

ENGL342
20th-Century American Literature (“to 1950”)
Spring 2010
TR 8:55-10:05 a.m.

Dr. Joel Wingard
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M-R 10:20-11:30
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"I am large. . . . I contain multitudes"

Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"

Course description and objectives

In this course we will read and study the work of more than forty authors who wrote prose fiction and nonfiction and poetry from the turn of the 20th century to close to its end. These forty-plus writers represent a sort of literary *e pluribus unum*: They include several "major" writers from the canon of American literature, as well as a number of writers whom you may not have heard of, let alone read, because their work has long been unanthologized or out of print. This kind of variety should be one way for us to call into question the American idea of *e pluribus unum* and its dominant metaphor, the melting pot. At the same time, we will study and apply the critical framework of rhetorical analysis to what we read and write. This is one of many critical approaches, but chosen for this course because of the teacher's professional interests and its utility to students as a method to apply to cultural texts of all kinds, not just literature.

Student Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you should be able to:

- demonstrate awareness of the range of American literature in the 20th century, including its development as part of the national cultural and historical experience over that time
- recognize issues of the literary canon, canonicity, and canon formation as they apply to American literature in the 20th century
- read and write critically through rhetorical analysis about literary texts, literary history, authors and their reception, and American cultural history (e.g. such figures as the melting pot and such stories as rags-to-riches) over the period
- collaborate with classmates to create knowledge about the course subject matter
- use bibliographic resources to find and identify relevant published criticism related to American literature in the 20th century.

Grades and evaluation

- Midterm and final exams (take-home essays): 20 percent each
- Group presentation on a 20th-century Am. Novel, incl. other representations thereof in American life: 15 percent
- Group paper on a 20th-century Am. Novel, incl. other representations thereof in American life: 15 percent
- Group Discussion leading (twice): 10 percent each
- Attendance/participation - 10 percent

Required books

Cain, William E., ed. *American Literature*, vol 2. 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman, 2004.
(*AL* in assignment schedule)

Hart, Roderick P., and Suzanne Daughton. *Modern Rhetorical Criticism*, 3rd ed. New York: Pearson Longman/Penguin, 2005. (handout - *MRC* in assignment schedule)

One novel to be chosen by group

Statement on academic honesty

It is every student's responsibility to be aware of College policy regarding academic honesty and plagiarism. The policy is laid out in the *Student Handbook* at <http://www.moravian.edu/studentLife/handbook/academic/academic2.html>

Statement on disabilities

If you have a learning disability and believe you may require accommodation to succeed in this course, you should contact the Learning Services Office at 1307 Main Street. Its phone number is 861-1510. Do this as soon as possible to enhance the likelihood that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. Any student who wishes to disclose a disability and request accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for this course first **MUST** meet with either Mrs. Laurie Roth in the Office of Learning Services (for learning disabilities and/or ADD/ADHD) or Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (for all other disabilities).

Tentative assignment schedule

- Week I
M 1/18 – F 1/22
- T – **introduction** etc.
- R – **background and context** – *AL*: “Welcome: Suggestions for Students,” pp. xix-xxi; “A Chronology of Works and Events that Shaped American Literature, 1860 to Present Day,” pp. 1527-37; and introductions to “American Literature at the end of the Nineteenth Century” and “Modern American Literature,” pp. 3-21, 297-324.
- Week II
M 1/25 – F 1/29
- T – **a critical approach** – *MRC* (handout): Chapters 1 & 2: “The Rhetorical Perspective” and “The Critical Perspective,” pp. 1-20, 21-36.
- R – **some critical applications** – *MRC* (handout): Chapters 6 – 8 (part) & 9: Analyzing form, syntax and imagery, lexicon, and media, pp. 101-123, 125-50, 151-60, 177-210.
- Week III
M 2/1 – F 2/5
- T - **toward the New American Century (nonfiction prose)** - *AL*: Washington – introduction and chapter from *Up From Slavery*, pp. 160-72; DuBois – introduction and chapter from *The Souls of Black Folk*, pp. 238-53.
- R – **outcasts, incasts, farcasts (prose fiction)** - *AL*: Wharton – introduction and “The Other Two,” pp. 219-37; London – Introduction and “To Build a Fire,” pp. 279-94; Anderson – introduction and “Hands,” pp. 406-12.
- Week IV
M 2/8 – F 2/12
- T – **toward The New American Century (poetry)** - *AL*: Robinson – introduction and poems, pp. 327-31; Frost – introduction and poems, pp. 390-405; Williams – introduction and poems, pp. 444-54; Millay – introduction and poems, pp. 573-78. **choice of group novel due**
- R – **transnational Literary Modernism (poetry)** - *AL*: Pound – introduction and poems, pp. 455-61; H.D., introduction and poems, pp. 462-69; Cummings – introduction and poems, pp. 580-86.;

Week V
M 2/15 – F 2/19

T – **transnational Literary Modernism (prose fiction)** - *AL*: Stein – introduction and “The Gentle Lena,” pp. 355-84; Hemingway – introduction, pp. 643-44, and “In Another Country,” (handout).

R – **meanwhile, back in the States** - *AL*: Fitzgerald – introduction, pp. 600-01 and “Absolution” (handout); Parker – introduction and poem, p. 579 and “The Waltz” (handout); **midterm test distributed**.

Week VI
M 2/22 – F 2/26
(midterm)

T – **the ‘New Negro’ Renaissance** - *AL*: Hurston – introduction and “The Gilded Six-Bits,” pp. 559-70; McKay, introduction and poems, pp. 544-45; Brown, introduction and poems, pp. 678-82; Hughes – introduction and poems, pp. 683-95.

R - **Midterm test due**

Week VII
M 3/1 – F 3/5

T – **“since 1950”**- *AL*: American Literature Since 1945, Cold War to Contemporary,” pp. 727-61; **the rediscovery of the South** - *AL*: Faulkner – introduction and “That Evening Sun,” pp. 626-42; Ellison – introduction and “Battle Royal,” pp. 877-90.

R - **the next generation of Southern writers** - *AL*: Welty – introduction and “A Worn Path,” pp. 762-70; O’Connor – introduction and “Revelation,” pp. 917-35; **clarification and proposal writing on group novel due**

Spring break
Sa 3/6 – Su 3/14

Week VIII
M 3/15 – F 3/19

T – **groups meet re clarification and proposal writing**

R – Library day

Week IX
M 3/22 – F 3/26

T – **upper- and lower-middle-class angst, North and South** - *AL*: Updike – introduction and “Separating,” pp. 960-70; Mason – introduction and “Shiloh,” pp. 1068-80.

R – **“the source”** - *AL*: Ginsberg – introduction and “Howl,” pp. 1378-89; Ferlinghetti - introduction and “Constantly Risking Absurdity,” pp. 1334-35. Film screening: “The Source.”

Week X M 3/29 – R 4/1	T – one variety of the dispossessed - <i>AL</i> : Silko – introduction and “Lullaby,” pp. 1123-32; Erdrich – introduction and “The Red Convertible,” pp. 1161-70.
	R – maybe we’re all dispossessed! - <i>AL</i> : Oates – introduction and “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?,” pp. 1019-34; O’Brien, introduction and “The Things They Carried,” pp. 1107-22.
Week XI T 4/6 – F 4/9	T – order in poetry? - <i>AL</i> : Macleish, introduction and “Ars Poetica,” pp. 571-72; Warren – introduction and poems, pp. 1269-77; Lowell – introduction and poems, pp. 1321-31.
	R – wave-three feminism - <i>AL</i> : Rich – introduction and poems, pp. 1426-31; Oliver – introduction and poems, pp. 1448-52; Piercy – introduction and poems, pp. 1453-55.
Week XII M 4/12 – F 4/16	T - who is ‘an American?’ - <i>AL</i> : Cervantes – introduction and “Refugee Ship,” p. 1508; Morales – introduction and “Child of the Americas,” pp. 1509-10; Espada – introduction and “Bully,” pp. 1522-23; Alexie, introduction and “On the Amtrak from Boston to New York City,” pp. 1524-26.
	R - Review/preview; Final exam distributed
Week XIII M 4/19 – F 4/23	T – TBA Group presentations; papers due
	R – TBA Group presentations; papers due
Week XIV M 4/26 – F 4/30	T – TBA Group presentations; papers due
	R – TBA Group presentations; papers due; course evaluations
Final exams M 5/3 – Sa 5/8	TBA – Take-home final due

