Fall 8-15-2002

ENG 3702-002: American Realism

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This course is focused on literature and culture of the second half of the nineteenth century, as well as on the concept of "realism" in literature. To this end, we will read widely in the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson, the fiction and prose of Twain, Cather, Chopin, James, among others, in order to get at the literary and historical character of the times.

Course policies are as follows. I expect regular attendance and participation, and your final grade will reflect this. If you want an A, act like an A student. Also keep me informed of things as they happen for that that could effect your role in the class; most problems have solutions and I'm willing to work with everybody, if need be. There will be several sorts of papers in this class, from quick in-class writing to a developed research project and a take-home final. I may ask you to do a presentation or to take responsibility for some particular class discussion. Your final grade will be based on assessments of your written work and the overall quality of your class performance.

Schedule

9/3 Whitman, "Preface" to Leaves of Grass; Song of Myself
9/5 Song of Myself

9/10 Whitman, poems from Drum-Taps; the selections from Specimen Days; "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"
9/12 Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Song of the Redwood Tree," "Passage to India," "The Sleepers."

9/17 Dickinson poems selected by the class; go through the section in the anthology devoted to her and pick a poem to present to the class, ready to read it out loud and help us understand it.
9/19 selected Dickinson poems

9/24 short paper #1 comparison of Whitman and Dickinson as realist writers