ENG 3704-001: Contemporary American Literature

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English 3704
Prof. Guzłowski, Fa 2002
Contemporary American Literature 930-1045 TTh

Office: 3781 Coleman Hall
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T 9-930, 1230-2, W 9-12 noon, Th 9-930, and by appointment

Special Needs: Students with special needs who require academic accommodations should contact Disability Services at 581-6583.

Course Objectives: The purpose of this class is to give a general background in the American Literature written since 1950. The course will focus on the central literary movements of this period (for example, later modernism, confessional poetry, the beat experience, existentialism, hippie-ism, postmodernism, neo-regionalism, and dirty realism) and the social, historical, and cultural conditions (for example, the Minority Rights movement, the rise of the suburbs, the Vietnam war, and the Mallification of America) which in part give rise to these movements. Along with this general background, we will read and discuss a number of literary works that will serve as examples of these movements.

Course Requirements:

Reading of Assigned Texts
Responses 100 points
Final Paper 100 points
Mid Term 100 points
Final Exam 100 points
Quizzes 60 points

Grades:
414-460 points = A
322-367 points = C
0-275 points = F

Reading of Assigned Texts: This course requires much reading, and some of the works are difficult. I've tried to space the big readings out so that we aren't doing one big thing after another. But, pretty much, you have to keep reading.

Discussion: We learn about literature by reading it and talking about it. Except for a few occasions when I will be introducing literary periods, movements, I will not lecture. Class will revolve most of the time around your observations, insights, and questions.

Exams: They will be comprehensive and will contain objective and subjective components. You will be asked to 1) identify characters, situations, images from the literature, 2) identify and explain quotations from the works we will be reading, 3) answer essay questions about them.

Papers: You will write one paper, at least 2000 words long (about 6 pages), on an author we'll be reading this semester. This paper should be analytical (proving some significant point) and critical (i.e. using outside criticism). The paper will be graded on both content, research, and form. Highest grades will go to papers which are most insightfully, thoughtfully, energetically and gracefully written. Further, the papers should be typed and should use the MLA format. Papers will be due shortly before the end of the semester. More information regarding every aspect of this assignment will be handed out following mid-term.

Responses: We learn about literature not only by reading and talking about it but also by writing about it. During the semester, each student will write 10 responses to the works we'll be reading. No student can write more than one response per author. The responses may be hand-written or typed. They should be at least 200 words long. Each response should either analyze an important issue in the work you are responding to or answer some important question or questions that you feel the work raises. Summaries of class discussion of the work will not be accepted.

The individual responses must be turned in on the day that we start discussing the work the response responds to. The reason for this is that I want your fresh response [no matter how hesitant] uncluttered by the possible interference from the classroom discussion. Responses may be revised within 10 days of being turned in. Late responses will not be accepted without a valid excuse.

Quizzes: There will be 12 quizzes during the semester. The questions will sometimes be objective, sometimes subjective. Each quiz will be worth 5 points. If you miss a quiz, you will be able to make it up if you have a valid, serious excuse for the absence.
**Plagiarism:** Note the English Dept's statement: "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 original work' (Random House Dict.)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.

**Syllabus:** The following may change because of various unforeseen factors. Also, note well that I do not give the titles of specific poems that we will be reading; this information will come before each assignment.

A) **Intro to historical and literary backgrounds**

B) **The Existential and Confessional World**
   - Singer, *Enemies, A Love Story*
   - Jarrell, poem (N)
   - Bishop (N) and Roethke (N), poems
   - Lowell, poem (N)
   - Kerouac, *On the Road*
   - Baldwin, *Another Country*

C) **Hippies, Radicals, and Post-Modernists**
   - Plath and Sexton poems (N)
   - Atwood, *Surfacing*
   - Rock and roll, handouts
   - Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse 5*

**Mid-Term**

D) **More Post-Modernism, Minimalism and Dirty Realism and Beyond**
   - Doctorow, *Ragtime*
   - Raymond Carver, *Cathedral*
   - Rita Dove, Robert Pinsky, Louise Gluck, Mary Oliver, poems (N)
   - Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
   - Oates, *Black Water*
   - Morrison, *Beloved*

**FINAL**