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ENG 3702-002: American Literature: Mid-19Th Century To 1900

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American Literature: Mid-19th Century to 1900 (Writing Intensive)
English 3702-002
Fall 2011

Purpose

The course offers a literary-historical study of works associated with the development of American Realism, a literary movement that especially flourished from 1865 to 1900 and that continues to this day. We will examine ways in which writers including Dickinson, Twain, Howells, James, and Chopin sought to represent reality. In addition, we will consider how social and intellectual changes influenced the writers’ literary techniques and concepts of reality. You will have the opportunity to read a wide range of outstanding works reflecting economic, racial, gender and other issues as our nation transitioned from a predominantly agrarian to a predominantly urban society.

Scope

Because the American Realists excelled at writing stories and novels, most of the works fit into those genres. But there is plenty of variety. Realism is by no means a monochromatic movement. It includes the Realism of local color, the Realism of social criticism, the Realism of psychological analysis, the Realism of biological and economic determinism, and even the Realism of gothic horror.

Your final grade will be based on the following components:

*Class Participation*: 10%
Your informed responses and discussion show active engagement with the works and contribute to classroom learning.

*Written Responses*: 35%
During the semester, you will write six written responses (at least 400-500 words each, but you can write up to 800 words) focusing on questions I will pose in class. In each response, you will be expected to state a clear position in a main-idea sentence and support that position with evidence and reasoning. Responses will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of main-idea sentence, sufficiency and coherence of evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. A response can receive
a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

**Critical Essay:**

40%

You will compose an essay of 8-10 pages (not including endnotes and works cited) in twelve-point type. Essays will be evaluated for content (clarity and depth of thesis, sufficiency and coherence of evidence and reasoning) and, to a lesser extent, for grammar and mechanics. However, an essay can receive a failing grade if the composition includes a great number of drastic sentence errors (fragments, splices, disagreements, dangling modifiers, etc.).

**Final Examination:**

15%

The final examination will be in two parts. Part I will include four items from which you will choose two items as the basis of 300-400 word responses. Part II will include three items from which you will choose one item as the basis of a 600-800 word response.

**Note:** When I evaluate written responses, critical essays and final examinations, I use a simple ten-point scale linked to letter grades. That is, an 87% is a B+, an 85% is a B, an 82% is a B-. This approach allows you to compute your grade at any point of the semester.

**Attendance Policy/Missed Written Assignments**

If you have a verifiable excuse from a doctor, the Health Service, or an appropriate University employee, I will drop missed written responses from your average. I will do the same if you can verify attendance at a family member's wedding or funeral or to assist a sick or injured family member. You cannot make up missed written responses. After three unexcused absences, you will incur a penalty of 10% off your final grade; each subsequent unexcused absence will carry a penalty of 5% off your final grade.

**Electronic Writing Portfolio**

You may submit an essay from this writing-intensive course to your electronic-writing portfolio. Keep in mind that submissions must include at least 750 words.

**Information for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

1. Week of August 22
   -Introduction to Course; Literary Historical Background; Handout of Melville Poems
   -Discussion of Poems from Melville’s *Battle-Pieces* (handout), Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (52-56), Dickinson’s “I like a look of Agony” (72)

2. Week of August 29
   -Poems by Dickinson: “These are the days when Birds come back” (71), “The Robin’s my Criterion for Tune” (74), “A Bird came down the Walk” (77), “There’s a certain slant of light” (73), “I died for Beauty—but was scarce” (80), “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died” (80), “I like to see it lap the miles” (84), “He preached upon ‘Breadth’ till it argued him narrow—” (91-2)
   -Bret Harte: “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” (502-9); George Washington Cable: “Belles Demoiselles Plantation” (520-32); Twain: “The Notorious Jumping Frog” (144-51)

3. Week of September 5
   -Twain: from *Life on the Mississippi* (154-71); *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (172-209)
   -*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (209-58)

4. Week of September 12
   -*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (258-309)
   -*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (309-44)

5. Week of September 19
   -James: “Daisy Miller” (400-43)
   -Howells: *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (3-75)

6. Week of September 26
   -*The Rise of Silas Lapham* (75-171)
   -*The Rise of Silas Lapham* (171-258)

7. Week of October 3
   -*The Rise of Silas Lapham* (258-299); Jewett: “A White Heron” (552-60)
   -Freeman: “The Revolt of Mother” (649-61); Chopin: *The Awakening* (560-97)

8. Week of October 10
   -*The Awakening* (597-650); Gilman: “The Yellow Wall-Paper” (695-708)
   -Bierce: “The Boarded Window” (517-20); James: “The Beast in the Jungle” (459-88)
9. Week of October 17
   -Crane (separate book): Maggie: A Girl of the Streets (7-78)
   -The Red Badge of Courage (81-127); Proposals for Critical Essays Due

10. Week of October 24
   -The Red Badge of Courage (127-212)
   -London: “To Build a Fire” (823-834); Garland: “Under the Lion’s Paw” (685-95);

11. Week of October 31
   -Dreiser: Sister Carrie (1-90)
   -Sister Carrie (90-160)

12. Week of November 7
   -Sister Carrie (160-227)
   -Sister Carrie (227-313)

13. Week of November 14
   -Sister Carrie (313-69);
   -O’Neill: The Hairy Ape (1100-1132)

THANKSGIVING RECESS

14. Week of November 28
   -Cather: “Neighbor Rosicky” (862-81); Wharton: “The Muses Tragedy” and “Roman Fever” (708-28))
   -Crane: The Black Riders (1299-1324), "War is Kind" (1325-45)

15. Week of December 5
   -Robinson: Poems (841-853)
   - Orientation for Final Examination; Critical Essays Due