

USCDornsife

Department of  
English

ENGLISH 263  
AMERICAN LITERATURE  
FALL 2019  
(Section 32631)

**Instructor:** Kerry Brian Ingram  
**Time:** 11:00-11:50, MWF  
**Location:** Room 203  
**Office Hours:** M/W 10:00-11:00  
Friday 10:00-11:00; 12:00-1:00  
(or by appointment)  
**Office Location:** 410 Taper Hall  
**e-mail:** kerrying@usc.edu

### 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.

**TEXTS:** *The Norton Anthology: American Literature*, (Eighth Shorter Edition)

*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 10/07.** 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 **seven typed pages** in length, double spaced. **The deadline for this paper is the final class session, 12/01.**

- **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, a "B" paper that is turned in one day late becomes a "B-" 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**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Paper #1                       | 15% |
| 2. Mini-Exam                      | 10% |
| 3. Midterm                        | 20% |
| 4. Paper #2                       | 15% |
| 5. Final Exam                     | 30% |
| 6. Quizzes/Comments/Participation | 10% |

### **SEQUENCE OF ASSIGNMENTS**

(This course outline and the dates established therein are tentative. Additional reading and substitutions may well be the rule. Use the outline to stay up-to-date.)

Mon. 8/26  
Syllabus/Course. Introduction

### **Colonial Puritanism**

Wed. 8/28  
**William Bradford**  
*Of Plymouth Plantation*

Fri. 8/30  
**John Winthrop**  
*A Model of Christian Charity*

### **Mon. 9/2 Labor Day Holiday**

Wed. 9/4  
**Mary Rowlandson**  
*A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

Fri. 9/6  
**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**

Mon. 9/9  
**Jonathan Edwards**  
“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”

Wed. 9/11  
**Benjamin Franklin**  
Letter To Ezra Stiles  
*The Autobiography* (selections)

Fri. 9/13  
**Phillis Wheatley**  
“On Being Brought From Africa To America”  
“To The Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth..”

Mon. 9/16  
**Thomas Paine**  
*The Crisis, No. 1* and *The Age of Reason*

Wed. 9/18

**Thomas Jefferson**

From the *Declaration of Independence*

From *Notes on the State of Virginia*

Fri. 9/20

**FIRST (mini) EXAM**

### **An American Philosophy?**

Mon. 9/23

**Washington Irving**

“Rip Van Winkle”

Wed. 9/25

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

“Self-Reliance”

Fri. 9/27

**Henry David Thoreau**

*Walden*

“Where I lived and What I lived For”

Mon. 9/30

**Henry David Thoreau**

“Resistance to Civil Government”

Wed. 10/02

**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. 10/04

**Nathaniel Hawthorne**

“Young Goodman Brown”

“The Minister’s Black Veil”

Mon. 10/07

**Herman Melville**

“Bartleby, the Scrivener”

**\*\*\*FIRST ESSAY DUE\*\*\***

Wed. 10/09

**Edgar Allen Poe**

“The Fall of the House of Usher”

“The Raven”

“Philosophy of Composition”

Fri. 10/11

**Harriet Jacobs**

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (selections)

**Frederick Douglass**

*Narrative of the Life...* (a selection)

Mon. 10/14

**To-Be-Announced**

Wed. 10/16

**MIDTERM EXAM**

**Fri. 10/18 NO CLASS- FALL BREAK**

### **The Birth of American Modernism**

Mon. 10/21

**Stephen Crane**

“An Open Boat” + other stories

Wed. 10/23

**Sherwood Anderson and William Faulkner**

“Hands”

“Mother”

“Barn Burning”

Fri. 10/25

**T. S. Eliot**

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrok”

Mon. 10/28

**F. Scott Fitzgerald**

“Babylon Revisited” + “The Crack-Up” (essay)

### **Realism, Regionalism or Post-Modern?**

Wed. 10/30

**Ernest Hemingway**

“The Short Happy Life of Francis McComber”

Fri. 11/01

*A Moveable Feast* (selected chapters)

Mon. 11/04

*A Moveable Feast* (selected chapters)

Wed. 11/06

**Walker Percy**

*The Moviegoer* (five chapters)

Fri. 11/08

*The Moviegoer* (cont.)

Mon. 11/11

*The Moviegoer* (cont.)

Wed. 11/13

**Tim O’Brien**

*The Things They Carried* (selected chapters)

Fri. 11/15

*The Things They Carried* (cont.)

Mon. 11/18

*The Things They Carried* (cont.)

Wed. 11/20

**Raymond Carver**

“A Small Good Thing”

“Fat”

Fri. 11/22

**Art Spiegelman and Grace Paley**

“Wants”

From Maus (Chapter Six)

Mon. 11/25

**Toni Cade Bambara and Junot Diaz**

“Fiesta, 1980”

“The Lesson”

**Paper # 2 is Due**

***THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY 11/27-12/01***

Mon. 12/02  
**Claudia Rankine**  
*Citizen*

Wed. 12/04  
*Citizen (cont.)*

Fri. 12/06  
*Citizen (cont.)*  
**Introduction to Contemporary Literary Theories**  
*Review for Final Exam*

12/11 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” <https://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.  
<https://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.  
<http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

#### **Relationship & 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. <https://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: <http://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. <https://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. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

**Student Support & Advocacy** – (213) 821-4710

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

**Diversity at USC** – <https://diversity.usc.edu/> Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students’ ability to learn and an instructor’s ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

**Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis**

In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.

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**Definition of Excellence in Teaching  
USC Department of English**

All writing is creative, and all civic engagement requires a sophisticated understanding of discourse and interpretation. The USC Department of English is committed to the power of the story, the word, and the image. We analyze and organize complex ideas, evaluate qualitative information, anticipate how real audiences respond to language, and study behaviors of complex characters leading uncertain lives with competing values. We develop critical abilities for a successful life, but our stories tell us why life is worth living.

Excellence in teaching is an active engagement with these commitments, perspectives, and values. A student with a major in **English** should graduate with an appreciation for (1) the relations between representation and the human soul, and (2) the relations between words and ideas. Teachers will encourage this appreciation through their knowledge and conveyance of the subject, the appropriateness of instructional materials, and the quality of their students' responses. We expect our students to:

- understand the major representations in English discourse from earliest beginnings to the current moment; all literatures exist in conversation with earlier literatures;
- organize and interpret evidence;
- feel the experiences of others, both by engaging in literatures and by their own efforts to create new literatures;
- understand how periods, cultural intentions, and literary genres differ;
- grasp the skills and theories of interpretation, and the history of our own discipline;
- see how interpretive interests shift with time and place;
- attend to linguistic details of semantics, phrasing, and structure;
- assume there are reasonable alternative understandings of a text;
- adjudicate differences through reasoned arguments that honestly engage counter-arguments.

Our students will have lives in very different arenas, but all calling for skills in discourse, empathy, civil argument, and civic engagement. We cannot and should not say what those careers will be; we train students for jobs that have not yet been invented.

English Department students with an interdisciplinary major in **Narrative Studies** should expect instruction that inculcates an appreciation for all of the above, and coordinates with definitions of teaching excellence in USC's corresponding departments.

The Department of English adheres to the modalities of instruction published in the "USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching."

Approved September 18,  
2018  
Undergraduate Studies  
Committee  
Department of English