ENG 3704-001: American Literature, 1950-Present

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ENGLISH 3704.001 – AMERICAN LITERATURE, 1950-PRESENT

Professor: Dr. Marjorie Worthington
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Class: Coleman Hall 3609, TR 8:00-9:15
Office Hours: TR 9:30-11:00am and 12:30-2:00pm or by appt.

The Crying of Lot 49, Thomas Pynchon
Ceremony, Leslie Marmon Silko
Everything is Illuminated, Jonathan Safran Foer
Beloved, Toni Morrison
In the Lake of the Woods, Tim O’Brien

Objectives Include (but are not limited to):
- To read, discuss and analyze representative texts of the early twentieth century.
- To familiarize ourselves with differing critical stances on some of these works.
- To learn about and engage in literary research.
- To hone skills related to writing literary analyses.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Short Essays: Over the course of the semester, you will write five, one-page, single-spaced, typed responses. They will cover the reading assigned for the particular day on which they are due. Although short, these responses should be focused and thesis-driven. It is my hope that these papers will: 1) help you keep up with the reading; and 2) generate interesting ideas for discussion. For that reason, you must be in class and must contribute to class discussion that day in order to get credit for the response. You must complete all short essay assignments to pass this course.

Short Essay Groups (by last name):

Critical Analysis: Critical articles about the texts we are reading can provide new and different insights into the works. Consult the appropriate databases and find three articles about one of the following texts: The Crying of Lot 49, Ceremony or Beloved. Write a 5-6-page summary and analysis of those articles. Address the following questions: What is each article’s main argument concerning the novel? Is that argument valid? What salient points do these novels fail to address? Which article makes the strongest point? Be sure to make copies of these articles (or print them from the database) to turn in with your final essay. NOTE: By “critical articles” I mean articles found in academic journals or books, NOT encyclopedias, Cliffs or Sparks notes, or web sources like Wikipedia. Please do not hesitate to see me if you are having trouble finding articles; we can work with the databases together.

Essay: For this assignment, choose a text or author other than the one you chose for your critical analysis and write an essay about it. You can expand upon the ideas in one of your short essays, turning it into a long essay by adding discussion and further evidence from the text. The most difficult part of this assignment will be determining a suitable topic and thesis for this essay. I am purposely not providing topic ideas: you will explore possible ideas yourself, choose one and flesh it out in an essay. Your paper should have a clear and focused thesis statement and should make some kind of compelling argument.
You will be graded on the quality of this argument and the extent to which you support this argument with evidence from the text. You may, but are not required to, use outside articles to aid you.

**Final Exam:** This final exam will test both basic knowledge of the texts and class discussion, and your ability to understand and analyze what you have read.

**POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** Your consistent attendance and participation are necessary to make this class the vibrant exchange of ideas it should be and I take attendance every day (even if you do not see me doing it). You are permitted no more than three unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence after three will lower your final grade by thirty points (3%). Excused absences are accompanied by appropriate legal or medical documentation.

**Office Hours:** The hours listed above are times when I will be in my office ready to meet with students. You can also make a special appointment to see me if you are unable to come during office hours. I encourage you to come and talk to me about your work as often as you like.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as appropriating words or ideas that are not your own without giving proper credit. The temptation to plagiarize can be great, particularly in the advent of extensive computer technology and the collaborative nature of our class. However, the consequences of plagiarism are dire and can result in a grade of F for the assignment and even for the course. It will also result in a report to the Judicial Affairs Office.

**Grade Breakdown:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short Responses and O’Brien response</td>
<td>30% (5% each)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**ENG 3704 READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

August 25 T Introduction
27 Th Pynchon, Chaps 1-2

A Sept. 1 T Pynchon, Chaps 3-5
B 3 Th Pynchon, Chap. 6

C 8 T Ralph Ellison. “A Party Down at the Square”, James Baldwin
D 10 Th Muriel Rukeyser. Flannery O’Connor

E 15 T Silko, pp. 1-93
A 17 Th Silko, pp. 93-139

B 22 T Silko, pp. 139-230
C 24 Th Silko, pp. 231-end

D 29 T Elizabeth Bishop. Robert Lowell
E Oct. 1 Th Charles Olson. Frank O’Hara
A 6 T Morrison, pp. 3-85
B 8 Th Morrison, pp. 86-134

c 13 T Morrison, pp. 135-229
D 15 Th Morrison, pp. 230-end

E 20 T Gwendolyn Brooks, Sylvia Plath
A 22 Th Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg

B 27 T O’Brien, Chaps 1-11
C 29 Th O’Brien, Chaps 12-16

Nov. 3 T O’Brien, Chaps 17-23 Critical Analysis due
D 5 Th O’Brien, Chaps 24-end

6 F Tim O’Brien visits campus. Your attendance is required. The event is free.

10 T Lorraine Hansberry Response to O’Brien visit due
E 12 Th Edward Albee, John Ashbery

A 17 T Maxine Hong Kingston, N. Scott Momaday
B 19 Th Amy Tan, Gloria Anzaldua

THANKSGIVING BREAK

C Dec. 1 T Foer, 1-118
3 Th Foer, 119-160 Essay Due

D 8 T Foer, 161-239
E 10 Th Foer, 240-end

Dec. 14 Monday, 8:00-10:00