

TWENTIETH CENTURY LITERATURE
1945-Present

ENG 395
CRN: 41412
Summer 2021
July 19-August 15
WEB

Instructor: Corbett Upton
Office: 375 PLC
Hours: *Via Zoom W 1-3 & by appt.*
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Course Description: After the cataclysm of WWII, the old order was beginning to crumble. In this aftermath, many artists viewed the structures of empire and capital that undergirded Western civilization with deep suspicion and began to challenge the world that had wrought such destruction, to challenge the modern, to seek the post-modern. To challenge the status quo, then, in many ways, was an ethical response, if not a postwar imperative, that sought to affirm the value and dignity of the individual human life. In this class, we'll explore the ways that artists sought to make way for new stories and forms that acknowledged their own and others' humanity. ENG 395 satisfies the university's Group Requirement in the Arts and Letters category and it satisfies an upper division, 1789 to the present requirement in the English Major (I & II).

This is an online course offered over the Internet: Students are expected to have access to a computer and the Internet. All work for this course will be entirely online through Canvas and may be found on the course's Canvas site at <https://canvas.uoregon.edu>. The class format will consist of written online lectures, quizzes covering readings, discussion board participation, group chat participation, and formal writing assignments.

Course Objectives:

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 secondary sources with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay's thesis.

Required Texts (UO Bookstore):

Nicholson Baker, *The Mezzanine*
Joan Didion, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems*
Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*
Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Regular access to Canvas

Recommended: A good dictionary and a guide to MLA format. Active reading will require marking significant passages. Plan to access texts accordingly.

Assignments and Grading:

Discussion Board Posts & Responses 10%
Quizzes 20%
Weekly Writing Assignments 45%
Final Essay 25%

Grading Scheme

A+ (97%-100%), A (94%-96%), A- (90%-93%),
B+ (87%-89%), B (84%-86%), B- (80%-83%).
C+ (77%-79%), C (74%-76%), C- (70%-73%),
D+ (68%-69%), D (65%-67%), D- (60%-64%),
F 59% or below

Participation: Though the class will not meet face-to-face, regular participation is a requirement for this class. Your regular participation is vital to your success and to the success of the class as a whole. Class discussions in the form of online discussion board posts play a major role in the practice, composition, and analysis of assignments. You must be prepared to discuss the reading assignment on the day that it is due. Read the assigned texts closely, share your ideas and ask questions of your peers and your instructor.

Assignments:

Reading Assignments: All **readings** are due by the beginning of the class indicated on the course schedule attached to this syllabus.

Discussion Board Posts: Discussion board posts and responses are required. For each post, follow the directions on Canvas carefully and completely. In your posts, observe professional online etiquette, use complete sentences, and complete them on the date listed in the course syllabus (ideally after you've done the appropriate reading assignment). Discussion boards will remain open for 24 hours.

Quizzes: All quizzes will be completed online, using the course Canvas site. Each quiz will be open for 24 hours and will automatically close at the beginning of class time.

Writing Assignments: All **writing** assignments are due on the due date listed in the course schedule attached to this syllabus. I am happy to help you in advance of the due date on any assignment. All written work will be graded for form as well as content, so be sure to get help with your writing (including grammar) in plenty of time if you need it. This class is writing intensive and you are expected to write at your best and use writing assignments to demonstrate and improve your writing skills.

Policies

Course Content and Intellectual Discussion: The material in this course contains representations of a wide range of the human experience, including disturbing and controversial content such as war, graphic sexuality, violence, racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of institutionalized violence and oppression. Class discussions will candidly, seriously, and respectfully consider this content within the context of the course. Please review the course material during the first week of classes to determine if the content will interfere with your success in the course. Consult an academic advisor if you need to find an appropriate alternative course.

Registration Statement: The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb. The last day to add this or any writing class is the Friday of week one.

Contact Information: Office hours are offered online by appointment. I encourage you to contact me with class-related questions and concerns. If you need to contact me privately, please do so via email. Generally, I will respond to emails within 24 hours. If you have questions about course readings, assignments, quizzes, or other class-related material, please ask your question on the discussion board as others may have the same or similar questions. Please allow several days for grades to be posted.

Technological Considerations: Students must have regular, reliable access to a computer and the Internet to be successful in this course. Students must have basic computer skills and be able to access and browse the Internet.

Online Etiquette: One of the benefits of online courses is that they offer participants the opportunity to interact asynchronously; course participants most likely will not be "in" the online classroom at the same time. This means that most, if not all, of your interactions between your instructor and your peers will be written: discussion board forums, small group workshops, and email. Be sure to proofread your documents and thoughtfully consider what message you intend to convey to the class *before* you post to any course discussion board. Show respect and courtesy to your classmates and instructor at all times.

Computer Crashes: These things happen. However, you should always back up your files. If your computer crashes and you are unable to produce a copy of your work before the beginning of class, your paper will be late.

Technical Support: The *Information Services Technology Service Desk* (Tech Desk) can assist you M-F from 8:00am-5:00pm if you experience computing-related problems: **(541) 346-HELP** or techdesk@uoregon.edu. The *Center for Media and Educational Technologies* (CMET) can help you if you experience Canvas-related issues: <https://library.uoregon.edu/cmet/canvas/help/students1.html>. Contact your instructor as soon as possible if you are experiencing technology-related issues that may interfere with your ability to access the course.

Late Work & Incompletes: No late assignments will be accepted (unless you've made arrangements with me well in advance of the due date). Incompletes will be given for documented medical emergencies only

Academic Integrity: Please review the University policy regarding academic integrity *refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website:* <https://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct>.

Accommodation: 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 uoacc@uoregon.edu.

Observance of Religious Holidays: Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.

Course Schedule:

Note: All writing and reading assignments are due on the day listed. This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1: Introductions; Poems from WWII; *Postwar drama & the emergence of Contemporary Theater:*

- A Streetcar Named Desire*
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| M | 7/19 | Read: Course syllabus; ENG 395 Introductory Lecture: The Legacy of World War II; Poems from WWII; Tennessee Williams: Postwar Drama and the Emergence of Contemporary Theater (Canvas); <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> : "Introduction" (ix-xiv), and "The World I live In" (181-184), scenes 1-2. |
| T | 7/20 | Read: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , scenes 3-5
Introductions: Write 2-3 sentences introducing yourself to me and the class, <i>then</i> add 2-3 sentences giving your general impressions of the <i>Poems from WWII</i> packet, and provide a quote from <i>one</i> of the poems to illustrate your answer (cite the poet and line(s) of the poem [e.g. Reed 9-12]). |
| W | 7/21 | Read: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , scenes 5-7
Discussion: Wednesday, having read at least through Scene 7 of <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by this point, post a 3-5 sentence comment about the reading and <i>add a quote to illustrate your point</i> (be sure to cite the quote); then write 1-2 sentences in response to two others' comments. Due by midnight in your Canvas discussion group. |
| R | 7/22 | Read: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> , 8-11
Quiz: DUE Friday by midnight. |
| Sun. | 7/25 | Writing Assignment: DUE by midnight. |

Week 2: "The cooked and the raw": *The Divide in American poetic form after the war, 1945-1968: Gwendolyn Brooks & Allen Ginsberg*

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| M | 7/26 | Read: The Divide in American poetic form after the war, <i>1945-1968</i> (Canvas); Poetic Form (Canvas); <i>Selected Poems</i> by Gwendolyn Brooks: "The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith" (12-18), "Negro Hero" (19-21), "Gay Chaps at the Bar" (22-29) |
| T | 7/27 | Read: <i>Selected Poems</i> by Gwendolyn Brooks: "We Real Cool" (73), "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon." (75-80), "The |

Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till” (81), “The Lovers of the Poor” (90-93), “The Ballad of Rudolph Reed” (110-12), “Riders of the Blood-red Wrath” (115-18).

W 7/28 **Read:** *Howl and Other Poems* by Allen Ginsberg: Dedication, Howl for Carl Solomon (7-8), *Howl* (9-26), “Footnote to Howl” (27-28),
Discussion: Wednesday, having read all of Brooks and at least through “Footnote to Howl” by Ginsberg by this point, post a 3-5 sentence comment about Brooks OR Ginsberg and *add a quote from the reading* to illustrate your point (be sure to cite the quote); *then write* 1-2 sentences in response to two others’ comments. **Due by midnight in your Canvas discussion group.**

R 7/29 **Read:** *Howl and Other Poems* by Allen Ginsberg: “A Supermarket in California” (29-30), “Sunflower Sutra” (35-38), “America” (39-43).
Quiz: DUE Friday by midnight

Sun. 8/1 **Writing Assignment: DUE by midnight.**

Week 3: The New Journalism, 1962-1972: Slouching Toward Bethlehem

M 8/2 **Read:** “Writers are always selling somebody out: Joan Didion and The New Journalism (Canvas); *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*: Epigraph and Introduction (x-xiv), “Some Dreamers of the Golden Dream” (3-28).

T 8/3 **Read:** *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*: “John Wayne: A Love Song” (29-41), “Where the Kissing Never Stops” (42-60), “7000 Romaine, Los Angeles 38” (67-72).

W 8/4 **Read:** *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*: “Slouching Towards Bethlehem” (84-128).
Discussion: Wednesday, having read at least through page “Slouching Towards Bethlehem,” post a 3-5 sentence comment about the reading and *add a quote from the reading* to illustrate your point (be sure to cite the quote); *then write* 1-2 sentences in response to two others’ comments. **Due by midnight in your Canvas discussion group.**

R 8/5 **Read:** *Slouching Toward Bethlehem*: “On Keeping notebook” (131-41), “Notes from a Native Daughter” (171-86), “Letter from Paradise, 21° 19’ N., 157° 52’ W” (187-204).
Quiz: DUE Friday by midnight

Sun. 8/8 **Writing Assignment: DUE by midnight.**

Week 4: 1980s excess & the search for meaning: The Mezzanine

M 8/9 **Read:** Postwar Fiction 1980s excess & the search for meaning: Nicholson Baker (Canvas); *The Mezzanine* (1-34)

T 8/10 **Read:** *The Mezzanine* (35-70).

W 8/11 **Read:** *The Mezzanine* (71-104)
Discussion: Wednesday, having read at least through page 104, post a 3-5 sentence comment about the reading and *add a quote from the reading* to illustrate your point (be sure to cite the quote); *then write* 1-2 sentences in response to two others’ comments. **Due by midnight in your Canvas discussion group.**

R 8/12 **Read:** *The Mezzanine* (105-35)
Quiz: DUE Friday by midnight

Sun. 8/15 **Writing Assignment: DUE by midnight.**

Final Essay: DUE Friday, 8/20 by midnight (or earlier if you wish)