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# ENG 3703-002: Early Twentieth-Century American Literature

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**Early Twentieth-Century American Literature**  
**English 3703—Spring, 2001**

Instructor: Dr. Timothy Engles (Office: Coleman 315D)  
 Phone: 581-6316 (office); 345-7166 (home--please don't call after 10 p.m.)  
 Office hours: 3:00-4:15, MWF, and by appointment  
 Instructor's e-dress: cftde@eiu.edu Course listserv: 3703spg@eiu.edu

Texts:

Paul Lauter, Ed., *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, Volume 2, Third Edition  
 Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* (1992)  
 Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)  
 James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man* (1912)  
 Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1925)  
 Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (1939)

Requirements: quizzes, position papers, one formal essay, one presentation, two exams.

**COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

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

This course will include analysis of literature written in the first half of the Twentieth Century, including both traditionally canonical works and those more recently hailed as important. We will trace recent reassessments of the "great" literature of this period, keeping in mind a widespread recognition succinctly summarized by Ishmael Reed: "Multicultural is not a description of a category of American writing--it is a *definition* of all American writing." Much of the material in this course will be difficult to grasp and to discuss, so you must be prepared each class meeting by reading the material carefully before class so that you can fully participate in our discussions.

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

Exam 1	15%
Final exam	20%
Position papers	20%
Formal essay (6-8 pages)	25%
10-minute presentation and handout	10%
Participation/quizzes/attendance	10%

**REGARDING WRITING:** Students will regularly turn in one-page, double-spaced, typed **position papers** in response to writing suggestions. These papers will be graded on the basis of

thoughtfulness, completeness, and insightfulness; while the quality of the writing in the position papers need not be quite as polished as that in the short essay, writing that has enough careless errors in it to distract from the content will be downgraded accordingly. **All writing assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the day they are due. 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.**

When the **formal essay** is turned in, it **MUST** be accompanied by all notes and drafts written towards it, with the final copy of the essay on top of this material. I will use these materials to gauge and offer comments on your writing process. **I WILL NOT GRADE an essay that is not accompanied by material that clearly demonstrates several earlier stages leading up to the final draft,** so be sure to save all such materials (if you do most or all of your writing on a computer, print out occasional drafts to include with your final copy). **Essays unaccompanied by materials that clearly demonstrate several stages of development toward the final copy will receive an automatic ZERO.** This policy does not apply to the position papers—one typed final copy of these will suffice.

**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 on the bus before class, set aside enough time to read carefully—take notes as you read, then **decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light.** Also, 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 not be announced beforehand and they cannot be made up. 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.

**MISSED QUIZZES AND LATE PAPERS:** Again, because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after they are taken, quizzes cannot be made up (even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. **Again, 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 position papers and the short essay 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, preferably every day, for messages pertaining to the course. Our class discussions will carry over onto the e-mail listserv, and I will occasionally send messages to the entire class. E-mail is also the quickest, easiest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any and all questions and comments. **Getting an e-mail account is crucial for this course—if you do not send me an e-mail message at the above address by Friday, January 12 at 10:30 a.m. to confirm that you have established an account, I will assume that you have chosen against fully participating in the course, and I will therefore drop you. In your message, describe yourself in whatever way you choose, and also write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with these course policies and procedures.**

**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 discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. If you have questions, no matter how simple or complicated, go ahead and ask me, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other people have the same question. I do not plan to lecture in this class; I want us to contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment. (Also, please do not chew gum or eat food during class, activities which are too distracting to others--drinking beverages is okay. Finally, no caps, please, but if you must wear one, turn it backwards so I can see your eyes.)

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** 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.” **More than four missed classes will lower your class participation grade to an F. Missing class frequently will also harm your grade on the reading quizzes.** 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 the telephone number of one or two other students in class so you can find out about missed assignments *before* you come to class.

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** I expect you to act honestly and do your own work in this class, and so does Eastern Illinois University. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with 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.”

## **ENGLISH 3703: DAILY SCHEDULE** **(this schedule may be subject to change)**

M JAN 8 Introduction to the course and to each other

W JAN 10 Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* 1-17

F JAN 12 Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* 44-59

10:30 a.m.: deadline for sending an e-mail message to Dr. Engles; describe yourself in whatever ways you choose, and also write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with the above course policies and procedures.

M JAN 15 KING'S BIRTHDAY—NO CLASSES

W JAN 17 HEATH: 8-18, "Publishing and Writing" and "The Situation of Women"

F JAN 19 Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* 1-30

M JAN 22 *The Awakening* 30-62

W JAN 24 *The Awakening* 62-87

F JAN 26 *The Awakening* 87-109

M JAN 29 Edith Maud Eaton (Sui Sin Far), "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian,"  
and "In the Land of the Free," 834-49

W JAN 31 Gertrude Bonin (Zitkala-Sa), from *Impressions of an Indian Childhood*, from *The  
School Days of an Indian Girl*, and "Why I am a Pagan," 859-72

F FEB 2 Six Students' Presentations on Three Authors

M FEB 5 James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

W FEB 7 *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

F FEB 9 *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

M FEB 12 *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

W FEB 14 Exam One

F FEB 16 LINCOLN'S BIRTHDAY—NO CLASSES

M FEB 19 Robert Frost, 1896-63: "Mending Wall," "The Road Not Taken,"  
"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Design," and "Directive"; also, chose  
one other Frost poem from these pages that you find significant or especially  
effective, and write a brief explanation of why you think so

W FEB 21 William Carlos Williams, 1897-83: "Danse Russe," "The Young Housewife," "The  
Great Figure," "Spring and All," "The Red Wheelbarrow," and "The Poor"; also,  
chose one other Williams poem from these pages that you find significant or  
especially effective, and write a brief explanation of why you think so

F FEB 23 Six Students' Presentations on Three Authors

M FEB 26 Go to this website: "PETALS ON A WET BLACK BOUGH: American Modernist Writers and the Orient" (<http://www.library.yale.edu/beinecke/orient/intro.htm>)  
Read the first section, then read each of the links under "The Twentieth Century: American Modernists" (In-class handout on Monday: Ezra Pound's "The River Merchant's Wife")

W FEB 28 Ezra Pound, 1215-20, "The Centers of the [White?] Modern," 884-97; also, be prepared for a quiz on these readings, AND, for this historical essay, briefly summarize in writing two main points made on one page of it (pages will be assigned on Monday)

(T March 1–Semester midpoint)

F MCH 2 T.S. Eliot, 1396-98, "The Wasteland," 1411-25

M MCH 5 Marianne Moore, author's biography and all poems, 1501-11

W MCH 7 Six Students' Presentations on Three Authors

F MCH 9 "The New Negro Renaissance," 1578-81, and Countee Cullen, author's biography and all poems, 1642-50

M MCH 12–F MCH 16 SPRING BREAK–NO CLASSES

M MCH 19 Langston Hughes, 1611-17, "Freedom Train," and "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," and "Blues Lyrics," 1721-28

W MCH 21 Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*: "The Battler," and "Soldier's Home"

F MCH 23 F. Scott Fitzgerald, 1432-34, "Babylon Revisited," 1470-83

M MCH 26 Zora Neal Hurston, 1670-72, "The Gilded Six-Bits," 1680-88

W MCH 28 William Faulkner, 1544-47, "A Rose for Emily," 1548-54

F MCH 30 Six Students' Presentations on Three Authors

M APR 2 Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust*

W APR 4 *The Day of the Locust*

F APR 6 *The Day of the Locust*

M APR 9 *The Day of the Locust*

W APR 11 Karl Shapiro, selected poems (class handout)

F APR 13 In-class discussion of final paper

M APR 16 -- F APR 20 NO CLASSES--individual conferences on final essay; bring a full rough draft of your essay to your conference; penalty if you don't: a ten-point deduction from the final grade

M APR 23 Elizabeth Bishop, 2319-27, all poems, plus other poems handed out in class

W APR 25 Ann Petry, 2110-11, "The Witness," 2112-23

F APR 27 Last day of classes

Final paper due

Tearful, heartfelt farewells

Final Exam: Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 10:15 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.