

English 469  
Winter 2020  
10-11:20 TTh  
121 MCK

Prof. William Rossi  
363 PLC; 346-3955  
Hrs: TTh 11:45-1:15  
rossiw@uoregon.edu

## 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, including one recent feature film. 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 ethnicities.

### Required Texts (available in UO Bookstore)

Wendell Berry, *That Distant Land* (Counterpoint).  
Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed (Wiley).  
William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (Random House).  
Bobbie Ann Mason, *Shiloh and Other Stories* (Random House).  
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin).

### Course Learning Outcomes

In this upper-division English course, students can expect to learn how to do the following:

- read post-1850 American literary texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
- draw on theories of humanistic and critical geographical theories of place to situate these texts within their cultural and historical contexts, particularly regarding ideologies of modernity and “modernization”;
- perform critical, formal analyses of the works we study;
- write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
- employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce persuasive arguments;
- and employ primary and secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, on selected assigned writings.

### Reading, Participation, and Attendance Policy

Reading, participation, and attendance are mandatory. Bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade is based on class discussion, in-class writing and reading, and small group work.

Two absences are permitted in the term, whether excused or unexcused does not matter. Missing class more than twice will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each

absence beyond the two permitted. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes for that day from a classmate and otherwise catch up on any material you have missed.

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**Readings Schedule** (subject to change)

1/7 Introductions, course overview, locating place in literature

**Romantic Implacements**

1/9 Cresswell, *Place*, pp. 1-39; William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed . . . Above Tintern Abbey” (1798); and Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (1855)

**Regionalism, Alienation, and “Ethnic Landscapes”**

1/14 *Place*, pp. 39-61; Paul C. Adams, “Peripatetic Imagery and Peripatetic Sense of Place” (2001) Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” (1886)

1/16 Zitkala-Ša, “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” and “School Days of an Indian Girl” (1900) Literary place analysis # 1 due

1/21 Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case” (1905); James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (1965)  
Literary place analysis # 1 due

**Modernization, Memory, and Resistance**

1-23/1-28 Wendell Berry, essays: “Higher Education and Home Defense”  
“The Prejudice Against Country People”; stories in *That Distant Land*: “Thicker Than Liquor,” “It Wasn’t Me,” “The Boundary,” and “Fidelity” (1986-2005).  
*See Port William character genealogies and geography posted on Canvas.*

1/30 Midterm Exam

2/4 William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (1942) “The Old People,” “The Bear” I, II, and III.  
*For help with narrative chronology, see “The Chronicle of Ike McCaslin” posted on Canvas.*

2/6 Faulkner, “The Bear” IV, V  
*See McCaslin family genealogy posted on Canvas*

2/11 Faulkner, “The Bear” IV, V (con’t)

2/13 Faulkner, “Delta Autumn;” Tim Cresswell, *Place*, pp. 62-87

2/18 Bobbie Ann Mason, *Shiloh and Other Stories* (1982-85), “Shiloh,” “Old Things”  
Literary place analysis # 2 due

2/20 Mason, “Residents and Transients,” “Nancy Culpepper,” and “A New-Wave Format”  
Literary place analysis # 2 due

### Imagining Globalizations, Finding Home and Homelessness

2/25 Cresswell, *Place*, pp. 88-97; Doreen Massey, “Imagining Globalisation: Power-Geometries of Time-Space;” Barry Lopez, “Flight” (1995)

2/27 Leslie Marmon Silko, “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” and Gary Paul Nabhan, from *Cultures of Habitat*; Silko, *Ceremony* (1977)

3/2 *Ceremony*

3/4 *Ceremony*

3/8 Optional Personal Place prospectus due to rossiw@uoregon.edu by 5 pm.

3/9 7pm [PLC 353] screening of *Leave No Trace*, directed by Debra Granik (2018)

3/10 *Leave No Trace* discussion

3/12 Final Exam

Finals Week: Optional Personal Place Essay DUE by 5 pm Dec. 6 electronically  
(rossiw@uoregon.edu)

### Readings Available on Canvas (in order assigned)

William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798”

Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”

Edward Casey, “Implacement” and “Displacement,” from *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* [grad students only]

Paul C. Adams, “Peripatetic Imagery and Peripatetic Sense of Place”

Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron”

Zitkala-Ša, “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” and “School Days of an Indian Girl”

Willa Cather, “Paul’s Case”

James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”

Wendell Berry, “Higher Education and Home Defense”

\_\_\_\_\_, “The Prejudice Against Country People”

\_\_\_\_\_, Port William character genealogies and geography

“The Chronicle of Ike McCaslin” and McCaslin family genealogy  
Doreen Massey, “Imagining Globalisation: Power-Geometries of Time-Space”  
Barry Lopez, “Flight”  
Leslie Marmon Silko, “Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective” and Gary Paul Nabhan, excerpt from *Cultures of Habitat*

## Graded Work

The graded work for the class will consist of two **literary place analysis** papers (10% and 20%); **participation** (15%); a **midterm** (20%); and a **final** exam (35%). A **creative personal place essay with reflection** is offered for extra credit. Descriptions and guidelines for written assignments will be distributed separately.

Please note that all written assignments are due at the beginning of class in hardcopy on dates listed in the separate assignment sheets and that no late work can be accepted.

## 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 the University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu](http://conduct.uoregon.edu)), which defines academic misconduct. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please don't hesitate to ask me.

## 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 meet with me in office hours soon. In addition, please request that the Accessible Education Center (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>) send me a letter outlining your approved accommodations.