

# **American Literature II - ENG 222**

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Office Hours: MW - 12:30-2:00 p.m., Saturday mornings online, and by appointment

Location: C216 / Phone: 860-892-5738

## **Course Description**

This course is a survey of American writers beginning from approximately 1865 to the present. Students will read the fiction, poetry, and drama of selected writers, and examine the dominant themes and literary movements that have shaped American literature. The multicultural dimensions of American literature will be explored, and a variety of relevant critical strategies will be used. Writing assignments will stress critical analysis including the incorporation of various critical approaches.

*Prerequisites: ENG\* K102 or permission of the instructor.*

**Our object will be to study some of the many voices that constitute what we call American literature, addressing questions such as:**

- What role has literature played in the ongoing story of culture and history of the United States? How are the broad cultural movements of realism, naturalism, modernism, and postmodernism reflected in literary works and how do those movements shape the writing and reception of literature?
- How do the gender, race, and class of writers and readers affect the creation and reception of a literary text?
- What constitutes a literary canon?
- What does "American" literature as a category mean?
- What is the place of literature in the United States in the twenty-first century?

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- Demonstrate your knowledge of the development of American literature from the Civil War to today.
- Identify important American writers, their key works, and their influence on and reflection of American culture.
- Identify the challenges, problems, and complexities in developing a literary canon that represents American literature.
- Write essays that follow the conventions of academic English (MLA).

- Interpret literary texts through the lens of their historical context and support them with textual evidence.

### **Required Texts and Resources**

- *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature: Volume Two - 1865 to the Present*
- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
- <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/americanlit> (This website will take you to student resources and supplements to your textbook.)

### **Grade Percentages**

Two essays 30% (15% each)

Midterm 20%

Final Exam 20%

In-class participation, including participation in discussions, homework assignments, in-class writing, and quizzes 30%

### **EXPLANATION OF ASSIGNMENT AND GRADES**

**ESSAYS (30)%:** During this session you will be required to write two formal essays. The assignments will be handed out in class and will focus on the works we will have been reading and discussing.

**Paper Format:** All formal essays are to be formatted in MLA, including font size, spacing, titles, etc. For a refresher on what that means, go to <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. (Incorrectly formatted papers will affect your grade negatively.)

**CLASS PARTICIPATION (20%):** A literature course such as this requires class discussion, with your input vital for the success of the course. Thus, I will expect that you will have read the assigned material before class and will be able to fully participate, individually and, if designated, in a group. (Periodically, I will give "pop" quizzes to see who is doing the reading. If you haven't done the reading, you will not be able to participate in group work.)

**MIDTERM AND FINAL EXAMS (40%):** These exams will be based on the readings and subjects covered in class. (More details to follow.)

### **OTHER POLICIES**

**Deadlines:** There is no such thing as late work. All work is due at the beginning of class (not after class either). If you cannot be in class, to receive full credit your work must be in my mailbox or under my door before class starts. If you have an emergency, please contact me to make other arrangements. (Only in a documented emergency will I accept

email submissions, which must be approved by me ahead of time.) Late essays will either receive a pass (C) or a fail (F). Late homework will be docked one full letter grade per day.

**Attendance:** In order for the class to be successful, it is important that you attend regularly. ***If you must miss class, please remember that you will still be held accountable for the material covered in class and all assignments that are due that day.*** (An excused absent includes, for example, illness and/or injury and requires written verification.)

**Tardiness:** *Please be in class on time.* Within the first five minutes of class I will take attendance. Habitual lateness will affect your grade negatively.

**Breaks:** Unless it is an emergency, refrain from leaving the class at all times. Doing so is very disruptive and annoying. For safety reasons, I will also be locking the classroom door and will not open it if you leave.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is essential to a useful education. Failure to act with academic integrity severely limits a person's ability to succeed in the classroom and beyond. Furthermore, academic dishonesty erodes the legitimacy of every degree awarded by the College. In this class and in the course of your academic career, present only your own best work; clearly document the sources of the material you use from others; and act at all times with honor.

*General Definition (Student Discipline Policy, section 2:10, Board of Trustees of Connecticut Community Colleges)*

Academic Dishonesty shall in general mean conduct which has as its intent or effect the false representation of a student's academic performance, including but not limited to

- (a) cheating on an examination,
- (b) collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course,
- (c) plagiarizing, including the submission of others' ideas or papers (whether purchased, borrowed, or otherwise obtained) as one's own,
- (d) stealing or having unauthorized access to examination or course materials,
- (e) falsifying records of laboratory or other data,
- (f) submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course, and
- (g) knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or

other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

**Tutoring:** Three Rivers has an excellent Writing Center, located next to the library, C117. You can also access help via email at [TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu](mailto:TRWritingCenter@trcc.commnet.edu). Include your name, student ID, and a brief explanation of the assignment. (Do not wait until the last minute.)

**Students with disabilities:** Any student with a hidden or visible disability which may require classroom modifications should see me about her/his disability within the first week or two of class. I will ask you to see one of the learning disabilities counselors on campus so we can work together to implement an appropriate plan to meet your needs. For more information see [http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Ed\\_Resources/Learn\\_Dis.htm](http://www.trcc.commnet.edu/Ed_Resources/Learn_Dis.htm)

**Cell phones and beepers:** School regulations require that all electronic devices be turned off in learning environments. (**No text messaging either during class.**) Consequences to be discussed.

**Class cancellations:** If class is cancelled, a notice will be posted outside the door. I will also try to send out an email, so make sure your email address is current in your personal records. School cancellations due to bad weather will be posted on the TRCC homepage and also recorded on the school's main phone number: 860-886-0177. To receive alerts on your cell phone, sign up for Early Alert Warnings on your Commnet page. (This service is free and allows you to be notified by text if there are any school cancellations or emergencies (highly recommended!!)).

## Course Outline: Spring 2011, American Literature 1865-present

### Week One

#### **JANUARY**

- 24 Introduction to course. What is American literature? What does it mean to be an American?
- 26 Read "Introduction," 1-29. Under each subheading, for example, "The Aftermath of the Civil War," identify the main points. You may bullet them. (Handwritten is fine.)

### Week Two

- 31 **\*American Literature, 1865-1914 (REALISM, REGIONALISM, NATURALISM)** 31-39. For each category (realism, regionalism and naturalism), write an informative summary (with specific details). (Handwritten is fine.)

#### **FEBRUARY**

- 2 William Dean Howells, 109: "Editha" 113

### Week Three

- 7 Sarah Orne Jewett, 193: "A White Heron," 194
- 9 *The Awakening* - background historical information (TBA)

### Week Four

- 14 *The Awakening*
- 16 *The Awakening*

### Week Five

- 21 No class - Presidents' Day
- 23 **ESSAY ONE DUE**; Sui Sin Far, 296: "In the Land of the Free" 297; Paul Lawrence Dunbar, 372: all poems, 374-377

### Week Six

- 28 Jack London, 388: "The Law of Life" 390; Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) 426: "The School Days of an Indian Girl" 428

#### **MARCH**

- 2 Charles W. Chestnutt 228: "The Passing of Grandison" 230

### Week Seven

- 7 Willa Cather 378: "A Wagner Matinee"
- 9 **Midterm Exam**

**\* \* Spring Break - March 14-18 - No class all week. Enjoy  
and be safe! \* \***

### Week Eight

- 21     **\*American Literature 1914-1945 (MODERNISM)**; Introduction, 500-537.  
Write notes that demonstrate you have read this entire section (main points).  
23     Amy Lowell 575: poems 577-580; Robert Frost 581: "Home Burial" 584 and  
"Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening" 593

### **Week Nine**

- 28     **Harlem Renaissance**: Langston Hughes 752: poetry 756-765  
30     Ezra Pound 641: "In the Station of the Metro" 647; T.S. Eliot 669: "The Waste  
Land" 678

### **Week Ten**

#### **APRIL**

- 4       "At Home and Abroad: American Fiction between the Wars" 819-825; "American  
Contexts" 826-827. Write notes that demonstrate you have read these two  
sections. May be handwritten.  
6       Nella Larsen 891: "Sanctuary" 894; Gertrude Stein 847: "Miss Furr and Miss  
Skeene" 851

### **Week Eleven**

- 11      Richard Wright 1008: "Almos' a Man" 1020; Eudora Welty 1021: "A Worn Path"  
1023  
13      John Steinbeck 993: "Flight" 995

### **Week Twelve**

- 18      **ESSAY TWO DUE**  
20      **\*American Literature Since 1945 (Postmodernism) 1038-1065; Modernism to  
Postmodernism 1067-1078** Write notes that demonstrate you have read this  
entire section (main points).

### **Week Thirteen**

- 25      No class  
27      Arthur Miller 1174: *Death of a Salesman* 1178 (read entire play)

### **Week Fourteen**

- 2       Finish discussion  
4       Gwendolyn Brooks 1266: poetry 1269-1273; Ralph Ellison 1134: "The Invisible  
Man" 1137; Hisaye Yamamoto 1273: "Seventeen Syllables" 1275

### **Week Fifteen**

- 9       Allen Ginsberg 1315: "Howl" 1318; Gloria Anzaldúa 1441: poetry 1443-1448  
11      Toni Morrison 1364: "Recitatif" 1366; Sherman Alexie 1502: "What You Pawn I  
Will Redeem" 1505

### **Week Sixteen**

- 16      Take home exam due. No exceptions.