English 224H Contemporary American Literature (Am. Lit. II)

Texts:


Why we are here:

This course is designed to introduce you to many of the major trends, or schools and movements, in 20th Century American Literature and the authors responsible for them. By the end of this course, you should be able to distinguish among the major features of these movements and their key writers. You should also gain the satisfaction of having read some “great” literary voices and the ability to articulate your interpretations of their work. In addition, this class will give you the opportunity to do some solo research on a writer or subject of particular interest to you.

Grading:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Response cards and blogs</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Research essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Final</td>
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“Art lives upon discussion, upon experiment, upon curiosity, upon varieties of attempt, upon the exchange of views and the comparison of standpoints.”

-Henry James, “The Art of Fiction”

The worth of lively, informed discussions in a literature class can not be stressed enough; thoughtful participation can make a class inspiring, while dreary unprepared classmates can make a class an ordeal. Please come prepared for every session and bring your sense of humor and point of view. Your PARTICIPATION GRADE will rest on your thoughtful participation in class activities.
RESPONSE CARDS are to be handed in at the beginning of each day, unless superseded by a BLOG assignment. If you miss class, you may hand in a late card; otherwise, late cards won’t be accepted. On a 3x5 card, you will either answer a question asked in class during the previous session, or you will choose one of the following subjects to address:

1) Write a sentence or two about the theme of the text as you interpret it.
2) Note one way the reading seems to adhere to or deviate from its trend/movement.
3) Note a repeated image or symbol and consider its function in the text.
4) What relationship(s) do you perceive between the biographical note and the text(s)?
5) Discuss a scene (in fiction) or line (in poetry) that you find particularly significant and say why.
6) Interpret the text in terms of its time period.
7) Use a critical theory lens--such as Marxism, feminism, deconstruction--to interpret some aspect of the text.
8) When multiple titles have been assigned, compare/contrast some element among them.

As you become comfortable writing response cards, you may deviate from the above list of choices; however, "I liked this reading because I could relate to it," and similar simplistic comments will not be credited.

BLOG assignments will be written on the class’ ANGEL website.

Grading criteria for the ESSAY and PRESENTATION will follow the attached grading rubric. Late papers lose five points per late day; presentations can’t be late.

For the record:

Feel free to communicate with me via e-mail or phone if you should need my help (that’s part of my job, too).

For those late night writing questions and grammar and punctuation emergencies, email NightWriter write@sunyocc.edu Sunday through Thursday, 9 p.m. to midnight. All tutoring is free to OCC students enrolled in any course, not just English.

On Tuesday 3/16, the class will be attending Richard Russo’s lecture at the Mulroy Civic Center. We have a grant to cover the ticket price; you just gotta be there.

Reading Schedule

ALWAYS READ THE BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON EACH AUTHOR WE COVER

MODERNISM (AKA “THE MODS”)

T 1/26 Introductions

Th 1/28 Nina Baym “Literature Between the Wars” pp. 1071-1084

T 2/2 William Carlos Williams "The Young Housewife" p. 1265; "To Elsie" p. 1269; “This is Just to Say” p. 1274; “A Sort of Song” p. 1274; "The Red Wheelbarrow" p. 1271; “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” p. 1279

Th 2/4 T.S. Eliot “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” p. 1420-1425
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 2/9</td>
<td>Ezra Pound “A Pact” p. 1285; “The Rest” p. 1285; “In a Station of the Metro” p. 1286; E.E. Cummings “Buffalo Bill’s” p. 1626; “the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls” p. 1626; “next to of course god america i” p. 1628; “pity this monster, manunkind” pp. 1633-4; Amy Lowell “The Captured Goddess” p. 1144; Venus Transiens” p. 1145; “September, 1918” p. 1147</td>
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<td>Th 2/11</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion</td>
<td>William Faulkner “Barn Burning” pp. 1630-1642</td>
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<td>T 2/16</td>
<td>Susan Glaspell “Trifles” pp.1203-1212</td>
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<td>Th 2/18</td>
<td>Flannery O’Connor “The Life You Save May Be Your Own” p. 2204-2211</td>
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<td>Th 2/25</td>
<td>Langston Hughes everything pp. 1892-1901</td>
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<td>T 3/2</td>
<td>Zora Neale Hurston “The Eatonville Anthology” and “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” pp. 1507-1518</td>
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<td>Th 3/4</td>
<td>Lecture and discussion</td>
<td>Ernest Hemingway “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” pp. 1848-1864</td>
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<td>T 3/9</td>
<td>F. Scott Fitzgerald “Babylon Revisited” pp. 1658-1672</td>
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<td>T 3/16</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
<td>Richard Russo lecture, 7:30, in the Rosamond Gifford Lecture Series, Mulroy Civic Center</td>
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<td>Th 3/18</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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POETIC INNOVATIONS I: DEEP IMAGES AND BLACK MOUNTAINS

T 3/23  Lecture and discussion
A. R. Ammons “Corson’s Inlet” p. 2828-2831; James Wright “Autumn begins in Martins Ferry, Ohio” p. 2923; “With the Shell of a Hermit Crab” p. 2925; Theodore Roethke “The Waking” p. 2699

POETIC INNOVATIONS II: THE CONFESSIONAL POETS


FEMINIST VOICES

Th 4/1  Lecture and discussion
Ursula LeGuin “She Unnames Them” pp. 2252-2253
Adrienne Rich “I Am in Danger—Sir—” p. 2948; “Diving into the Wreck” and “Power” pp. 2949-2952

T 4/6  Genevieve Taggard “Everyday Alchemy” p. 1620 (VOLUME D!)
Muriel Rukeyser “Suicide Blues” p. 1950 (VOLUME D!)
Edna St. Vincent Millay “I being born a woman” p. 1611 (STILL D!)
Denise Levertov “To the Snake” p. 2820; “In Mind” p. 2821

POETIC INNOVATIONS III: THE BEAT GENERATION

Th 4/8  in-class film The Source

T 4/13  Film continued
Kerouac handout
Gary Snyder “Milton by Firelight” p. 2957; “Riprap” p. 2958;
“August on Sourdough, A Visit from Dick Brewer” p. 2959

Th 4/15  Allen Ginsberg “Howl” pp. 2865-2872; “Sunflower Sutra” pp. 2873;
“On Burroughs’ Work” p. 2876

MULTICULTURALISM

T 4/20  Lecture and discussion
Judith Ortiz Cofer “The Witch’s Husband” pp. 2551-2555
Sandra Cisneros “Mericans” pp. 2559-2561
Li-Young Li “Persimmons” pp. 5095-5097

Th 4/22  Louise Erdrich “Fleur” pp. 2562-2572
T 4/27  Toni Morrison “Recitatif” pp. 2253-2266

POSTMODERNISM

Th 4/29  Lecture and discussion
        Kurt Vonnegut “Fates Worse Than Death” pp. 2183-2190
        Research essay due


Th 5/6  “weakest link” review for final