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Course Outline for ENG 35
MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE
Effective: Fall 2014

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ENG 35 — MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE — 3.00 units

U.S. literature from the second half of the 19th century to the present, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, and essays. Emphasizes literary analysis and the exploration each work in relation to its social, cultural and historical contexts.

3.00 Units Lecture

Prerequisite

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition
with a minimum grade of C

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering the course a student should be able to:

A. ENG1A

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Demonstrate familiarity with and develop a critical perspective on the achievements in literature by American writers since the mid-19th century;
- B. Analyze literary works in relation to their historical, social, and cultural contexts;
- C. Demonstrate knowledge of the structure of the works studied and analyze their literary components, including plot, character, tone, style, and figurative uses of language (such as metaphor, irony, symbol, paradox);
- D. Contrast the diversity of the works while comparing their treatment of common themes, especially in response to social and political changes;
- E. Critically evaluate distinctive eras of American literature since the mid-19th Century, for example, the 19th Century "American Renaissance," the Harlem Renaissance, modernism and post-modernism, protest literature of the Civil Rights era;
- F. Demonstrate understanding of how literature both reflects and helps create history and culture;
- G. Demonstrate familiarity with the literature of writers from at least three of the following groups through compare/contrast analysis: African Americans Asian Americans European Americans Latinos Native Americans
- H. Apply knowledge of shifting racial definitions, formation, identity, and relationships to the interpretation of literature;
- I. Evaluate how national identity/ies inform the creation of literature, whether in terms of form or theme;
- J. Evaluate the tension between individual artistry and resistance to stereotype and/or advancement of the racial group, as well as tensions between "authentic" racial expression and assimilation to Anglo-American, male literary standards.

V. CONTENT:

- A. Readings of prose fiction, poetry, drama: may also include expository essays, graphic novel, performance, transcriptions of oralliterature, and/or creative nonfiction;
- B. Readings from an array of American writers, diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, and era;
- C. Summary, expressive, and basic analytical written responses to readings;
- D. Practice of a writing process, including individual and collaborative prewriting, planning, drafting, revision, and editing;
- E. Short essay assignments based on the examination of texts;
- F. Reading of selected sources with a mind to using sources to support small research project (oral presentation and/or review);

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Discussion** - Students will participate in class discussion, whether as individuals or groups. Group discussion projects may involve collaborative work on students' understanding of a theme in the literature (race in Huck Finn, for example) or jigsaw activities in which students learn about a theme or topic in literature from peer groups and then take turns "teaching" various themes or topics to their home group.

- B. **Observation and Demonstration** - Though English 1A is a pre-requisite for this course, observation and demonstration of the writing process, and of writing a literature essay in particular, will be the focus of some class periods. Adaptation of MLA plagiarism and citation rules (direct quote, paraphrase, summary) to writing about literature will be discussed and demonstrated.
- C. **Guest Lecturers** - Guest lecturers will be invited when funding is available.
- D. **Lecture** - Instructor will do minimal lecturing on aspects of literary form, region, and ethnic group that will most directly impact students' reading. This will serve to build schema for students.
- E. **Student Presentations** - Students will engage in small research projects presented to the class. Projects might build schema for an upcoming reading; provide information about an ethnic group or literary movement that will not be covered in the class but would contribute to student understanding of a theme or racial group, for example; or provide more detailed information about an author under consideration.
- F. **Field Trips** - Field trips to local theaters may be included if performing relevant American plays. Field trips to author readings are also possibilities.
- G. **Audio-visual Activity** - Instructor may show films based on fiction or other literary or oral art under consideration in course. Films might also be used to provide historical or biographical background.

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Write an essay analyzing the experimental style of Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* in terms of its specific contribution to American postmodernism.
- B. Write an essay comparing and contrasting the revolutionary mid-19th Century visions of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- C. Write an essay considering how Native American writer Sherman Alexie explores connections between Native American and African-American cultures and responses to oppression in *Reservation Blues*.
- D. Write a journal entry providing a critical analysis of thematic or structural aspects of the works considered.
- E. Prepare a group presentation on the African-American male literary establishment's negative reception of the work of African-American female writers, which challenged male dominance and sexism;
- F. Prepare an oral presentation relating course materials to your life and values, which shows your understanding of how the literary vision has contributed to those values.

VIII. EVALUATION:

A. Methods

1. Quizzes
2. Research Projects
3. Papers
4. Field Trips
5. Class Participation
6. Class Work
7. Home Work

B. Frequency

1. According to instructor preference, quizzes may be daily or at random. If at random, they are usually unannounced and test the reading.
2. Research projects will be fairly narrow in scope and abbreviated. They may be completed by individuals or groups, submitted on paper, electronically, and/or via oral presentation. There will be one per individual/group per semester.
3. Two essays will be required
4. If made available, there would likely be only one field trip.
5. Class Participation: Daily.
6. Class Work: Daily
7. Home Work: Daily

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Baym, Nina, et. al., ed. (2012). *The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Vol. 2: 1865 to the Present*. (Shorter 8th ed. ed.). New York: Norton.
2. Douglass, Frederick. (1995). *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Mineola: Dover.
3. O'Neill, Eugene. (2002). *Long Day's Journey into Night*. New Haven: Yale UP.
4. Twain, Mark. (1998). *Huckleberry Finn* (Norton Critical ed.). New York: Norton.
5. Bonnin, Gertrude (Zitkala-Sa). (2003). *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings*. New York: Penguin.
6. Cather, Willa (2006). *Death Comes for the Archbishop*. : Virago Modern Classics.
7. Cahan, Abraham. (2010). *Yekl, the Imported Bridegroom, and Other Stories of Yiddish New York*. : Waking Lion P-Ingram.
8. Larsen, Nella. (1986). *Quicksand and Passing*. New Brunswick: Rutgers UP.
9. Okada, John. (1979). *No-No Boy*. Seattle: U of Washington P.
10. Hemingway, Ernest. (2006). *The Sun Also Rises*. : Scribner.
11. Ginsburg, Allen. (2001). *Howl*. San Francisco: City Lights.
12. Morrison, Toni. (2004). *Beloved*. New York: Vintage.
13. Kushner, Tony (2003). *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes: Part I: Millennium Approaches; Part II: Perestroika*. : Theatre Communications Group.
14. Diaz, Junot. (1997). *Drown*. : Riverhead Trade.
15. Kingston, Maxine Hong (1989). *The Woman Warrior*. New York: Vintage.
16. Anzaldua, Gloria (2012). *Borderlands: La Frontera*. : Aunt Lute Books.
17. Franzen, Jonathan. (2002). *The Corrections*. : Plcador.
18. Lauter, Paul, ed. (2014). *Heath Anthology of American Literature, Vol. II, Concise Edition*. : Cengage.
19. Kingsolver, Barbara (2011). *The Bean Trees*. New York: Harper Perennial.
20. Alexie, Sherman. (2005). *Reservation Blues*. New York: Grove.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: