COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 263 covers selected works of American writers from the Colonial period to the present day, with an emphasis on major representative writers. In this course, we will examine notions of self and identity by looking at a diverse range of American texts that investigate ideas on religion, government, philosophy, and narrative genre. In other words, how do we recognize the “truth” when we read, write, listen to or invent “American” literature?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

We will hone our skills in critical thinking, reading and writing by applying those skills to the course materials. In written compositions and exams, students must be able to interpret the aesthetic and thematic aspects of these works, relate the works to their historical and literary contexts, and understand relevant criticism and research. By the end of the semester, we should be closer to understanding the difficulties and consolations involved in articulating the clarity and confusions of the evolving, multi-cultural American consciousness, over time.

The Moviegoer by Walker Percy
The Things They Carried by Tim O’Brien
A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway
Citizen by Claudia Rankine

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- You will be required to write two papers for this course. These analytical essays require no research beyond our in-class materials, although additional research is always an option, provided it is documented in the MLA style. The first paper must concern a primary work on the syllabus discussed before the deadline. However, my approval of your topic is required, and the paper should be at least five typed pages, double spaced. The deadline for the first essay is 10/01. The
second essay will concern a full-length work discussed in class after the first exam, either *A Moveable Feast* by Hemingway, *The Moviegoer* by Percy, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien, or *Citizen* by Claudia Rankine. Following preliminary discussions in class, the essay topics for each student will be assigned by me. This essay should be at least six typed pages in length, double spaced. The deadline for this paper is the final class session, 11/30.

- There are three exams: a mini-exam, a midterm, and a final.

- **In-class participation is crucial in order to succeed in this class.** I will rarely call roll, but attendance will be taken in the process of recording quiz grades and exercises, none of which can be made up. Instead, each student’s lowest quiz grades (about 10%) will be dropped at the end of the semester. Arriving late or leaving early will, therefore, affect a student’s participation grade. Needless to say, if a student is absent excessively, missed class discussions and instruction will almost certainly affect the overall grade.

- Papers are **due in class** on the due dates listed on the syllabus. Late papers will be marked down 1/3 of a letter grade for each late day. For example, an “A” paper that is turned in one day late becomes an “A-” paper. Papers more than one week late, barring exceptional circumstances, will not be accepted.

- No plagiarism (see the statement on academic conduct on the last page).

- Students are responsible for all work assigned in class, even after missing a session. **Students should arrange to get any missed notes, homework, or missed assignments from me or from another student.** Often, I will hand out Xeroxed copies of primary points covered during the class and, just as often, I will add new material.

- Please mute your phones before class. Laptops and iPads are allowed in order to take notes, but not for anything else.

**Grading Policy**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini-Exam</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper #2</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes/Comments/Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**SEQUENCE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

(This course outline and the dates established therein are tentative. Additional reading and/or substitutions may well be the rule. Use the outline to organize study plans but stay up-to-date.)
Mon. 8/20
Syllabus/Course. Introduction

Colonial Puritanism

Wed. 8/22
William Bradford
*Of Plymouth Plantation*

Fri. 8/24
John Winthrop
*A Model of Christian Charity*

Mon. 8/27
Mary Rowlandson
*A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

Wed. 8/29
Anne Bradstreet
“The Prologue”
“The Author to Her Book”
“Before The Birth of One of Her Children”
“In Memory of My Dear Grandchild…”
“To My Dear Loving Husband”
“A Letter To Her Husband, Absent…”
“To My Dear Children”

An Expanding World

Fri. 8/31
Jonathan Edwards
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Mon. 9/3
LABOR DAY

Wed. 9/05
Benjamin Franklin
Letter To Ezra Stiles
*The Autobiography* (selections)

Fri. 9/07
Phillis Wheatley
“On Being Brought From Africa To America”
“To The Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth..”
Mon. 9/10
Thomas Paine
*The Crisis, No. 1
The Age of Reason

Wed. 9/12
Thomas Jefferson
From the *Declaration of Independence*
From *Notes on the State of Virginia*

Fri. 9/14
To-Be-Announced

Mon. 9/17
FIRST (mini) EXAM

An American Philosophy?

Wed. 9/19
Washington Irving
“Rip Van Winkle”

Fri. 9/21
Ralph Waldo Emerson
“Self-Reliance”

Mon. 9/24
Henry David Thoreau
“Resistance to Civil Government”
*Walden*
“Where I lived and What I lived For”

Wed. 9/26
Walt Whitman
“When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”
“Song of Myself” (selections)
“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

An American Literature?

Fri. 9/28
Nathaniel Hawthorne
“Young Goodman Brown”
“The Minister’s Black Veil”

Mon. 10/1

***FIRST ESSAY DUE***

… and ….
Herman Melville
“Bartleby, the Scrivener”

Wed. 10/3
Edgar Allen Poe
“The Raven”
“Philosophy of Composition”
“The Fall of the House of Usher”

Fri. 10/5
Harriet Jacobs
*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (selections)

Mon. 10/8
Frederick Douglass
*Narrative of the Life*.... (a selection)

The Birth of American Modernism

Wed. 10/10
Stephen Crane
“An Open Boat” + other stories

Fri. 10/12
Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner
“Hands”
“Mother”
“Barn Burning”

Mon. 10/15
T. S. Eliot
“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrok”

Realism, Regionalism or Post-Modern?

Wed. 10/17
F. Scott Fitzgerald
“Babylon Revisited” + “The Crack-Up” (essay)

Fri. 10/19
Ernest Hemingway
“The Short Happy Life of Francis McComber” (*Handout*)

Mon. 10/22
*A Moveable Feast* (selected chapters)
Wed. 10/24
**MIDTERM EXAM**

Fri. 10/26
Flannery O’Connor
“A Good Man Is Hard To Find”

Mon. 10/29
Walker Percy
*The Moviegoer* (five chapters)

Wed. 10/31
*The Moviegoer* (cont.)

Fri. 11/02
*The Moviegoer* (cont.)

Mon. 11/05
Tim O’Brien
*The Things They Carried* (selected chapters)

Wed. 11/07
*The Things They Carried* (cont.)

Fri. 11/09
*The Things They Carried* (cont.)

Mon. 11/12
Raymond Carver
“A Small Good Thing”
“Fat”

Wed. 11/14
Toni Cade Bambara and Juno Diaz
“Fiesta, 1980”
“The Lesson”

Fri. 11/16
Art Spiegelman and Grace Paley
“Wants”
From *Maus* (Chapter Six)

Mon. 11/19
Claudia Rankine
*Citizen*

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY 11/21-11/25**
Mon. 11/26
Claudia Rankine
Citizen (cont.)

Wed. 11/28
Claudia Rankine
Citizen (cont.)

Fri. 11/30
Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theories
Review for Final Exam
Paper # 2 is Due

12/5 11:00-1:00 WEDNESDAY Final Exam

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp
Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086 Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu