W 3/2: Big Sur (Chapters 12-4)
    Assignment: Paper #2 Assignment (due next Friday)
F 3/4: 2nd Paper: Presentation
    Assignment: Come to class next Monday and Wed. to work on your papers

Wk.10: M 3/7: Paper #2 Workshop (1of2)
    W 3/9: Paper #2 Workshop (2of2)
    F 3/11: Paper #2 Due; A Sample of American Poetry since 1945