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ENG 3703-002: Twentieth Century American Literature, 1900-1950

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English 3703  Twentieth Century American Literature 1900-1950

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursday 10:45-12:30, 1:45-3:30, and by appointment

Books for the course:

Nina Baym, ed. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, 1914-1945

Willa Cather, The Professor’s House

W.E.B. Dubois, The Souls of Black Folk

F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Dashiel Hammett, The Maltese Falcon

John Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath

Edith Wharton, The House of Mirth

The period covered in this class, 1900-1950, represents the full flowering of American literature, art, and culture. It's hard to imagine a more vibrant, complex, and explosive time, filled with major changes in personal living, technology, politics, warfare, economics, and most of all for our purposes, artistic and cultural expression. American artists initiated an explosion in all the arts, creating innovative and lasting works in poetry, fiction, drama, criticism, film, music, coalescing into a style still called “modern” even though some of these innovations are more than one hundred years old. During the semester, we will try to explore as much of this as we can, reading widely and deeply in the literature of the time, sampling some of the film and music, and overall, attempting to see how this period of American culture fits with our own.

Rules and regulations:

1. Attendance and participation matter. If you want an A, act like an A student.
2. During the semester, there will be a mix of in-class and out of class writing. Sometimes I will ask you to respond to what we’re reading in your own terms, sometimes I will ask you to do some research on topics as they come up. There will be a large take-home final at the end of the term.