

Eastern Illinois University

The Keep

Fall 2019

2019

Fall 8-15-2019

ENG 5009-600: Studies in 19th Century American Literature

Woody Skinner

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2019



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Skinner, Woody, "ENG 5009-600: Studies in 19th Century American Literature" (2019). *Fall 2019*. 87.
https://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2019/87

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2019 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2019 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENGL 5009: 19th-Century American Literature Eastern Illinois University :: Fall 2019 :: Online

Instructor

Dr. Woody Skinner

wwskinner@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman Hall 3040

In-Person Office Hours: Mondays—10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00
 Wednesdays—10:00-11:00 and 1:00-2:00
 Fridays—1:00-2:00

Digital Office Hours: Wednesdays and Fridays—1:00-2:00

Required Texts and Materials

- *The Rise of Silas Lapham* by William Dean Howells (1885)
- *Maggie* by Stephen Crane (1893)
- *McTeague* by Frank Norris (1899)
- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin (1899)
- *Rose of Dutcher's Coolly* by Hamlin Garland (1895)
- *The Silent Partner* by Elizabeth Stuart Phelps (1871)
- *Phases of an Inferior Planet* by Ellen Glasgow (1898)
- *The Sport of the Gods* by Paul Laurence Dunbar (1902)

Course Description

American naturalism, a late nineteenth-century literary movement, represented a crucial transition in American letters. Naturalists resisted the lingering influence of mid-century romantics like Hawthorne and Melville and diverged from the genteel realism of Howells and James in favor of grittier—often urban—subjects. In this seminar, we will explore this underexamined movement, studying a range of naturalist novels and accompanying critical and cultural texts.

Along the way, we'll devote special attention to narratives of urbanization, investigating the influence—aesthetic, philosophical, and cultural—of transformations in American life. We'll also consider, as the semester progresses, naturalism's complicated legacy. In what ways did the movement anticipate modernism? Why did a number of these authors quickly fall out of fashion? And, on a potentially related note, why did these novels—many of which foreground pressing social problems—routinely present anti-Semitic ideas, along with blinkered visions of race and gender?

Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate broad knowledge of 19th-century and early 20th-century literary movements, including romanticism, realism, naturalism, and modernism.

- Provide a historically-informed definition of American literary naturalism.
- Speak to the intellectual, political, and aesthetic trends that contributed to American literary naturalism.
- Contribute to discussions of American literature by building on, as well as challenging, the ideas of your classmates and professor.
- Read deeply and critically, with an eye toward producing scholarly work.
- Raise questions that advance scholarly conversations surrounding key works of American literature.
- Position your ideas in relation to naturalist criticism and scholarship, both historic and contemporary.
- Trace the lingering influence of naturalism on 20th-and-21st-century literature and media.
- Employ sound research practices to develop scholarly work.
- Draft, revise, and polish scholarly writing.

Course Policies

Technical Requirements

To take this course, you must be able to do the following:

- Regularly access the Internet, using a laptop or desktop computer
- Download and upload email attachments
- Use Microsoft Word and PowerPoint
- Use Collaborate Ultra and Kaltura for audio/video communications
- Use Adobe Reader (free download) or Preview (for Mac) to read PDF files
- Install software
- Use a webcam and microphone

Digital Decorum, or 'Netiquette'

Constructive university learning environments require professors and students to respect differences—of background, thought, opinion, and belief. This notion holds special significance in our online literature course, where you will be asked to routinely engage with your classmates' perspectives, experiences, and ideas. Therefore, respect will serve as the guiding principle and bedrock expectation of our work together this semester.

Here are some best practices for communicating in our online classroom:

- Healthy discourse provides room for differences of opinion; however, disagreements should, without exception, be respectfully expressed.
- Keep in mind that sarcasm is more difficult to understand without tonal cues and body language.
- When you're replying to a discussion board post, please summarize the portion of the original post that has inspired your response.
- Avoid unnecessary repetition. Privilege concision and rely on the substance of your ideas to meet suggested word counts.

- Since our discussions will draw extensively from primary and secondary sources, be sure to clearly indicate direct quotes and, when possible, provide page numbers.
- In the case of digital texts with unclear or ambiguous pagination, please clearly indicate the chapter to which you're referring.

The following content will not be permitted and will, furthermore, be referred for disciplinary action:

- Illegal materials
- Harassing or threatening comments
- Harmful, abusive, or sexually explicit statements

Submitting Assignments

Dropbox assignments should be submitted as Word or PDF files, and final essays should be submitted in accordance with MLA document style (12 point Times New Roman font, standard headers, a correctly formatted Works Cited page, etc.).

Instructor Response Time

I will check the course daily Monday through Friday and periodically during weekends. You can expect an email response from me within 48 hours of your message, and you can expect to receive grades on all assignments within one week of submitting them.

Learner Interaction and Participation

Your engagement in this course will be measured, more than any other way, by the quality and quantity of your discussion board posts, which account for **40 percent of your final grade**. Discussion board prompts and expectations will vary throughout the term; however, each discussion module will require you to post original threads and provide thorough, thoughtful responses to your classmates.

In addition to the discussion board, your participation will be evaluated based on the regularity and depth of your engagement with course materials, your participation in digital conferences/meetings, and your D2L activity. These behaviors account for **10 percent of your final grade**.

Late Work and Make-Up Work

All work should be turned in on the designated dates, at the specified times. I do not accept late work unless qualifying circumstances are discussed with me beforehand; I will grant extensions only when provided with at least 48-hours notice. I do not allow make-up work for previously missed assignments.

Policy on Plagiarism

Here is the English department's plagiarism policy: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident

to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.”

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

Students with Disabilities

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Technical Support

If you need assistance with D2L, call D2L Support toll free at 1-877-325-7778. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Email and Chat options are also available on the “My Home” page after logging in to D2L. Other D2L Resources, including a D2L Orientation course for students, are available on the “My Home” page. If you are experiencing less than optimal D2L Brightspace performance, review the D2L Brightspace Performance Checklist to assess the issue.

For technical questions related to other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, contact the ITS Helpdesk at 217-581-4357 during regular business hours, or submit a help ticket at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have a question related to course content, please contact your instructor.

Grading

Assignment	Grade	Total Points
Discussion Board Activity	32% (4% per module x 8)	320
A Century of Literary Movements	4%	40
Undiscovered Naturalism Assignment	4%	40
Writing Group Contributions (project proposal, annotated bibliography, small-group workshop)	10%	100
Digital Presentation	10%	100
Final Essay	30%	300

Participation (includes discussion board participation, D2L activity, content engagement, digital conference attendance)	10%	100
Total	100%	1000

Final Grade	Total Points/Percentage Grade
A	895-1000 (90-100%)
B	795-894 (80-89%)
C	695-794 (70-79%)
D	595-694 (60-69%)
F	0-594 (0-59%)

A-level work engages deeply with texts to illuminate their previously unseen qualities; this level of work exhibits original insights and, thus, advances the discourse surrounding a given text (or set of texts). In addition to demonstrating a command of primary and secondary texts, A-level work uses elegant sentences and sound organization to achieve a compelling style. A-level work is uncommon and should, therefore, be celebrated.

B-level work is a lot like A-level work in that it displays grammatical, organizational, and rhetorical fluency while also demonstrating considerable knowledge of primary and secondary texts. This level of work, however, lacks the depth of engagement and originality of insight that characterize A-level work. B-level work does not significantly advance the conversation about the text(s) at hand.

C-level work punctually and perfunctorily meets the requirements of the assignment. C-level of work superficially engages with primary and secondary sources; consequently, work at this level is neither incisive nor rhetorically forceful.

D-level work partially satisfies the demands of the assignment. Work at this level is underdeveloped, demonstrating significant deficiencies that might include—but are not limited to—the following: incomplete citations, absent sources, missing pages, and organizational/rhetorical incoherence.

F-level work fails, typically in more than one way, to meet the requirements of the assignment.

Additional Support

Office Hours

I will hold regular digital and in-person office hours at the times listed above, and I am always happy to speak with you—whether you have questions, want to brainstorm together, or simply would like to discuss one of our books. If the demands of your schedule prevent you from meeting during office hours, please contact me to make other arrangements—we will find a time that works well for both of us.

The Writing Center

I encourage you to use EIU's Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, documenting your papers, and working with sentence-level concerns. The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Student Success Center

Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

Schedule

The dates below are tentative; I reserve the right to make adjustments for the benefit of the class.

Module	Primary Text	Assignments
Module 1: August 19-30	<i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>	--Discussion posts --A Century of Literary Movements
Module 2: September 3-13	<i>Maggie</i>	--Discussion posts
Module 3: September 16-27	<i>McTeague</i>	--Discussion Posts
Module 4: September 30- October 11	<i>The Awakening</i>	--Discussion Posts --Undiscovered Naturalism Assignment
Module 5: October 14-25	<i>The Silent Partner</i>	--Discussion Posts --Writing Group Task: Brief Project Proposal
Module 6: October 28- November 8	<i>Rose of Dutcher's Coolly</i>	--Discussion Posts

		--Writing Group 1: Discussion Questions --Writing Group Task: Annotated Bibliography --Mandatory Conferences
Module 7: November 11-22	<i>Phases of an Inferior Planet</i>	--Discussion Posts --Writing Group 2: Discussion Questions --Writing Group Task: First Five Pages Workshop
Module 8: November 25- December 6	<i>The Sport of the Gods</i>	--Discussion Posts --Writing Group 3: Discussion Questions --Digital Presentations Due
Finals Week: December 9-13		Final Project Due