American Noir Literature

Instructor
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Office Hours
By appointment
In my office almost always

"The Night of the Hunter." (1955) Charles Laughton, Director. James Agee, screenwriter; Davis Grubb, author (1953).

Texts

The Best American Mystery Stories of the Century. Editor, Tony Hillerman. Harper Collins, 2000.

Course Description

Noir fiction—otherwise labeled pulp, the mystery, detective stories—has subjects high and low. Protagonists are often low characters who by way of contrast make us see high characters, the rich, powerful, and beautiful, differently. Although the scenes and action may be base and puerile, the best works—by Chandler, Hammett, Highsmith—can evoke a feel for ontological truths. We may finish a story with a satisfying sense of the absurd, if not the irrationality of existence. While the form is founded on the Poe's detective Dupin, who used "ratiocination" to solve crimes, Poe also established a form which offered no conclusions, an aporia, uncertainty, infinite regress, or hall of mirrors. The dark ambiance of existentialism—I recall Camus who dressed like Bogart—elevates noir; yet at the same time, in its gritty realism, it is a low art form. Dante's *Inferno* may have been the first noir. It is a rogues gallery of sympathy sinners. It has far more appeal than the *Paradiso*, and yet the undefinable endpoint of Dante's journey is implied in the journey downward.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to

1. Develop an awareness of the American literary tradition.
2. Understand issues in class, gender, and the environment in the development of American society as expressed through literature.
3. Use literature of the past as a means of critically understanding American society today.
4. Apply techniques of literary research and criticism to write about writing.
5. Use theoretical concepts in literature as a lens for interpretation and study current scholarship in literary criticism in English.
6. Understand the formal features, aesthetic concepts, figurative language, and tropes used in literature.

Graduate Program in English Learning Outcomes

ENGLISH (GRADUATE)
Graduate students will be able to

1. **SLO 1 –** Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
2. **SLO 2 –** Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and interpret literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
3. **SLO 3 –** Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct and utilize research methodologies in the study of literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

Projects

I. Discussion Posts (450 points; 15 posts, 30 points each)
Submit one posts per week to the discussion board. The discussion post builds a community of readers and encourages all of us to read regularly.

The length of each post should be around 300 words, about three paragraphs or a page. Focus on raising questions, interpreting, and responding critically. To support and develop your ideas, use quotes. Another good strategy is to consider the reading through reference to other literature you know: inter-textual reading. I would like our posts to function like a conversation in which we respond to each other's ideas as well.

II. Short Paper on a Noir Novel

Read one noir novel during the semester and write a short four-page literary analysis. You may use one or two critical, scholarly articles to develop your ideas. However, this paper should emphasize close reading for interpretation.

I will provide a list of great noir novels. You may choose one not on the list, but please give a rationale.

II. Term Paper (500 points; due on the last day of class—August 12)
The term paper can focus on one aspect of one work of literature or compare two works of literature. Submit a statement of purpose referring to at least two scholarly sources before you take on your subject. We will share ideas for papers and help each other through peer review and editing.

Format
- 15 pages
- MLA style
- Analytical close reading—use quotes
- Consult scholarship on your topic and juxtapose your ideas to theirs.

PROJECTS	Due Date	%	Points
Posts to the class Discussion Board	Weekly	45	450 30 each
Short Paper on a Novel	10.15	15	150
Statement of Purpose for Term Paper	10.29	5	50
Term Paper 15 pages in length	December 3	35	350
Total Points Available		100	1000

Deadlines
Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the end of the day on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances.

Distance Education Statement
Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as library resources, online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login. 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. Directions for filing a student complaint are located in the student handbook.

Student Responsibilities Statement
All full-time and part-time students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Student Handbook and the Undergraduate & Graduate Catalog and for abiding by the University rules and regulations. Additionally, students are responsible for checking their Sul Ross email as an official form of communication from the university. Every student is expected to obey all federal, state and local laws and is expected to familiarize themselves with the requirements of such laws.

Sul Ross State University

Blackboard

If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or https://techassist.sulross.edu

Accommodating Students with Disabilities and Counseling Services

SRSU Accessibility Services. Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request each semester for each class. Students seeking accessibility/accommodations services must contact Mrs. Mary Schwartze Grisham, LPC, SRSU's Accessibility Services Director or Ronnie Harris, LPC, Counselor, at 432-837-8203 or email mschwartze@sulross.edu or ronnie.harris@sulross.edu. Our office is located on the first floor of Ferguson Hall, room 112, and our mailing address is P.O. Box C122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine. Texas, 79832.

SRSU Library Services

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LoboID and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author's ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an "F" on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

Students in this class are expected to demonstrate scholarly behavior and academic honesty in the use of intellectual property. A scholar is expected to be punctual, prepared, and focused; meaningful and pertinent participation is appreciated. Examples of academic dishonesty include but are not limited to: Turning in work as original that was used in whole or part for another course and/or professor; turning in another person's work as one's own; copying from professional works or internet sites without citation; collaborating on a course assignment, examination, or quiz when collaboration is forbidden.

Tutoring at the English Department's Online Writing Center

The English Department provides tutoring through Blackboard Collaborate. I will assign extra credit for major assignments receiving feedback from the tutors in the English Department's Online Writing Center.

Tutoring Center

The Lobo Den Tutoring Center offers FREE tutoring support to help you excel in your courses. Whether you need assistance in Writing, Math, Science, or other subjects, we're here to help!
Important Information:

- **Drop-in and Scheduled Appointments:** Flexible options to fit your needs.
- **Hours of Operation:** Monday–Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM.
- **Workshops:** Attend our regularly hosted academic workshops on STEM topics and professional development, often in collaboration with specialized faculty.
- **Location:** BWML Room 128.
- **Contact Us:** For more information or to book an appointment, email tutoring@sulross.edu or call (432) 837-8726.

Looking for additional support?

- Tutor.com offers FREE 24/7 online tutoring in over 200 subjects, including specialized support for ESL and ELL learners with native Spanish-speaking tutors.
- Access Tutor.com via Blackboard: Log in to your Blackboard account to get started anytime, anywhere.

Take advantage of these valuable resources to boost your confidence and performance in your classes. We look forward to helping you succeed!

Incompletes

Incompletes will only be granted if there is a valid reason why the student is unable to complete the course work due health, accident, or family emergency and at least 50% of the course assignments are completed.

COURSE CALENDAR

Dates	Readings	Due Dates
Week X		
	Poe's Purloined Letter	
Week 1		
9.3	O. Henry Willa Cather Futrelle	Discussion Post 1
Week 2		
9.10	Anderson Post Glaspell	Discussion Post 2
Week 3		
9.17	Hammett Lardner Steele	Discussion Post 3
Week 4		

9.24	Cinema: Charles Laughton's "The Night of the Hunter"	Discussion Post 4
Week 5		
10.1	Redman Cain Steinbeck	Discussion Post 5
Week 6		
10.8	Runyan Buck Chandler	Discussion Post 6
Week 7		
10.15	Thurber Woolrich Faulkner	Discussion Post 7 Short Paper on novel Due 10.15
Week 8		
10.22	Dassin's "Naked City"	Discussion Post 8
Week 9		
10.29	Kemelman Queen MacDonald	Discussion Post 9 Statement of Purpose for Term Paper Due 10.29
Week 10		
11.5	Ellin Hunter Miller	Discussion Post 10
Week 11		
11.12	Slesar Highsmith Jackson	Discussion Post 11
Week 12		

11.19	Cinema ?	Discussion Post 12
Week 13		
11.26	O'connor Ellison Oates King	Discussion Post 13
Week 14		
12.3	Cinema ?	Term Paper Due 12.3 Discussion Post 14
Week 15		
		Discussion Post 15