

ENGL342
20th-Century American Literature
Spring 2012
MW 2:35-3:45 p.m.

Dr. Joel Wingard
Zinzendorf 304
M,W 1:30-2:30 p.m.
W, 10:30-11:30 a.m.
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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 roughly the turn of the 20th century 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 motto 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.

This is a 300-level course, which, by College policy,

- Generally have prerequisites
- Build on concepts, skills, and vocabulary from 100- and 200-level courses
- Bring together higher-level concepts from the discipline with life experiences (including ... field work, performance, service learning, and other activities which draw on students' own experiences and/or practical applications of course content)
- Bring together higher-level concepts from the discipline with concepts from related disciplines
- Focus on higher order thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis, and critique (including self-critique)
- Engage the students in a more sophisticated level of discourse, moving the students towards being producers of knowledge, ideas, and content
- Give students the opportunity to define problems, and create and explore original ideas in the discipline(s) relevant to the course
- Move the students towards independent functioning and learning in the discipline(s) relevant to the course

For this iteration, ENGL 342 does not have formal prerequisites, but all the other descriptors of 300-level courses at Moravian College apply. Among the “concepts, skills, and vocabulary from ...200-level courses” that are especially relevant are some of those you were to have developed in any of your writing-intensive courses in English (ENGL 211, 212, 215, and/or 225), especially the collaborative learning elements involved in those courses. With this in mind, learning outcomes for ENGL 342 are as follows. By the end of the semester 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 produce new 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): 15 percent each
- Group presentation on a 20th-century American novel: 20 percent
- Group paper on a 20th-century American novel: 20 percent
- Group Discussion-leading: 15 percent
- Active class participation, including attendance: 15 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 (TBD)

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). The Writing Center is located in a building that is not accessible to persons with mobility impairments. If you need the services of the Writing Center, please call 610-861-1392.

Tentative assignment schedule

Week I M 1/16 – F 1/20	<p>M– introduction etc.</p> <p>W – background and context – <i>AL</i>: “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 supplementary handout; and introductions to “American Literature at the end of the Nineteenth Century” and “Modern American Literature,” pp. 3-21, 297-324.</p>
Week II M 1/23 – F 1/27	<p>M – a critical approach – <i>MRC</i> (handout): Chapters 1 & 2: “The Rhetorical Perspective” and “The Critical Perspective,” pp. 1-20, 21-36.</p> <p>W – some critical applications – <i>MRC</i> (handout): Chapters 9 & 11: “Analyzing Media” and “Cultural Criticism,” pp. 177-210 and 233-58.</p>
Week III M 1/30 – F 2/3	<p>M - toward the New American Century (nonfiction prose) - <i>AL</i>: Washington – introduction and chapter from <i>Up From Slavery</i>, pp. 160-72; DuBois – introduction and chapter from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>, pp. 238-53.</p> <p>W - toward the New American Century (short fiction) – <i>AL</i>: Howells -- introduction and “Editha,” pp. 52-66; Dreiser -- introduction and “Old Rogaum and His Theresa,” pp. 260-78.</p>
Week IV M 2/6 – F 2/10	<p>M - outcasts, incasts, farcasts (short fiction) - <i>AL</i>: 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.</p> <p>W – outcasts, incasts, farcasts (poetry) - <i>AL</i>: Robinson – introduction and poems, pp. 327-31; Frost – introduction and selected poems, pp. 390-405; Williams – introduction and selected poems, pp. 444-54; Millay – introduction and selected poems, pp. 573-78. choice of group novel due</p>
Week V M 2/13 – F 2/17 [★]	<p>M – transnational Literary Modernism (poetry) - <i>AL</i>: Pound – introduction and poems, pp. 455-61; H.D., introduction and poems, pp. 462-69; Cummings – introduction and poems, pp. 580-86.;</p>

[★] Possible field trip: historic Church Street and Nisky Hill Cemetery (weather permitting)

W – **transnational Literary Modernism (short fiction)** - *AL*: Stein – introduction and “The Gentle Lena,” pp. 355-84; Hemingway – introduction, pp. 643-44, and “In Another Country,” (handout); Fitzgerald – introduction and “Babylon Revisited,” pp. 600-20.

Week VI

M 2/20 – F 2/24
(midterm)

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

W – **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 selected poems, pp. 683-95.

F - **Midterm test due**

Week VII

M 2/27 – F 3/2

M – **“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.

W - **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 3/3 – Su 3/11

Week VIII

M 3/12 – F 3/16

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

W – **Library day**

Week IX

M 3/19 – F 3/23

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

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

[▲] This will entail class starting early, running late, or both on this day.

Week X M 3/26 – F 3/30	<p>M – one variety of the dispossessed - <i>AL</i>: Silko – introduction and “Lullaby,” pp. 1123-32; Erdrich – introduction and “The Red Convertible,” pp. 1161-70.</p> <p>W – other varieties of the 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.</p>
Week XI M 4/2 – R 4/5	<p>M – order in poetry? - <i>AL</i>: Macleish, introduction and “<i>Ars Poetica</i>,” pp. 571-72; Warren – introduction and poems, pp. 1269-77; Lowell – introduction and poems, pp. 1321-31.</p> <p>W – Third-wave 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.</p>
Week XII T 4/10 – F 4/13	<p>W - 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. final exam distributed</p>
Week XIII M 4/16 – F 4/20	<p>M – Group presentations; papers due</p> <p>W – Group presentations; papers due</p>
Week XIV M 4/23 – F 4/27	<p>M – Group presentations; papers due</p> <p>W – Group presentations; papers due; course evaluations</p>
Final exams M 4/30 – F 5/4	<p>R – Take-home final due</p>