

American Literature After 1865

English 4308

Spring 2015

Tuesday, 6-8:45

Donald W. Walden, Ph.D.

D116

Office: B106; 758-5018

dwalden@sulross.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, noon to 4:30

Goals

This course is about what American writers since the Civil War have thought about the human condition and American culture. After taking it, you should be able to:

- recognize styles of each period and author
- discuss major ideas and works.
- enjoy reading, watching, listening to, and discussing literature.
 - respond to literature actively and constructively: decide what you think.
- see how literature both reflects and shapes society.
 - think critically about literature and life by using evidence and inferring and comparing.

- understand how literary devices help set the tone of a piece and convey emotional meaning.

- select from various kinds of literature.

- understand how history affects form.

Text

Grading

You will be graded on your knowledge of the novels and on your understanding of the novelists' insights, and your ability to develop and support your own. You will accumulate points, up to a possible 1,000, and if you have 900, you will make an A and so on.

Weekly questions. 130 points. I shall post questions on Blackboard, and you will respond on Blackboard. The questions will ask about the hermeneutics or poetics of a novel, and you will need to respond in some detail, citing evidence to support your response. An assignment sheet is available.

Response papers. 300 points. You will write two papers, of two to three pages, responding to questions that I give you or to questions that you ask. Basically, they will ask what a piece of literature says about human nature or about culture. You will submit a rough draft, and I'll tell you what you need to do to get an A, and you will revise the paper

A list of response questions is attached. You may respond to questions on any of the novels we have covered up to the time you write a paper.

Term paper. 150 points. You will select a topic regarding the modern novel, develop a position, and write a six- to eight-page paper to support that position. I will look over your work at various points to assure that you are doing acceptable work. If you wish, you may write all the response papers about the same topic and then put them together with appropriate polishing for the term paper. An assignment sheet is available.

Exams. 250 points. A mid-term exam on March 22, worth 100 points, and a final exam on May 12, worth 150 points. You will need to identify ideas, novels, characters, etc. and write a couple of short essays on topics you select from a list. The object will be to show that you can analyze and synthesize evidence and produce a conclusion and a coherent argument to back it up.

Class participation. 170 You will post two questions on Blackboard and answer two of your peers' questions. Each post will be worth 45 points.

Late papers

I shall read only one paper at a time, and if I have not seen a paper before, I shall treat it as a rough draft. For those reasons, if you get behind, you will get even farther behind and may not have time to finish the term paper.

Plagiarism

Plagiarized work will not be accepted. Plagiarism means turning in someone else's work for credit. We will discuss documentation and citation so you will know how to submit work without plagiarizing. If you plagiarize work, I shall drop you from the class with an F and turn your name over to the dean.

Attendance

The attendance policy for this class is different from the one explained in the catalog. You must attend at least four class meetings spread throughout the semester. If you have to miss one scheduled for your home campus, you must attend a meeting at another campus. If not, you will be dropped unless you have a documented, legitimate reason for missing both classes. Legitimate means an emergency that prevented you from being in class, such as an illness. Documented means something signed by an authority, such as a doctor, indicating you were indisposed both times.

Also, you must participate in discussions of all the literature, so you must attend throughout the semester. Attend the meetings at your site according to the schedule for that site; only deviate from that schedule if you have a legitimate excused absence in which case you must attend a class meeting at another site as soon as you can. It will never be permissible to attend four meetings in a row and skip the rest of the semester--you would be counted as absent during the months when you should have met at your site.

Students with disabilities

Sul Ross State University Rio Grande College is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. Students who need accessibility services should contact Kathy Biddick at 830-279-3003. The address is 2623 Garner Field Road, Uvalde, Texas 78801.

Distance education

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, library resources, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should submit online assignments through Blackboard or SRSU email, which require secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

Schedule of readings and assignments

January 20, Whole class will meet in Uvalde.

Introduction to the course

Discussion of American culture

Introduction to naturalism, regionalism, and realism

January 27, Uvalde

Naturalism/determinism

Short stories by Crane, Dreiser, London

Novel, Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

<http://americanliterature.com/author/stephen-crane/book/the-red-badge-of-courage>

February 3, Del Rio

Regionalism, local color

Short stories by Harte and Chesnut

Realism

Short stories by James and Bierce

February 10, Uvalde

Twain

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

“The Private History of a Campaign that Failed”

February 17, Eagle Pass

Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*

February 18

Your first posting

February 19

Response to the first posting

February 24, Uvalde

Melville

Billy Budd

“Bartleby, the Scrivener”

February 25

Your second posting

February 26

Response to the second posting.

March 3, Del Rio

Chopin,

The Awakening

“A Pair of Silk Stockings”

Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper”

Freeman, “A New England Nun”

Jewett, “A White Heron”

Due: draft of your first response paper

March 10, Eagle Pass

Poetry

Due: second draft of your first response paper

March 17

Spring Break

March 23

Mid-term examination

You will take the closed-book portion in an office on your home campus:

Del Rio, Chelsea Garrett, Room F102

Eagle Pass, Connie Esparza, Room B101

Uvalde, Tara Sealey, Room A109

The open-book portion will be online

March 24, Uvalde

Cather

O, Pioneers

“Paul’s Case”

Due: draft of your second response paper

March 31, Del Rio

Fitzgerald, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair"

Poetry

Due: the final draft of your second response paper

April 7, Eagle Pass

Poetry

Due: proposal and list of passages for your term project

April 14, Uvalde

Poetry

Hemingway, Anderson short stories

Due: the outline of your term project

April 21, Del Rio

Faulkner, *The Unvanquished*

Due: the first draft of your term project

April 28, Eagle Pass

Death of a Salesman

http://www.pelister.org/literature/ArthurMiller/Miller_Salesman.pdf

The Glass Menagerie

http://absolutenglish-972.pagesperso-orange.fr/notes/uscivi/glassmenagerie/scene_by_scene.htm

Due: the second draft of your term project

May 5, Del Rio

Due the final draft of your term project

The crucible

<http://asbamericanlit.edublogs.org/files/2011/10/21078735-The-Crucible-Arthur-Miller-2hmdzot.pdf>

A Raisin in the Sun

<http://www.myteacherpages.com/webpages/TPalacios/files/ela11araisininthesun.pdf>

May 12

Final examination