

English 5307
Literature and Class in America

Term and Year: Fall 2019

Location: Online

Meeting Times: Online class

Professor: Dr. Ian Peddie
MAB 111

Open Door Times: T, Th, 9:30-11 and by appt

Email: ian.peddie@sulross.edu

Phone: 432-837-8154

Required Texts

Algren, Nelson. *The Man With the Golden Arm* (50th Anniversary edition). Seven Stories Press, 1999

Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina*. Plume Press, 2005.

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickled and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*. Holt, 2008.

Hughes, Langston and Arnold Rampersad. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*. Vintage, 1995.

Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*. Plume Press, 2000

Wacquant, Loic. *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*. Duke UP, 2009.

Zweig, Michael. *The Working Class Majority: America's Best Kept Secret*. Cornell UP, 2001

There will also be online texts. These are free and I will supply URL information.

Course Description

In this course, we will explore the relationship between contemporary American culture and the world we live in. That is, and broadly speaking, we will examine how literature is affected by social concerns. In this sense, the class will address currently topical concerns such as injustice, exclusion, elitism, prejudice etc., especially how these concerns are portrayed, elucidated, disguised, championed and traduced through a variety of cultural lenses that include literature, history, film, music and social analysis. Needless to say, this course offers much scope for interdisciplinary enquiry.

Course Objectives: Students in English 5307 will:

- examine the processes of poetry, drama, fiction and other writing through the academic lens;
- analyze creative methodologies;
- understand the interaction between culture and society
- appreciate and comprehend interdisciplinary analysis and approaches
- understand and be able to analyze culture as part of a socio-political spectrum

ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act)

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact Mary Schwartz, M. Ed., L.P.C., in Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas 79832. Telephone: 432-837-8203. E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu .

Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations should contact me as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements to ensure the most hospitable and enhancing (cyber) learning environment as possible

First Class and Beyond:

On the first class day, I will post opening/welcoming remarks and suggestions for getting started in the course. On subsequent days, please check announcements for instructions on lectures and answers to class questions, which will be posted each class day (i.e. Monday-Friday) when necessary and/or appropriate. Much of my “lecturing” occurs in the announcements. I will be “off-line” on the weekends, which will begin by 12 p.m. Fridays and continue until 12 p.m. Mondays. Office hours follow those listed above. I will be “off-line” during the week after 3 p.m. daily (i.e. look for email responses within 48 hours—or check the announcements, as I often answer general course questions there).

Coursework

****Please note that you should write attached assignments in Microsoft Word to ensure we may all utilize them. Please contact Sandy Bogus at sbogus@sulross.edu (or 432.837.8523) if you have technical problems or questions.****

****Blackboard only works best in Firefox, Chrome, or Safari (rather than Explorer).**

You are expected to participate fully in a completely engaged manner and will be held accountable for your participation, both in formal and informal forums, throughout the completion of the session’s work. All of your participation must be thoughtful, sincere, and tactful. In the pursuit of these goals, we will write a position paper, a research essay, as well as utilizing discussion forums. You will also complete a course journal that will hold course materials generated this semester.

****I expect your coursework to mirror the time you would take with this course if it were an onsite course. Thus, you should spend the approximately three hours a week working on this course, with additional time for the actual reading and writing of the manuscripts, etc. determined by your personal reading and writing pace—just as you would for an onsite course.**

Detailed Assignment Description:

Discussion Boards: The discussion boards allow us to speak to one another. Think of the discussion boards as the “cyber” equivalent of sitting at the seminar table with one another and talking about our readings, writings, thoughts and reactions to the coursework. The first discussion boards will ask you to do just this. Please answer in detailed manners, using examples and analysis of the why and how of your answers. The posts must be approximately three to five hundred words. Responses to posts should be approximately one to two hundred words. You will respond to two posts. Respond to posts which have not already received two responses yet. DO NOT respond to a post with two responses already unless you have no other options. The topics for the discussion boards will be posted regularly and all in good time. **Note that you can only respond to another’s post after you have posted your main idea.**

Course Journal: The course journal will consist of your thoughts, responses, questions, and ideas pursuant to the texts of elements generated by the texts. Your journal/weekly responses should be about half to three quarters of a page, single spaced. Your responses could run from something that catches your eye to a problem or a concern, to a textual, social, political adumbration etc. Remember that you are not expected to have all of the answers but if you have then let us have them! Note that these responses are **not** summaries or descriptions. Be frugal with the use of “I” and be wary of “I think” and its variations too. **Do no research;** I am interested in what you have got to say rather than the opinions of another. Needless to say, correct syntax, grammar and so on is expected.

Assignments: Students in English 5309 will be required to follow the reading, writing, and discussion environment schedule as presented in the syllabus and be prepared to discuss assignments at the “class period” in which they are due. Students will be expected to write assignments consistently and timely, as this online course only works as well as the students completing the work. **Again, the online course works best if you do the work at the time it is assigned—I have found that the course works much, much better if we are all working in tandem.**

Discussion Boards	20% of the student’s final grade
Journal	20% of the student’s final grade
Research Paper	30% of the student’s final grade
Position Paper	20% of the student’s final grade
Final Exam	10% of the student’s final grade

Academic Integrity

Sul Ross students are expected to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity and are expected to encourage others to do the same. Further, students are expected to take responsible action when there is reason to suspect dishonesty on the part of others. While it is not possible to list all acts of academic dishonesty, examples include knowingly performing, attempting to perform, or assisting another in performing any act of academic dishonesty; cheating; plagiarism; collusion; submitting previously submitted material; misrepresentation or falsification of material; misrepresentation of circumstances such as illness, conflicting responsibilities. Additional details on academic integrity are found in the college catalogue. Academic dishonesty carries severe penalties ranging from a grade of “0” on the affected assignment to dismissal from Sul Ross State University.

Attendance

As this is a web-format workshop course, consistent participation is absolutely necessary. Remaining current with the course schedule and taking part during the expected due dates will not only keep you personally engaged, but will ensure that other participants of the course can benefit from your thoughts, ideas, and reactions toward the readings and writing assignments. *If you miss due dates, I will not expect others in the class to consider your work in arrears. If you fail to participate in a discussion during the workshop timeline, you will miss out on a major component of your discussion board grade. Late work will result in an automatic ten points being taken off your grade; thus, if you received a B on an assignment, it will be reduced to a C. I do not accept any late work for this course after the final exam period has ended.*

****Please note that this course is a seminar which necessitates that students complete discussion boards and major assignments on the day on which the assignments are made. Thus, discussion boards must be posted by 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and responses be posted by midnight on Thursdays. This will ensure that the course’s discussions move forward timely and with minimum inconvenience to your fellow students. Thus, if you miss the assignment, you will not be able to make it up and will lose the credit. Please move on to the next one.**

The Writing Center: The Writing Center is an academic support service available to all Sul Ross students. I strongly encourage you to make the center an integral part of your writing process by visiting the tutors frequently during the semester. The benefits of such visits are readily apparent in your work. The Center is located on the first floor of MAB, room 102, and its phone number is 432.837.8270.

Miscellaneous yet Important:

If, for any reason, you require accommodations for the successful completion of this course, please let me know as soon as possible so that we may make arrangements.

I require that all discussions of our creative/scholarly work remain tactful, sincere, and highly ethical. Take the time with one another's work that you would wish taken with your own. If you do not feel up to this challenge, please find another course.

My office hours are, of course, "cyber" hours, although I will be available on campus at Sul Ross during those hours as well. Please do not hesitate to call the office phone. Or, I can provide further numbers and arrange more convenient times to speak as necessary. I will answer emails within 48 hours of receiving them (with the exception of weekends), so please do not wait until the last moment to ask questions. Also, please check the announcements for the class each day—I often address course issues and give suggestions and directions there, as they affect all students.

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| Week Two | Algren, <i>The Man With the Golden Arm</i> , 1-155; Zweig, Ch 1, "The Class Structure in the United States"; Wacquant, Ch 1, "Social Insecurity and the Punitive Upsurge." |
| Week Two | Algren, <i>The Man With the Golden Arm</i> , 155-223 ; Zweig, Ch 2, "What We Think about When We think about Class," Wacquant, Ch 2, "The Criminalization of Poverty in the Post-Civil Rights Era; Ch 3, "Welfare 'Reform' as Poor Discipline and Statecraft" |
| Week Three | Algren, <i>The Man With the Golden Arm</i> , 223-end; Rotella, "The Story of Decline and the October City," Bettina Drew, "The Heart of the Matter," James Giles, "Nelson Algren: The Value of Dissent," 423-443; Newman, "The Invisible Poor" (R). |
| Week Four | Hughes, poems (TBA); Wacquant, Ch 6, "The Prison as Surrogate Ghetto: Engaging Black Subproletarians." |
| Week Five | Hughes, poems (TBA); Morrison (Sections "Autumn" and "Winter") |
| Week Six | Zweig, Ch 3, "Why is Class Important?" and Ch 4, "Looking at the Underclass." |
| Week Seven | Mid-Term Exam |
| Week Eight | Morrison (remainder of text) |
| Week Nine | Marvin Gaye: <i>What's Going On</i> |
| Week Ten | Zweig, Ch 5, "Looking at Values—Family and Otherwise." Allison (first third of text) |
| Week Eleven | Zweig, Ch 7, "Power and Globalization." Allison (second third of text) |
| Week Twelve | Wacquant, Ch 7 "Moralism and Punitive Panopticism: Hunting Down Sex Offenders." Allison (remainder of text) |
| Week Thirteen | Ehrenreich ("Serving in Florida" and "Scrubbing in Maine") |
| Week Fourteen | Ehrenreich (remainder of text) |

Final Exam