

English 263: American Literature

Professor David Román FALL 2019
Tuesday/Thursday 3:30-4:50 THH 213

Course Description:

This course explores key themes and genres in the literature of the United States. The course begins in the 19th century with the foundational writings of Emerson and Thoreau. It then turns to three classic 19th century authors (Walt Whitman, Frederick Douglass, and Kate Chopin) who will set us up for an extensive reading of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, one of the most powerful novels of the 20th century. The rest of our twentieth century readings will move us away from the primacy of narrative and towards the performing arts. This section include Tennessee Williams and Lorraine Hansberry, two extraordinary playwrights who changed the nature of American theatre, and Joni Mitchell whose emergence in the 1970s radically altered American popular music. The course concludes with a unit on Toni Morrison and Philip Roth, two of the most celebrated writers of the 20th and 21st centuries, writers whose recent deaths mark the end of an era in American literature---but what era? And what comes next?

Most of our readings identify and address sites of social struggle. Many of our readings dwell in the tragic undercurrents of American culture. Rather than obscure this social reality, this course foregrounds the tragic and its distinct American contexts.

The course is designed as an introduction to literary and cultural studies. Course requirements include one 7-9 page paper, in-class presentations, and midterm and final exams.

Reading List:

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"

Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government"

Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Joni Mitchell, *Ladies of the Canyon*

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Philip Roth, *Indignation*

Grades:

Weekly in-class presentations: 25%

Paper #1: 25% (due 9/25)

Midterm: 25%

Final: 25%

403 Taper Hall of Humanities**Office Hours: Thursdays 12:30-1:30 and by appointment****213/740-2821****davidr@usc.edu**

Week 1:

T & TH: (8/27 & 8/29) introductions

Week 2:

T: (9/3) Ralph Waldo Emerson, "An American Scholar," Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"

TH: (9/5) Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

Week 3:

T: (9/10) Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

TH: (9/12)): Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Week 4:

T: (9/17) Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

TH: (9/19) Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

Week 5:

T: (9/24) Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

TH: (9/26) NO CLASS

Week 6:

T: (10/1) John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

TH: (10/3) John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Week 7:

T: (10/8): John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

TH: (10/10): John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Week 8:

T: (10/15) EXAM

TH: (10/17): FALL BREAK

Week 9: OCTOBER 22

T: (10/22): Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

TH: (10/24): Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Week 10: OCTOBER 28

T: (10/29) Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

TH: (10/31) Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Week 12: NOVEMBER 4

T (11/5) Joni Mitchell, *Ladies of the Canyon*

TH: (11/7) NO CLASS

Week 13: NOVEMBER 11

T: (11/12) Joni Mitchell, *Ladies of the Canyon*

TH: (11/14) Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Week 14: NOVEMBER 18

T: (11/19) Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

TH: (11/21) Philip Roth, *Patrimony*

Week 15: NOVEMBER 23-29

T: (11/26) Philip Roth, *Patrimony*

TH: (11/28) NO CLASS

Week 16:

T: (12/3) conclusions

TH: (12/5) review

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Student 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.

Students with Disabilities requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Academic Integrity. USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

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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