Instructor: Kristy Bryant-Berg PhD
Office Hours: Fridays 9 am to noon or by advance appointment
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Course Objectives
This course develops appreciation and understanding of 20th century American novels by examining a small but provocative sampling to exemplify notable trends. We will explore both modernist roots reshaping the American novel and contemporary highlights that also challenge the novel’s form while increasingly complicating American identity. Each novel will be examined, not only individually for accurate comprehension, but also in relation to each other to build an overall sense of how 20th American novels address and/or suppress the national sins spawning and haunting American culture. Brief lectures and secondary readings will be used periodically to provide background about each author’s larger work and identify central concerns and controversies surrounding each novel; our class discussions will be geared to inspire development and strengthen support of your unique interpretations through careful attention to form as content.

Required Texts
*My Antonia* by Willa Cather
*The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner
*Bless Me Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya
*Beloved* by Toni Morrison
*The Painted Drum* by Louise Erdrich

Note: Access to the internet and a University of Oregon webmail account are requirements of this course because announcements and assignments will be distributed via the class Canvas site.

Course Requirements and Grading
1. Close Reading Quizzes: Many of our class discussions, at least one per novel, will begin with brief close reading quizzes to both encourage students to keep up with the assigned reading schedule and help develop original interpretations of the novels; all of these close reading quizzes will be performed in class, will be open-novel, meaning you can use your novels and any notes you have written in them, and will be due via Canvas. Please routinely bring your laptop to class, or notify me during the first week of the term if you do not have regular access to a laptop, so we can make alternate arrangements. Your responses will be graded based on evidence of careful response to the writing prompts and questions, accurate and thoughtful integration of specifics from the novels, including analysis of direct quotations and overall thoroughness for 10% of your final grade.

2. Participation in Discussion & In-Class Activities: Because your primary opportunity to practice your close reading skills will be during our class discussions, your active engagement is crucial to your learning, and will affect your grade. For the purposes of this course, “active engagement” has three main components: respectful and attentive listening to the comments and ideas of others, significant contribution to in-class discussions, and productive participation in the various in-class activities, such as group work, research or writing exercises, assigned over the course of the term. Also, remember to bring both assigned readings and laptops to class. The grading schema for participation 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. The use of cell phones, mp3 players, iPods, or any other distracting electronic devices during class will significantly lower your participation grade, and the user of any such device may be asked to leave and receive an absence for the day. Likewise, verbally attacking your peers, carrying on private conversations, reading the newspaper or working on assignments for other courses do not contribute to attentive participation and will lower your participation grade. If you feel you may have a problem meeting these criteria, please come see me during the first week of the term. Such active engagement in discussions and class activities will represent 10% of your course grade.

3. Panel Research Presentations: Once during the term, along with one or more of your fellow classmates, you will be required to participate in a panel selecting a pertinent and interesting research source, which must be a scholarly, secondary source, to shed light on that day’s assigned reading. Together, the student panelists will both offer a brief report explaining the thesis from their selected scholarly, secondary source and applying it to a close reading of one or more passages from the day’s assigned novel excerpts. These panels must be completed on the specified due dates (a sign-up sheet will be distributed midterm), and each member of the panel must also post their chosen research source and passage/s on Canvas, at least one class session prior to the presentation due date. In the event that this prep work is not submitted on time, a late penalty (10% of the assignment score) will be deducted from the overall assignment grade. This panel discussion will be worth 5% of your course grade.

4. Midterm Exam: The midterm will require both identifications and close reading of brief passages from the first two novels. (10%)  

5. Final Exam: The final will require identifications and close reading of brief passages from the last three novels, as well as a short essay in response to all five novels assigned this term. (15%)  

6. Short Essay (3-4 pages): The short essay will require a clear and arguable thesis supported by careful close reading of assigned passages from one of the first two assigned novels. (20%)  

7. Final Essay (5-6 pages): The final essay will require a clear and arguable thesis supported by careful close reading of assigned passages from two assigned novels, at least one of which must be from the second half of the term. (30%)  

Policies  
1. 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.  

2. Attendance: More than four unexcused 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. Four 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.
3. **Honesty:** All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course, which means you may not submit papers or portions of papers you have written for any other course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website. **Even a single sentence without proper citation (both in-text and via Work Cited list) is plagiarism.** A zero score on the assignment may result if documentation is inadequate. And in cases where academic misconduct has been clearly established, the award of up to an F for the final course grade is the standard practice of the English Department. 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 feedback and grading comments.**

4. **Civil Discourse:** The University of Oregon Student Conduct Code details that “an environment conducive to learning is one that preserves the freedom to learn -- where academic standards are strictly upheld and where the rights, safety, dignity and worth of every individual are respected.” Please be aware that this course requires students to engage in civil discourse with such respect to peers, instructors and our larger communities while sharing ideas on controversial topics. According to University of Oregon President Michael H. Schill, “Our university community rejects any ideologies or groups that embrace racist, homophobic, misogynistic, or anti-Semitic views.” Therefore, expressing such attitudes of hate is unacceptable conduct in our class atmosphere.

5. **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, located in the Accessible Education Center, at 541-346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

6. **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 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. **Also, I'd strongly recommend that you save copies of all your work via secure online storage, such as your UO Webmail, Dropbox or Google Docs, so that in the event of a computer crash/loss you still have your most recent saved versions of your work.**

7. **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 grade step (from an B- to a C+, for instance) or more.

8. **Incompletes:** No incompletes will be granted except in the case of documented emergency and instructor approval. Failure to make up the Incomplete on schedule will result in the mark of “I” automatically changing to a grade of “F.”

9. **Registration:** The only way to add this class is through DuckWeb.
Schedule of Events & Due Dates (subject to change at Instructor’s discretion)
Note: All articles are to be read before the class period for which they are assigned.

Week 1
Tuesday (1/9) – Discuss Syllabus and Schedule of Events
Thursday (1/11) – Class Discussion: “Indian Camp” & “Hills Like White Elephants” (on Canvas)

Week 2
Tuesday (1/16) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book I & II)
Thursday (1/18) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book III & IV)

Week 3
Tuesday (1/23) – Class Discussion: *My Antonia* (Book V)
Thursday (1/25) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (April Seventh, 1928)

Week 4
Tuesday (1/30) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (June Second, 1910)
Thursday (2/1) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (April Sixth, 1928)

Week 5
Tuesday (2/6) – Class Discussion: *The Sound and the Fury* (April Eighth, 1928)
Thursday (2/8) – **Midterm Exam**

Week 6
Tuesday (2/13) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Uno-Siete); **Short Essay is due by the end of class**
Thursday (2/15) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Ocho-Catorce)

Week 7
Tuesday (2/20) – Class Discussion: *Bless Me Ultima* (Quince-Veintidos)
Thursday (2/22) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Part I: Sections 1-9)

Week 8
Tuesday (2/27) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Part I: Sections 10-18)
Thursday (3/1) – Class Discussion: *Beloved* (Parts II & III)

Week 9
Tuesday (3/6) – Class Discussion: *The Painted Drum* (Part I)
Thursday (3/8) – Class Discussion: *The Painted Drum* (Part II)

Week 10
Tuesday (3/13) – Class Discussion: *The Painted Drum* (Part III)
Thursday (3/15) – Final Exam Review Session

**Finals Week**
Tuesday (3/20) – Final Exam 12:30-2:30 pm
Thursday (3/22) – **Final Essay is due in PLC 343 before noon**