ENG 3702-002: American Realism

Stephen Swords

Eastern Illinois University

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This class focuses on American literature of the later nineteenth century—Whitman, Dickinson, Twain, Cather, Chopin, Dunbar, Perkins, Jewett, among others. In many ways, this period of American cultural history represents the beginnings of our own time, and its literature reflects much that is still familiar in terms of imagery, story, and idea. One hope I have for this class is that you'll come to see that "back then" was not that much different than "right now," and that many of the things these writers had to say to their own time still ring true and pertinent to our own.

Policies for this course are straightforward. I expect regular attendance and participation, and these will count in your final grade. I also expect you to keep up with the reading. There will be a take home mid-term and a take-home final. Your final grade will be based on your overall performance, according to my best judgement. If you want an A, act like an A student.

Schedule I

8/26 opening day; poems by Frost, Williams, Dickinson
8/28 Whitman, "The Sleepers"; two poems by Dickinson

9/2 Norris, "A Plea for Romantic Fiction"; Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

9/9 Twain, "James Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses"; Huckleberry Finn (chapters 1-15)
9/11 Huckleberry Finn (chapters 16-30)

9/16 Huckleberry Finn (chapters 31-end)
9/18 background on Twain

9/23 Cather, Song of the Lark
9/25 Song of the Lark

9/30 Cather, My Antonia
10/2 My Antonia

10/7 Chopin, The Awakening
10/9 The Awakening