

English 335 – Modern American Fiction (1920-1940)
Hendrix College, Spring 2016

1	Wed, 20 Jan	Course Introduction
2	Fri, 22 Jan	SNOW DAY
3	Mon, 25 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “On the Quai at Smyrna” through “The Three-Day Blow”
4	Wed, 27 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “The Battler” through “Cat in the Rain”
5	Fri, 29 Jan	<i>In Our Time</i> , “Out of Season” through “My Old Man”
6	Mon, 1 Feb	<i>In Our Time</i> , “Big Two-Hearted River: Part I” to end
7	Wed, 3 Feb	assigned articles
8	Fri, 5 Feb	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> chapters 1-12
9	Mon, 8 Feb	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> chapters 13-22
10	Wed, 10 Feb	<i>The Age of Innocence</i> chapters 23 - end
11	Fri, 13 Feb	student articles #1: Emily Holmes, Ashley Elser, Greer Veon, Steven Hulsey
	Mon, 15 Feb	MIDWINTER BREAK
12	Wed, 17 Feb	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , First Section
13	Fri, 19 Feb	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , Second Section
14	Mon, 22 Feb	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> , Third Section
15	Wed, 24 Feb	assigned articles
16	Fri, 26 Feb	<i>Cane</i> , “Karintha” through “Blood-Burning Moon”
17	Mon, 29 Feb	<i>Cane</i> , “Seventh Street” through “Bona and Paul”
18	Wed, 2 Mar	<i>Cane</i> , “Kabnis”
19	Fri, 4 Mar	student articles #3: Joo Oh, Josh Hammons, Caroline Washington, Joy Spence
20	Mon, 7 Mar	writing day (“ How to Write for Dr. V ”)
21	Wed, 9 Mar	workshop
22	Fri, 11 Mar	<i>Miss Lonelyhearts</i>

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23	Mon, 14 Mar	<i>The Day of the Locust</i> chapters 1-15
24	Wed, 16 Mar	<i>The Day of the Locust</i> chapter 16 to end
25	Fri, 18 Mar	first analytical essay due
19 - 27 Mar		SPRING BREAK
26	Mon, 28 Mar	student articles #4: Laura Hildebrand, Colin Martell, Ellie Black
27	Wed, 30 Mar	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> , through April 30 th (stop at May 1 st , p.63)
28	Fri, 1 Apr	<i>Gentlemen Prefer Blondes</i> , to end (of novella, no book)
29	Mon, 4 Apr	student articles #5: Robbie Borrello, Katie Thompson, Bayley Krell, Jake Turner
30	Wed, 6 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 1-3
31	Fri, 8 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 4-5
32	Mon, 11 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 6-7
33	Wed, 13 Apr	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> chapters 8-9
34	Fri, 15 Apr	assigned articles
35	Mon, 17 Apr	<i>Native Son</i> , Book 1
36	Wed, 20 Apr	<i>Native Son</i> , Book 2
37	Fri, 22 Apr	<i>Native Son</i> , Book 3
38	Mon, 25 Apr	student articles #6: Kara Coffman, Connor Newton, Kat Neilson
39	Wed, 27 Apr	writing day
40	Fri, 29 Apr	workshop day
41	Mon, 2 May	second analytical essay due
	Tue, 3 May	reading day
	Fri, 6 May 2:00	reflective essay due; course evals

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Make it new.

—Ezra Pound

Gertrude Stein always speaks of America as being now the oldest country in the world because by the methods of the civil war and the commercial concentrations that followed it America created the twentieth century and since all the other countries are now either living or commencing to be living a twentieth century of life America having begun the creation of the twentieth century in the sixties of the nineteenth century is now the oldest country in the world.

—Gertrude Stein

Course Description

This course introduces the history and variety of American fiction from the first half of the 20th century, and helps place it in its cultural context. Given the extent and richness of the subject, the course will be suggestive rather than inclusive or even representative. The first half of the 20th century has been dubbed the modernist period in literary and cultural studies, and one aspect of this course will be an exploration of what exactly the term *modernism* might signify. It aims to: (1) increase your understanding of this period of literary history; (2) foster your interpretation of literary texts, especially from the modernist era; (3) improve your ability to work with literary scholarship; and (4) develop your mastery of writing about literature.

In order to gain as much from this course as possible, you must actively engage the content. So while short lectures by the professor will certainly occur, student interaction—with the stories, with classmates, with the instructor, with your own imaginations and critical eye—will constitute the primary course activity. For class, you may be asked to work with a small group to interpret a work; you will bring prepared prompts for some readings; you may be asked to do some in-class writing; etc. Outside of normal class discussion, you will engage the texts through reading responses; a team-taught class based on two secondary sources; two analytical essays; and a reflective essay (see below). This course involves a lot of reading. Plan accordingly.

Texts

Hybrid novels: Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1925); & Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923).
New York: Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence* (1920); & John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer* (1925). Hollywood: Nathanael West, *Miss Lonelyhearts* & *The Day of the Locust* (1933, 1939); & Anita Loos, *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1925). Native Sons: William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936); & Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940).
Articles to be assigned.

Requirements/Grades

- ✎ *Class Participation* (15%): Class participation includes attendance, tardiness, and **active** participation in class activities. Excessive absences will result in a failure for the course.
- ✎ *Reading Responses* (15%): On any day of a novel we study for one or two days, or on any day but the last for works we cover in more than two days, submit a 2 page response (1.5 spaced). I am not looking for a formal essay; I am looking for an intelligent, provocative response that draws on the language of the text. It should be speculative, reaching for ideas. It might attend to a single passage; it might juxtapose passages. It might apply something from an earlier work or critical source to the work under consideration. Due by email 10 a.m. the day of that particular reading; bring a hard copy to class (printed front and back). If studying a block-length quotation, include it as a third page.
- ✎ *Article Preparation* (10%): In small groups, you will choose two critical articles about a text for the entire class to study and discuss. Your group will also lead the class activities on that day. You are welcome to assign a short task for the class members to prepare and bring. I **STRONGLY** encourage you to use the week I am away to read the work and begin, with your group, to find the articles you wish to use. Note that you have the content of the article and its methodology and its form as your material. The articles must be approved by me; they must be distributed to the class 48 hours beforehand.
- ✎ *Analytical Essays* (25% each): Make a significant argument about a text. Whatever else your essay does, it must in some way address how your text reflects the modernist culture which produced it. Feel free to use secondary material from outside this class, including material from other academic disciplines. You are limited only by the range of your own intellectual curiosity and your ability to present your case. Consultation is recommended. Use at least two secondary sources in significant fashion, only one of which can be provided by the class. 8-10 pages; MLA.

In terms of essay grading criteria/expectations, use the following general guidelines: An **A** essay provides insights beyond class discussion; it must be clearly and gracefully written and organized. A **B** essay might be well written and organized but not push the ideas much past class discussion, or it has some problems of logic/evidence in that effort; or it is successful in its ideas, but the execution—the writing—has some shortcomings. A **C** essay does not go beyond class discussion, depends on plot summary, or otherwise has logic/evidence problems preventing its argument from being particularly convincing or compelling. If most readers don't need you to explain what you are explaining, your paper is probably a "C" in content. A "C" paper might also have somewhat compelling and even convincing ideas, but it exhibits serious problems in written expression. A **D** essay has serious shortcomings in both content and expression.
- ✎ *Reflective Essay* (10%): This essay asks you to use a text to think beyond its own boundaries. Analytical essays use the text and other materials to understand the text; I'm asking you to use the text as a springboard for reflective, smart musings of significance outside the text. In a sense this essay will be less formal. You do not necessarily need a thesis; a first-person presence is fine. But less formal does not mean less carefully crafted. Models will be provided.

Other Policies

- ☒ Drinks are permitted in class, but no food. No hats, either, except for religious headgear.
- ☒ The syllabus is subject to revision as the course progresses.
- ☒ *Learning Disabilities*: Any student who needs accommodation in relation to a recognized disability should inform the instructor at the beginning of the course. In order to receive accommodations, students with disabilities are required to contact Julie Brown in Academic Support Services at 501-505-2954.
- ☒ *Email*: Email will be used to contact the entire class for communicating changes to the syllabus and other matters. Check your Hendrix account daily.
- ☒ *Laptop and other wireless devices*: These are not permitted in class, unless required for disability accommodation (see above).
- ☒ *Academic Dishonesty*: Intellectual dishonesty will not be tolerated. See the academic integrity statement and policy in the student handbook. Frequently, failure to document and attribute secondary sources adequately is not a deliberate attempt to pass another's ideas and words off as one's own, but rather a misunderstanding of how to give that other person sufficient credit properly. Please consult with me on any documentation question so we can avoid problems.
- ☒ *Late essays*: If you have extenuating circumstances, you must consult me at least one week prior to the due date (except in the case of actual emergencies). Otherwise, you will lose five points for every day it is late, starting from when class begins on the due date.
- ☒ *Essay Format*: All submitted essays must follow the MLA style for format, documentation, and bibliography. Specifically:
 - ☒ MLA format: 12 point font, with serifs. 1" margins all around (campus MS Word default is 1.5" left margin). No cover sheet. No folders. Attach pages with a staple (which I will not provide). Page numbers must appear in the upper right corner of each page except the first. All papers must have a title and a "Works Cited" section.
 - ☒ Exceptions to MLA format: Single-space the name/course/date/professor information on the first page. 1.5-space block/indented quotations. If you have room, add your entire "Works Cited" section at the bottom of your last page.
 - ☒ MLA documentation: MLA calls for parenthetical documentation, not footnotes or endnotes. Consult any recent English handbook, the *MLA Handbook* in the library, or the online guide linked via the English Department's website. *Rule of thumb*: *Given the context of the surrounding passage and the bibliography listing, include the absolute minimum amount of information necessary within the parentheses.*