

Spring 1-15-2011

ENG 3703-001: Early Twentieth-Century American Literature

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3703-001

Early Twentieth-Century American Literature
English 3703—Spring, 2011
Coleman 3160, 9:30 (T/R)

Instructor: Tim Engles
Phone: 581-6316
E-mail: tdengles@eiu.edu

Office: Coleman 3831
Course listserv: 3703s11@lists.eiu.edu
Office hours: p.m. Tues/Thurs, 3:15-4:15,
and by appointment

Required texts:

Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!* (1913)
Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1925)
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)
Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)
Tillie Olsen, *Tell Me a Riddle* (1961)
William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge* (1941)
Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (1939)
Arthur Miller, *The Death of a Salesman* (1949) [in *Drama: A Pocket Anthology*]

*Additional readings listed in the schedule will be provided as handouts

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

**(read the following carefully; these words constitute our contract,
and I will request your written agreement to them)**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course will include analysis of American literature written in the first half of the Twentieth Century, including both traditionally canonical works and those more recently hailed by scholars and teachers as important. Some of the material in this course will be difficult to grasp, and to talk about, so you must be prepared for each class meeting. You can do so by reading the material carefully before class so that you can fully appreciate and participate in our discussions.

Our course will be conducted as an inquiring conversation, with your active participation central to our work. Because the success of our conversations will depend so heavily on everyone's participation, it is crucial that you keep up with the reading, and that you do so with careful attention. In fact, we will begin many sessions with a reading quiz, primarily intended to insure that you maintain attentive reading habits.

REGARDING READING: Since one skill you will be developing in this class is the art of textual analysis, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over. Instead of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read carefully—take notes of some sort as you read, then decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light. Also, as noted above, to ensure that your final grade reflects

your reading effort, I will occasionally give “pop” quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will be unannounced and again, they cannot be made up.

GRADES: Your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Exam 1 | 20% |
| Final exam | 25% |
| 1 st Formal essay (4-5 pages) | 15% |
| 2 nd Formal essay (6-8 pages) | 25% |
| Participation/quizzes/attendance | 15% |

MISSED QUIZZES, MISSED EXAMS, AND LATE PAPERS:

1) Because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after quizzes are taken, they cannot be made up (even if you come to class late, and even if you have a legitimate explanation for your absence). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. I recognize that some students must be absent at times; accordingly, when I compile your quiz grades at the end of the semester into an average score, I will drop the lowest one—if you miss a quiz, that will be your one dropped quiz. If you don’t miss any quizzes, I will still drop your lowest score from your quiz average.

2) There will also be no makeup exams in this course; if a student misses an exam, the makeup assignment will be a formal, eight-page essay on a topic chosen by the professor.

3) Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date, whether the student is in class or not. Late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late. You may turn in the two essays before their due dates if you know you must miss class that day.

E-MAIL ACTIVITY: Enrollment in this class requires an e-mail account, and you must check it frequently for messages pertaining to the course (that is, several times per week, at least). You already have an EIU account; you’re welcome to use another type of account, but just be sure you use one for this course that you tend to check frequently, and be sure that messages pertaining to this course do not end up in your “Junk Mail” folder. We will use our course listserv (or “e-mail discussion list”) for announcements and for occasional extension of in-class discussion. E-mail is also the quickest, easiest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any and all e-mailed questions and comments.

Using e-mail is crucial for this course—if you do not send me an e-mail message (tdengles@eiu.edu) by Friday, January 14 at 3:00 p.m., I will assume that you have chosen against fully participating in the course, and I will therefore drop you. In that message, (1) tell me which course you’re in (English 3703); (2) describe yourself in whatever way you choose, including your career aspirations; (3) write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree (or perhaps in part disagree with, which is fine, if you explain why) with these course policies and requirements; and (4) as with all emails you send to instructors, “sign” it by adding your name at the end of the message. Sending me this message will also constitute your “signature” of

our course contract, that is, these policies and procedures that you are reading. I will then use your email address to subscribe you to the class listserv (you don't have to subscribe to it yourself).

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: In class, I expect all of you to participate in discussions (class participation will be figured into your final grade). The best way to demonstrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader is by contributing regularly to class and group discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say.

During most of our sessions, I do not plan to lecture; students learn better when they contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other students have the same question.

Also, so that you don't distract others, please do not eat food or chew gum during class (beverages are okay); silence your cell phone and do not use it for texting during class; and do not use a computer in class.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: The rule regarding attendance is: be here. I will take attendance, and I expect you to attend class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the “daily schedule.” Up to three absences is okay; after that, each absence will lower your final grade in this course by one letter. Keep in mind that missing class frequently will lower your final grade as well as your grade on the reading quizzes. In addition, note that coming to class “prepared” means coming to class with that day's assigned reading—anyone who does not have the day's assigned reading with them may be considered absent.

Regarding tardiness: this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another section. Finally, you are responsible for all assignments, whether you attend class or not. Get to know one or two other students in class, or get in touch with me, so you can find out about any missed assignments *before* you come to class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Keep in mind, of course, the English Department's policy on plagiarism: “Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

THE OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES: If you have a documented (or potentially documentable) disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

ENGLISH 3703: DAILY SCHEDULE
(this schedule may be subject to change;
bring the day's reading material to class—
students who don't do so may be marked absent)

T JAN 11 Introduction to the course and to each other; in-class reading: "The Story of an Hour,"
by Kate Chopin

R JAN 13 Willa Cather, *O Pioneers!*

F JAN 14 3 p.m. **Deadline** for sending Dr. Engles (tdengles@eiu.edu) the e-mail that's
described above (under "E-mail Activity")

T JAN 18 *O Pioneers!*

R JAN 20 *O Pioneers!*

T JAN 25 Zitkala-Sa, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" (1900); emailed handout—be sure
to print out your copy, read it carefully, and bring it to class today

R JAN 27 Hemingway, *In Our Time* (selections TBA)

T FEB 1 Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

R FEB 3 *The Great Gatsby*

T FEB 8 *The Great Gatsby*

R FEB 10 Larsen, *Quicksand*

T FEB 15 *Quicksand*; discuss Paper One

R FEB 17 *Quicksand*; discuss Exam One

T FEB 22 **Exam One** (reminder: if a student misses an exam, the makeup assignment will be a
formal, eight-page essay on a topic chosen by the professor)

R FEB 24 Attaway, *Blood on the Forge*

T MAR 1 *Blood on the Forge*; **Paper One Due**

R MAR 3 (Semester Midpoint) *Blood on the Forge*

T MAR 8 In-class film-screening: *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940; directed by John Ford); reading
TBA

R MAR 10 Continue *The Grapes of Wrath*; reading: Tillie Lerner (Olsen), "I Want You Women Up North to Know" (1934)

Mar 14- 18 Spring Break

T MAR 22 Emailed reading on *The Grapes of Wrath*—be sure to print out your copy, read it carefully, and bring it to class today

R MAR 24 Olsen, *Tell Me a Riddle*

T MAR 29 *Tell Me a Riddle*

R MAR 31 West, *The Day of the Locust*

T APR 5 *The Day of the Locust*

R APR 7 *The Day of the Locust*

T APR 12 Reading on *The Day of the Locust* TBA, and discussion of final paper

R APR 14 Miller, *Death of a Salesman*

T APR 19 *Death of a Salesman*

R APR 21 *Death of a Salesman*

T APR 26 No Class – Work on your Final Paper! Dr. Engles will be in his office during our class period, and during his regular office hours, to meet with any students who would like to discuss their papers.

R APR 28 **Final paper due** (final paper due at the beginning of class)

M MAY 2 Final Exam, 10:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m. (reminder: if a student misses an exam, the makeup assignment will be a formal, eight-page essay on a topic chosen by the professor)