

Oxford College of Emory

English 251- 09A  
American Literature, 1865 to present  
Language Hall 204B  
Spring 2009 Semester

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4-4571

**Required Texts**

McMichael, George. *Anthology of American Literature*, Volume 2. 9<sup>th</sup> Ed. Pearson, 2007.

Miscellaneous assignments and readings on Blackboard.

**Course Description**

English 251 meets the sophomore writing requirement and provides the context for an in depth examination of American literature from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Kinds of scholarly inquiry. Through successive readings, students will gain familiarity with the kinds of questions that literary scholars may ask of any text. There are many investigations that literary scholars undertake; students will be able to employ and emulate a small number of them. (1) How do the criteria of a particular genre help readers to understand a text? (2) In what ways does a literary text embody issues and concerns of a particular historical context? (3) Do the tenets and concepts of a particular literary movement find embodiment in a particular literary text? (4) What are the issues of sociology of the text, or how do race, class, and gender find expression in the text? (5) What is the psychology of the text, or how do the terms and models of psychology emerge in the text? (6) What is the 'special language' of literary analysis, and how does this language involve both terms and techniques? Scholars like Wayne C. Booth, M. H. Abrams, and Joseph Gibaldi have given us convenient nomenclature for ways of inquiring in literary studies.

Ethics and values. While students explore the questions that scholars may raise, they will be vigilant for those occasions where more universal ethical issues and human values are involved in each text. That is not to say that scholars are unconcerned about universal ethical issues. Rather, we will align our study with a special quality of the Oxford College of Emory experience by adding special importance to this dimension of literary study.

Experiential context. What may make this course memorable for students more than any other feature is to apply the terms, processes, and materials in some way to existing issues or contexts outside the classroom. This context may involve a presentation at a student research conference or the application of these ways of examining texts to an existing issue of social, intellectual, or cultural importance.

Blackboard readings and assignments. This course will also involve a number of Blackboard assignments. Each class will involve discussion of and/or writing about these many readings (Attendance is discussed elsewhere, but I want to underscore here the importance of doing the out of class work and attending each class meeting). For example, several of the Blackboard assignments will *be* completed out of class and submitted before class in order to enable me to prepare materials for our class discussion

### **Course Objectives**

1. To improve the quality of student writing is our first order objective.
2. To gain knowledge of many ways that literary scholars seek to explore and to understand texts.
3. To gain knowledge of the major themes and styles characteristic of the Realistic, Naturalistic, Modern, and Postmodern periods of American literature.

### **Assignments in General**

1. Reading and class discussion of many poems, stories, novels in American literature from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
2. Writing of several essays (800-1200 words), each involving a particular kind of inquiry into the text(s) of the course.
3. One long research paper (10-12 pages) requiring sources cited in MLA style.
4. An oral presentation, activity, or work of art (either singly or with a group) which involves an experiential aspect of the work of the course.
5. Quizzes in class and other short assignments on these readings will frequently be done out of class and submitted through Blackboard. We will also use Blackboard for various other forms of communication, including these short assignments, some response prompts, and perhaps a discussion thread.
6. A written final exam with questions involving the genres of biography and autobiography as well as other books and materials we have discussed in class.

### **Other Responsibilities and Related Matters**

1. Attendance. Be present and on time. I take roll the first thing as class begins, and always mark as absent those who are not in the room. You may miss three class meetings, but I will deduct points (5 pts per absence) from your class participation grade after the third absence. Students who are late must assume responsibility to be certain the attendance record is changed to reflect their attendance.
2. Honor Code. We will discuss this important issue in class, and we will cover plagiarism at that time. But please be aware that your writing is to be your own, and any other person's writing must be acknowledge through citations in the proper form. Please consult the Oxford College Handbook if you have any questions regarding the Code or the Honors Council.
3. Late essays and other work. Work should be turned in on time so that I will be able to give you feedback on that assignment when the class is discussing the assignment. The longer period of time after we discuss an item that goes by, the less relevance and usefulness that assignment will have. For every day that an essay (or other work) is late, I will deduct a letter grade from that paper (or other work).

### **Grading of the Assignments and Assigned Weights of Each**

3 literary analyses	30%
Quizzes/Blackboard	10%
Research Paper	20%
Experiential project	15%
Final exam	20%
Class participation	5%

\*\*All assignments will be assigned a letter grade, and I will use + and – to enable students to have more precise feedback as the quality of each particular letter grade. Hence, on a 100 point scale, an A- would fall in the low 90s, and a B+ in the high 80s, for example. Using a 12-point scale, each letter grade with + or – has a value as well.

### **Office hours**

My office is located in the library (first floor) in the Center for Academic Excellence, and my office hours for this class will be MWF from 2:00-3:00 and on TTh from 8:30-9:30. I am also available to meet with you by appointment. My email is [jgalle@emory.edu](mailto:jgalle@emory.edu)

### **Weekly Outline of Topics to be Covered**

January 14-16	Introductory
January 19-23	Twain, <u>Huckleberry Finn</u>
January 26-30	Chopin, <u>The Awakening</u> Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-Paper” James, “The Turn of the Screw”
February 2-6	Crane, poems and “The Open Boat” London, “The Law of Life” Dreiser, “Free”
February 9-13	Poems of Whitman and Dickinson
February 16-20	Poems of Robinson and Frost
February 23-27	DuBois, from <u>The Souls of Black Folks</u>
March 2-6	Anderson, from <u>Winesburg, Ohio</u> Dos Passos, from <u>USA</u>
March 9-13	Spring Break
March 16-20	O’Neill, <u>The Hairy Ape</u>

March 23-27	Poems by Stevens and Williams Poems by Toomer, Cullen, and Hughes
March 30- /April 3	Fitzgerald, “Winter Dreams” Hemingway, “Big Two-Hearted River”
April 6- 10	Wolfe, “Only the Dead Know Brooklyn” Faulkner, “That Evening Sun”
April 13-17	Poems of Roethke and Ginsberg
April 20-24	O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” Vonnegut, “Welcome to the Monkey House”
April 27	Last day of class for this course
April 29	Reading Day
April 30, May 1, 4-6	Final Exams Period
May 9	Commencement