

Spring 1-15-2013

ENG 3703-002: American Literature: 1900-1950

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Office hours: MWF 10:00–11:00, MW 3:–3:30, and by appointment

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We will read great poetry and fiction, with one eye toward what is “modern” (or “modernist”) and “American” about what we’re reading, and another eye toward the distinctive qualities of the work under discussion. We’ll read poems by T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Marianne Moore, David Schubert, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams (making the course, among other things, an experience in how to really read poetry and get something from it). We’ll read fiction by Djuna Barnes, Willa Cather, William Faulkner, and Zora Neale Hurston.

TEXTS

Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*
Willa Cather, *The Professor’s House*
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Jahan Ramazani, et al., eds.,
Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry
William Carlos Williams, *Collected Poems*, V. 1

Michael Harvey’s *The Nuts and Bolts of College Writing* is a supplement to our work, a great book for student-writers.

You should have access to a hardcover collegiate (college-level) dictionary when reading.

The works we’re reading contain material that some readers may find offensive or disturbing (language, sex, violence). In such cases, please consider taking another course.

ENGLISH 3703 AMERICAN LITERATURE: 1900–1950

PROFESSOR M. LEDDY
SPRING 2013



REQUIREMENTS

Requirements: As with any worthwhile endeavor, “the effort is the prize,” as the jurist Benjamin Cardozo said. The course will require dedicated daily work (reading and talking), occasional writing (in-class and out-of-class), and a final examination.

ATTENDANCE

Be here, on time, every time. You’re responsible for all assignments, whether or not you’re here when they’re announced.

Frequent absences will affect your grade, not through a system of points and deductions but simply because not being here will make it difficult to do the work that the course is meant to involve.

If you must miss a class, you should get in touch with me beforehand to find out what you will miss.

Photocopied pages to go with our reading will be available from an envelope on my office door.

LATE WORK, MAKE-UP WORK

Missed work cannot be made up. Late work is acceptable only if you have my approval in advance.

DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive

academic accommodations, contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583).

OFFICE HOURS

Talking to professors is one of the smartest things a college student can do. Please, come in to ask questions and talk about your work in the class. If office hours don’t work for you, make an appointment.

If you feel uneasy about talking to professors, read “How to talk to a professor” for potentially helpful advice: goo.gl/VYSkv.

E-MAIL

Before you e-mail me, please read and follow the guidelines in “How to e-mail a professor”: goo.gl/4n6EH. These guidelines are read all over the world and will serve you well in e-mailing any professor (assuming that your professor answers e-mail).

One guideline that you don’t need to follow: you need not add your class number and meeting time to your signature. I’ll know who you are.

DECORUM

The atmosphere in our class should be serious—not somber or pretentious, but collegiate and genuinely intellectual. No eating, sleeping, talking, texting, or doing work for other classes. No headphones, hoods, iPods, or phones. Electronic devices should be turned off and out of sight. Please show proper respect for our community of learning.

DISCUSSION

Consider what the writer Thomas Merton says about a teacher he admired (Mark Van Doren,

Columbia University):

Most of the time he asked questions. His questions were very good, and if you tried to answer them intelligently, you found yourself saying excellent things that you did not know you knew, and that you had not, in fact, known before.

I like to ask questions that make people think. I also like it when people ask me such questions. Try to think of an in-class question not as having an answer you're already supposed to know but as an invitation to think. I know that this suggestion might go against the grain of much of your experience in classrooms. You should be asking relevant questions too, of me and perhaps of one another. That helps to make the class less like a quiz show and more like a conversation.

One more observation on discussion, from the cultural critic Randolph Bourne:

A good discussion increases the dimensions of every one who takes part. Being rather self-consciously a mind in a group of minds means becoming more of a person.

As you can guess, I'm optimistic about discussion. For more on questions and discussion, read "How to answer a question": goo.gl/DlzaG. (That's a capital I ("eye") after the D.)

GRADING

Your grade will be based on your writing (60%), class participation (20%), and final exam (20%).

Longer writing assignments receive letter grades. Shorter ones get numerical grades. Missing work receives a zero. Participation receives a numerical grade, an overall evaluation of the extent to

which you're prepared and contributing: 100 (always), 85 (frequently), 75 (usually), 50 (sometimes), 0 (rarely or never).

To calculate semester grades, I use numerical equivalents for letter grades:

A	95	A-	92	B+	87	B	85
B-	82	C+	77	C	75	C-	72
D+	67	D	65	D-	62	F	55

Sometimes when I grade writing I'll give a grade that falls between two grades—e.g., B+/A- (89.5).

For semester grades, 90 or above is an A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C; 60 or above, a D; below 60, an F.

EWP

You may include work from the course in your Electronic Writing Portfolio. Please make sure that you understand the requirements for the EWP and that you fulfill them in a timely way. For more information: www.eiu.edu/assess/ewpmain.php.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The English Department's statement 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 the representation of them as one's original work" (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and 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 my statement concerning academic integrity:

Any breach of academic integrity—from a single sentence cut and pasted into a dinky little assignment to a wholly unoriginal essay—is a serious matter and will get you a serious penalty. The Student Standards office recommends an F for the course. You will also be required to take a course in ethics administered by Student Standards, whose staff will keep your misconduct on record and notify your other professors that one of their students has violated academic integrity.

You should be familiar with Eastern's statement on academic integrity and should ask if you have any questions about quoting from and/or documenting sources. But because the work of the course is to be an expression of *your ideas in your words*, aside from words and ideas from properly acknowledged sources, questions of plagiarism and collusion should never arise.

Do not "borrow" work or give your work to anyone (allowing someone else to make use of your work is also a breach of academic integrity and will also get you a serious penalty, up to and including an F for the course).

PROVISIONAL OUTLINE (numbers = weeks)

- 1: Introduction to the course
- 1-2: Robert Frost
- 2-3: T.S. Eliot
- 3-4: William Carlos Williams
- 5-6: Langston Hughes
- 7: Marianne Moore
- 8: Wallace Stevens
- 9: David Schubert
- 10-11: William Faulkner
- 11-12: Willa Cather
- 13-14: Djuna Barnes
- 14-15: Zora Neale Hurston

Final exam: April 29, 2:45–4:45