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# ENG 2205-003: Introduction to Literary Studies

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English 2205 Introduction to Literary Studies Fall 2005

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Books for the course:

Emily Dickinson, *Complete Poems*

Neil Gaiman, *American Gods*

Paul Lauter, ed. *Heath Anthology of American Literature, V. I*

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*, 1892 ed.

It seems to me it's pretty simple what English majors try to do, though so many people seem to wonder just what it is we do. We read things and try to figure out what they mean and why and how and who might care. Sounds simple enough, right? Call this class an exercise in exploring why this straightforward task of meaning-making requires the work it does and in what ways this work can be done. We'll spend the first half of the semester or so learning what we can about the two great poets America has produced—Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Following that, we'll spend some weeks reading Neil Gaiman's elaborate novel, *American Gods*. My aim in this is to introduce you to several different modes of literary study, to give you a chance to develop and in depth sense of several writers, and to help you to see the ways there are meanings we can make.

Course policies are as follows;

1. This is a discussion and attendance based class, and I expect and reward regular participation. Missing more than a couple of classes will hurt you. Not getting involved in class discussion will hurt you more.
2. I'll ask you to do various kinds of writing from impromptu in class things to more developed projects. There will be a take home final.
3. Final grades will be based on your overall performance.