Senses of Place in American Literature

In this course we will explore the many ways American writers have represented senses of place--and senses of being displaced--in poetry, fiction, and non-fiction from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. Within the limitations of a ten-week quarter, we will examine these varying of senses of place in relation to key literary historical movements, particular geographical regions, and ethnicites.

Required Texts


Attendance

Two unexcused absences are permitted; thereafter final grades are lowered one-third letter grade for each absence.

Readings Schedule

BB= available on Blackboard

1/9 M: Introductions and course overview; key terms from *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, 4th ed. (2000) [handout]
1/11 W: Paul C. Adams, “Peripatetic Imagery and Peripatetic Sense of Place” (2001) and Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (1855) [BB]

1. Romantic Implacement and Displacement

1/16 M: Henry Thoreau, “The Village” (from *Walden*, 1854) and “Walking” (1862); Edgar Allan Poe, “Man of the Crowd” (1840) [BB];
1/18 W: Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” (1886); Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case” (1905) [BB]

2. Regionalism, Alienation, Ethnicity


For relationships among characters in Berry stories, see Port William Genealogies” on BB

2/1 W: Zitkala-Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), “Impressions of an Indian Childhood,” and “School Days of an Indian Girl” (1900) [BB]
   Review and compare with Jewett, “A White Heron” and Cather, “Paul’s Case”

2/6 M: Midterm Exam

3. Loss, Memory, and Modernism

2/8 W: Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)
2/13 M: Toomer, *Cane*
2/15 W: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
2/20 M: Hurston, *Their Eyes*

2/29 W: James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (1965) [BB] + jazz (tba)

   Special Event, March 1 (Friday):
   All day symposium “Place and Displacement in African American Literature”
   Knight Library Browsing Room
3/5 M: Symposium debrief; writing project discussion

4. Imagining Globalizations

   Final Take-Home Essays distributed
3/12 M: *Tropic of Orange*
3/14 W: No Class

3/18: FINAL ESSAYS DUE to rossiw@uoregon.edu by 12noon Wednesday, March 14
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Written and Oral Graded Work

For 469 students, the graded work for the class will consist of occasional pop readings quizzes (8%); a midterm exam (20%); an extended analytical and personal essay (30%); symposium attendance and written session summary (12%); and a take-home final essay examination (35%). 569 students will also take the quizzes (8%), submit the symposium session summary (12%), and write the midterm (20%). In addition, they will do required supplemental reading, complete an annotated bibliography or a two-book review essay (15%), and present an oral summary of one book to the class (5%). For their final essay, grad students may either write a longer version of the take-home final or a comparable paper on a topic to be worked out in conference with me (40%). Descriptions and guidelines for these various written assignments will be distributed separately.
Class Regulations and Courtesies

1) You are expected to come to class on time and stay until the end. If you must leave early, please let me know before class and sit near the door, so that you can leave unobtrusively. You will of course be responsible for any information you miss. I recommend getting notes from a classmate.

2) Please respect your classmates; this means you should be actively listening to the lectures and discussions, as opposed to texting or email. Except for specified situations, such as group presentations, our attention during class will focus on discussion.

3) Laptop computers will generally not be necessary and may not be used in this class unless you have a documented disability. Therefore, please take notes by hand and transcribe them to your computer after class if doing so would be helpful for you.

4) Similarly, please turn off and put away your cell phones and refrain from leaving the room to text or check mail during our class session.

Plagiarism: All work completed for this class must be your own. If you cheat (hand in your friend's work or copy directly from the internet or a book, etc.) you will (at the very least) fail the class and your name will be registered with the University. For guidelines and University rules on this very serious matter, see: http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/

Students with Disabilities
I will make every effort to accommodate students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me as soon as possible. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. Counselors can be contacted at Disability Services [http://ds.uoregon.edu/], 346-1155.