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ENG 3703-002: Modern American Literature

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Course Objectives: The purpose of this course is to give the student a general background in the American literature from 1900 to 1950. We will discuss the central literary movements of this period (realism, anti-genteelism, modernism, imagism, the Harlem Renaissance, Folkism, and existentialism), and the social, historical and cultural conditions that in part gave 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.

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

Course Requirements: Reading of Assigned Texts
- Paper 100 points
- Electronic Journal 100 points
- Mid Term 100 points
- Final Exam 100 points
- Quizzes 60 points

Grades:
- 414-460 points = A
- 368-413 points = B
- 322-367 points = C
- 276-321 points = D
- 0-275 points = F

Reading of Assigned Texts: This course requires much reading and a couple 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. Also, you should know that some works from this period deal with what some people might consider upsetting topics, such as, atheism, infidelity, miscegenation, incest, alcoholism, and spousal abuse.

Papers: You will write one paper, at least 2500 words long, on the authors we'll be reading this semester. This paper should be argumentative (proving some significant point) and critical (i.e. using outside criticism). The paper will be graded on both form and content. Highest grades will go to papers that are most insightfully and thoughtfully written. Further, the papers must be typed and must use the MLA format. Papers will be due the last class day of the semester, April 29, 2004. A late paper will drop a letter grade for each calendar date it is late. More information regarding every aspect of this assignment will be handed out following mid-term.
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 in a multiple choice format, 2) identify and explain the thematic significance of quotations from the works we will be reading, 3) answer essay questions about them.

Electronic Journal: We learn about literature not only by reading and talking about it but also by writing about it. During the course of the semester, each student will participate in an electronic discussion group. The egroup site is available at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eng3703/

During the semester, you will submit 10 short analytical entries to the egroup about the literature we'll be reading and 20 responses to other students' entries.

What should you write about in your 10 short analytical entries? Each one should begin with an important question about the text you are analyzing. This important question should be about an important issue in the work you are analyzing, or the question should focus on an important quote. Your analysis should answer the question that you raise. Sometimes you may want to respond to something that was said in class about the literature. That's fine.

What should you not write about in your 10 short analytical entries? Although I realize the importance of responding to a work of literature on a personal level, I want these essays to be analytical rather than personal. Also, the responses should not be summaries of the works being responded to.

How long should these entries be? The length of a well-developed paragraph: at least 100 words each.

Responses to other students' entries should also be analytical rather than personal. The responses may respond to a student's initial question or final question or to a block of responses or analytical entries or to things said about texts in class. The responses should be thoughtful and substantive.

To make sure these 10 short analytical entries are equally spaced out (this will benefit all of us), each student will be expected to write 5 short analytical entries before mid-term and 5 after mid-term. You can write as many of these as you want but I will only count the first short analytical entry per week toward your grade.

The responses should also be spaced out. I expect each student to do 10 before mid-term, and 10 after mid-term. This is a minimum sort of requirement. Feel free to respond more often. But no more than 2 a week will count toward your required minimum of 10 before mid-term and 10 after mid-term.

If you have trouble getting on-line, see me. You can always post through my computer.

Quizzes: There will be 12 quizzes during the semester. The questions will sometimes be objective, sometimes subjective. Each quiz will be worth 5 points.

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.)—
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.

I have zero-tolerance for plagiarism of any kind on any assignment or test. I will fail a plagiarist for the course, and I will notify the university judicial board of the plagiarism.

**Syllabus:** The following may change because of various unforeseen factors.

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

**B)** Realism and the Attack on Gentility:
- Cather, Willa, *Oh Pioneers*
- Sandburg and Masters, selected poems.

**C)** Modernists and Imagists:
- Hemingway, *Sun Also Rises*
- Lowell, Amy, "Patterns" and Elinor Wylie "Wild Peaches"
- cummings, e.e., Williams, W. C.
- Faulkner, *Light in August*

**D)** Harlem Renaissance:
- Hughes, Langston "Mulatto," "Mother to Son," "The Trumpet Player"
- Cullen, Countee "Yet Do I Marvel" and "Heritage"
- Wright "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"
- Hurston, Zora Neale, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**Mid-Term**

**E)** The Thirties and Folkism:
- Guthrie, Woody, various songs
- Johnson, Josephine, *Now in November*
- Steinbeck, John, *Grapes of Wrath*

**D)** World War II and Existentialism:
- O’Neill, Eugene, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*
- Williams, *Glass Menagerie*
- Jarrell, Randall, "90 North," "Death of the Ball Turret Gunner," "Second Air Force " and "Losses" (handout)
- Gantter, Raymond, *Roll Me Over: An Infantryman’s World War II*
- Singer, Isaac, *Enemies: A Love Story*

**Final**