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ENG 3704-001: Late Twentieth-Century American Literature

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Late Twentieth-Century American Literature
English 3704—Fall, 2004

Instructor: Tim Engles  (Office: Coleman 3831)
Phone: 581-6316 (office)
Office hours: 3:00-4:15, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and by appointment
Instructor’s e-dress: cftde@eiu.edu  Course listserv: 3704f04@eiu.edu

Texts:

Kurt Vonnegut, *Breakfast of Champions* (1973)

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(read the following carefully; these words constitute our contract, and I will request your written agreement to them)

This course will include analysis of literature written in the second half of the Twentieth Century, including both traditionally canonical works and those more recently hailed as important. We will trace recent reassessments of the "great" literature of this period, paying particular attention to what may or may not be "postmodern" about them. There will be a lot of reading in this course, and much of the material will be difficult to grasp and to discuss, so you must prepare for each class meeting by reading the material carefully before class in order to fully participate in our discussions.

GRADES: Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal essay (6-8 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-minute presentation and handout</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/ quizzes/ position papers/ attendance</td>
<td>25%</td>
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REGARDING WRITING: Students will occasionally turn in one-page, double-spaced, typed position papers in response to writing prompts. These papers will be graded on the basis of insight and thoughtfulness; while the quality of the writing in the position
papers need not be quite as polished as that in the final essay, writing that has enough
careless errors in it to distract from the content will be downgraded accordingly. All
writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due.
Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date whether the student is in class or
not. Papers will be graded on a one hundred-point scale, and late papers will be
penalized fifteen points each day they are late. You may turn in position papers and the
formal essay before their due dates if you know you must miss class that day.

When the formal essay is turned in, it MUST be accompanied by all notes and drafts
written towards it, with the final copy of the essay on top of this material. I will use these
materials to gauge and offer comments on your writing process. I WILL NOT GRADE
an essay that is not accompanied by material that clearly demonstrates several earlier
stages leading up to the final draft, so be sure to save all such materials (if you do most or
all of your writing on a computer, print out occasional drafts to include with your final
copy). Essays unaccompanied by materials that clearly demonstrate several stages of
development toward the final copy will receive an automatic ZERO. This policy does
not apply to the position papers—one typed final copy of these will suffice.

REGARDING READING: Since one skill you will be developing in this class is the art
of textual analysis, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over. Instead
of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read all of the assigned
pages, and to read them carefully. I suggest that you take notes as you read, then decide
for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to
light. Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, I will occasionally
give “pop” quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will not
be announced beforehand and they cannot be made up. Because the answers to
unannounced quizzes come up in class after they are taken, quizzes cannot be made up
(even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend
class regularly and on time. I recognize that some students must be absent at times;
accordingly, when I compile your quiz grades at the end of the semester into an average
score, I will drop the lowest one—if you miss a quiz, that will be your one dropped quiz.
If you don’t miss any quizzes, I will still drop your lowest score from your quiz average.

E-MAIL ACTIVITY: Enrollment in this class requires an e-mail account, and you must
check it frequently, preferably every day, for messages pertaining to the course. E-mail
is the quickest, easiest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any and all
questions and comments. Our class discussions will carry over onto the e-mail listserv,
and I will occasionally send messages to the entire class. Getting an email account is
crucial for this course—if you do not send me an email message at the above address by
Friday, August 27 at 3:00 p.m. to confirm that you have established an account, I will
assume that you have chosen against fully participating in the course, and I will therefore
drop you. In your message, describe yourself in whatever way you choose, and also write
a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with these course policies and
procedures. I will use the address you use to send me this message to subscribe you to the
class listserv.
CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: In class, I expect all of you to participate in discussions (class participation will be figured into your final grade). The best way to demonstrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader is by contributing regularly to class discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask me, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other people have the same question. I do not plan to lecture in this class; instead, I will guide our discussions, and I want us to contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment. (Also, drinking beverages in class is okay, but please do not chew gum or eat food, activities which are too distracting to others. Finally, no caps, please, but if you must wear one, turn it backwards so I can see your eyes.)

ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will take attendance, and I expect you to attend class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the “daily schedule.” More than three missed classes will lower your class participation grade to an F. Missing class frequently will also harm your grade on the reading quizzes. Regarding tardiness: this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another section. Finally, you are responsible for all assignments, whether you attend class or not. Get the telephone number of one or two other students in class so you can find out about missed assignments before you come to class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: I expect you to act honestly and do your own work in this class, and so does Eastern Illinois University. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the English Department’s policy on plagiarism: “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 Dictionary of the English Language)—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, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”