

**Chaminade University of Honolulu
Summer Term Evening Program
July 7 – September 8, 1999
Naval Station, Pearl Harbor**

COURSE: English 432⁶⁰ Themes in American Literature; 1940 to the Present

TIME: Wednesdays 1645– 2055

INSTRUCTOR: Steven W. Bannow Telephone 971-4052 (Work)
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TEXT: Norton Anthology of American Literature (Fourth Edition) Volume 2

ADDITIONAL REQUIRED READINGS:
TBD

ADDITIONAL OPTIONAL READINGS:

I will distribute various selections covering the historical, cultural, and artistic background of modern/contemporary American literature at key points throughout the term. These selections will come from the a variety of texts and critical journals.

IN-CLASS PRESENTATION AND TERM PROJECTS:

I will supply an additional list of novels and other works from which each student shall make a selection for reading and in-class presentation.

I. General Objectives of Literature and this course:

Literature helps us to understand and respond to the major realities of human existence: life, death, love, good, evil, the spiritual. Writers speak to us in many ways: poetry, drama, short prose, and novels. Some authors succeed in reaching us – through the generations – while others do not.

We study literature to learn about life and, through this process, to grow – emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. We also study literature to acquire a sense of quality and taste. Why, for example, is one author widely regarded as a master or a genius and another is not? Why do the works of one writer withstand “the test of time” and become classics while others’ works are set aside and virtually forgotten soon after they are published?

We will explore the issues raised in the preceding two paragraphs as well as others. Our references will be drawn primarily from the second half of the Twentieth Century in this country. The writers we will study are different in many ways but ultimately all very American. We will conduct our study in a manner that will cover as much territory as possible without attempting overly ambitious goals. Since this is a survey course, we will cover a variety of literary genres: poetry, short stories, drama, and novels. Our studies will be most beneficial if we keep a few things in mind:

1. Read actively (pen/pencil in hand), challenge the writer, note key passages, and ask questions;
2. Get ahead and stay ahead with your reading assignments: The earlier in the semester you read a work, the more time you will have to reflect upon it;
3. Look for key themes and motifs and try to establish ways of linking or differentiating between the works and their creators through these themes and motifs;
4. Keep your mind open, your creativity unfettered, and your sense of humor engaged at all times.
5. Above all, be ready to think and have fun.

II. Relationship of this course to the general objectives of the university:

To develop in the student approaches to the creative and analytical understanding and appreciation of fiction, specifically through the study of representative American writers of the period

To open to the student the wealth of American cultural heritage – both artistic and intellectual.

To encourage a search for truth through literature and to assist the student in forming a value system or a philosophy of life.

III. Format of Course:

Presentation of key points in literary works and in depth supplements by the instructor.

Class discussion of key issues and themes within the literature. **Student involvement will be emphasized in all aspects of the learning experience.** Active reading of the assigned material is absolutely essential to a complete understanding of class discussion and to successful completion of all graded requirements.

Student-led responses to various concerns found within the works – both to encourage student critical thinking and research and to afford an opportunity to demonstrate effective oral communication.

NOTE: At the beginning of each class session, each student will submit two questions (with answers) dealing with assigned readings. (The questions will consist of one t/f or fill-in-the-blank style and one short answer style.) This is an essential component of your class-participation grade. The key to success in this component of the course is timely submission of the questions. Specifically, QUESTIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH CLASS.

IV. Grading:

Background material and Short Stories	Take-home or in-class, open-book quiz	15%
The Novels	Take-home or in-class, open-book quiz	15%
Poetry and Drama	Take-home or in-class, open-book quiz	15%
Reading and Research	In-class presentation	20%
Final Exam	Three page (typed) take-home exam	20%
Attendance/Class Participation/Questions	ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT in class	15%

NOTE: CLASS ATTENDANCE AND PROMPTNESS are essential – especially since we meet for a total of only ten sessions. Unless particularly unusual circumstances can be demonstrated by the student, more than two absences will result in a failing grade. PLEASE give me advance notice any time you must miss a class. (Each student shall obtain the names and telephone numbers of at least two other classmates for the purpose of exchanging information about class notes, syllabus changes, and assignments in the event of an absence.)

V. Schedule:

- July 7 Introduction/Historical Framework/Video (Slaughterhouse Five)
- July 14 THE MODERN AMERICAN SHORT STORY
Background Reading (“American Lit Between the Wars: 1914 -- 1945,” pp.939 - 950;
“American Prose Since 1945,” pp. 1761 - 1770).

The Heritage
Thurber – Intro, “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty,” “The Unicorn in the Garden” – 1460-1461 and 1464 - 1468.
Faulkner – Intro and “Barn Burning” – 1524 - 1526 and 1621 - 1633.
Hemingway – Intro and “Snows...” – 1633 - 1651.
Wolfe – Intro and “The Lost Boy” – 1689 - 1709.
Steinbeck – Intro and “The Leader of the People” – 1725 - 1736.
Wright – Intro and “The Man ...” – 1741 - 1751.
- July 21 DEALING WITH THE POST-WWII WORLD
Kerouac – I will distribute bio info and a selection from On the Road.
Nabokov – Intro and Selection from Invitation of a Beheading – 1785 - 1796.
Welty – Intro and “Petrified Man” – 1797 - 1807.
Malamud – Intro and “The Magic Barrel” – 1889 - 1901.
Bellow – Intro only – 1919 - 1921.
Mailer – Intro and Selection from The Armies of the Night -- 2062 - 2080.
Baldwin – Intro only – 2080 - 2081.
O’Connor – Intro and “A Good Man is Hard to Find” – 2093 - 2094 and photocopy.
Updike – Intro only – 2125 - 2127.
Pynchon – Intro and Selection from The Crying of Lot 49 – 2180 - 2197.
Walker – Intro and “Everyday Use” – 2238 - 2246.
- July 28 TAKE-HOME QUIZ #1 IS DUE
Salinger – The Catcher in the Rye.
- August 4 Ellison – The Invisible Man.
- August 11 Nabokov – Lolita.
DISTRIBUTE FINAL EXAM
- August 18 TAKE-HOME QUIZ #2 IS DUE
AMERICAN DRAMA ON THE MODERN/CONTEMPORARY STAGE
Eugene O’Neill – Lecture only.
Arthur Miller – Lecture only (“Tragedy and the Common Man.”)
Williams – Intro and A Streetcar Named Desire – 1808 - 1870 (Video?)
Albee – Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf? (Video?)
- August 25 THE CONTINUING SONG OF AMERICAN POETRY
The Emerson/Whitman Heritage
For each poet, we shall briefly discuss the intro section and a representative selection of his/her poetry (Specific works TBD).
Millay, Cummings, Hughes, Penn Warren, Jarrell, Lowell, Brooks, Wilbur, Dickey, Ginsberg, Sexton, Rich, Plath, Baraka, Rios, Cervantes, Song, Lee.
BEGIN STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
- September 1 TAKE-HOME QUIZ #3 IS DUE
FINAL EXAM IS DUE
STUDENT PRESENTATIONS

September 8 STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Course Wrap-Up

IN CLASS PRESENTATION IDEAS

Virtually any novel or extended narrative by the following writers, but clear with me first.*

PROSE:

Hemingway, Faulkner, Wright, Updike, Barth, Baldwin, West, Barnes, Kerouac, Pynchon, Vonnegut, Heller, Rand, Nabokov, Roth, Bellow, Malamud.

DRAMA:

O'Neill, Miller, Albee, Williams

*NOTE: There are a few others from which to choose. See me for additional options. The main caveat here is to keep your selection within the time span of the course (i.e., "... American Literature – 1940 through the Present").

General Guidelines for Presentation Format

Title

Year of Publication

Author

Quick biographical sketch

Plot

Key Themes

Artistic Interest: Symbolism, imagery, language, style.

Critical Evaluation: Does it work? Is it good? Why/Why not?