

ENGL 2130-24H (Honors American Literature)

MW 12:30 – 1:50 pm / Pafford 309

Spring Semester 2015

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Office Hours:
MW 8:30 - 9:30 am; 11:00 am - 12:30 pm;
W 2:00 – 3:00 pm; and by appointment

Course Description: The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some of the writers and literary works that have made significant contributions to the development of literature in America. The works we will read encompass a historical period that covers almost four centuries, from the earliest years of English settlement in the New World to the contemporary era. However, our investigation will push us well beyond a survey of these different literary works and toward a more sophisticated awareness of their various textual, cultural, and historical interrelationships. Specifically, we will examine how American literature is related to the historical and cultural development of America as a nation. We will also explore how different writers have struggled to understand and attempted to define through writing what America is and what it means to be an American. While we will discover many interrelationships among the works that we read, their significance within the American literary tradition varies considerably. Some are significant as historical documents; others have had a profound social, cultural, or political influence on the development of America as a nation. Some are regarded by literary scholars as works of extraordinary imaginative insight and literary achievement; others—while perhaps lacking superior aesthetic qualities—have influenced our culture through their widespread popularity. All of them in different ways offer revealing glimpses into the psyche of our nation at different moments in time. Since the scope of any survey course is impossibly broad, we will attempt to narrow our focus by identifying some specific themes and topics that will guide how we read and discuss these works. We will explore questions related to American identity and what it means—both historically and today—to be “American.” We will investigate the role that nature has played in defining American identity. We will explore the nature of freedom and how the individual is related to social bodies such as families, communities, and cultural institutions. Finally, we will investigate the importance of history and myth in the formation of American national identity.

NOTE: This course fulfills the humanities requirement in Core Area C.2. It is required for English majors (Area F). Students who complete this honors section of ENGL 2130 with a grade of B or higher may receive credit for ENGL 1101 and ENGL 1102. Please consult with the Honor’s College office for details.

Learning Outcomes: 1) Students will develop the ability to recognize and identify significant achievements in American literature; 2) Students will understand the relevant social, historical, and aesthetic contexts of these literary works; 3) Students will appreciate the implications of theoretical and critical approaches to such literature; 4) Students will develop enhanced cultural awareness and analytical skills; and 5) Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and of the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals: A) This course fulfills the Area C.2 requirement in the core; B) This course fulfills the following Area C (Humanities/Arts) Learning Outcomes: 1) To develop the ability to recognize and identify achievements in literary, fine and performing arts; 2) To have an appreciation of the nature and achievements of the arts and humanities; and 3) To develop the ability to apply, understand, and appreciate the application of aesthetic criteria to “real world circumstances; C) This course fulfills an Area F core requirement for English majors (all tracks); D) This course contributes to the program goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture ; and E) This course broadens students’ interest in literature and increases their ability to appreciate its value.

Learning Outcomes for Honors Courses: 1) Students will demonstrate the ability to examine topics and issues from diverse perspectives; 2) Students will demonstrate the ability to engage in higher order abstract, creative and critical thinking; 3) Students will demonstrate the ability to explore, and if feasible,

experiment with possible applications of their learning toward the solution of “real world” problems; 4) Students will demonstrate the ability to explore and conduct discipline-specific independent research and creative activities using a variety of resources; and 5) Students will demonstrate superior oral and written communication skills.

Required Texts (Available at the UWG Bookstore):

Morrison, Toni. *A Mercy*. Vintage, 2009 ISBN-10: 0307276767 OR ISBN-13: 978-0307276766

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. Penguin Classics; Revised edition, 2002. ISBN-10: 0142437247 OR ISBN-13: 978-0142437247

DeLillo, Don. *Mao II*. Penguin Books, 1992. ISBN-10: 0140152741 OR ISBN-13: 978-0140152746

Other reading assignments will be available electronically on CourseDen. You will be required to print these out and bring them with you to class on the dates listed in the syllabus.

Grading Scale: Students are assigned a letter grade for each assignment ranging from A+ to F based on the numerical scale below. This grade will be used when calculating the final average at the end of the semester.

97-100 = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	below 60 = F
94-96 = A	84-86 = B	74- 76 = C	64-66 = D	
90-93 = A-	80-83 = B-	70- 73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

Course Evaluation

20%	Quizzes and Homework Assignments	20%	Midterm Essay Examination
20%	Critical Essay I	20%	Final Essay Examination
20%	Critical Essay II		

Attendance Requirements: I expect you to be present and on time for all class meetings. Readings and homework exercises should be completed in advance of each class. You should be prepared to participate actively in class discussions OR by simply *asking* questions. Remember: if you do not understand something presented in class, *ask*.

If you are going to be absent from class, you should let me know, preferably in advance. Late work will not be accepted unless you make arrangements with me in advance and you have a legitimate reason (a serious medical or family emergency) for turning in work after it is due. In the case of excused absences, it is your responsibility to make arrangements with me to complete assignments you have missed immediately upon your return to class. Failure to follow these guidelines will result in a zero or a reduction in the grade for assignments not submitted on time.

If you find it unavoidable to miss class, be aware of the following guidelines: 1) Four (4) absences are allowed during the semester. Every absence thereafter will result in a 2 point grade reduction of your final grade in the course, regardless of the nature of the absence. I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, so you should use your allotted absences wisely. Unplanned or unexpected occurrences are likely, so be prepared to use absences for these events only; 2) Class roll will be taken at the beginning of every class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to let me know immediately after class or you will be counted absent. It is your responsibility to keep up with your absences and tardies; 3) Entering class late and leaving class before it is over will count as an unexcused absence, unless you have a legitimate medical excuse for doing so. Reasons related to outside employment or work in other classes are not legitimate excuses for leaving class early or arriving late; 4) Excessive absences or tardiness from class may result in failing this course.

Class Presentations and Homework Assignments: You will complete short, informal writing and presentation assignments throughout the semester to facilitate our discussions in class and to help you prepare for the critical essays and examinations. These will be announced in advance in class and posted on CourseDen. Your grade on these assignments will be factored into the final average of your quiz grade (see below).

Quizzes: A reading quiz will be given at the very start of class on most days. It will cover the reading assignment(s) listed on the syllabus for that day. The questions will be objective and will assess basic reading comprehension. Quizzes

typically include short questions that focus on the following: titles of works and approximate dates; identification of major themes; identification of characters and setting; and identification of significant events and main ideas. NOTE: I will drop your lowest quiz grade before calculating your final quiz average. Students who arrive late to class or who miss class will not be able to make up quizzes. I do not give make-up quizzes under any circumstances.

Midterm and Final Examinations: The midterm and final examinations will be based on reading assignments, course lectures/discussions, and other materials covered in class. For each examination students will be expected to know the major historical and literary terms and concepts, authors, literary works (including specific passages), and the critical/theoretical interpretations of those works presented in this course. Consequently, students should be familiar with each reading assignment and should take careful notes during class. Both examinations will include an objective component (definitions and short answer questions) and an interpretive component (identification/analysis of specific passages covered in class). The date for each examination is listed on the course syllabus and cannot be scheduled at an alternate time unless you have a serious medical emergency or another legitimate reason for doing so. In the event that such circumstances arise, you must let me know *in advance* to schedule an alternate time to take the examination. Otherwise, late exams will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are taken late. I will post a study guide on CourseDen prior to each exam.

Critical Essays: You will write two critical essays (5-6 typewritten pages minimum each). Each essay will focus on a thesis-based analysis of a literary work covered in this course. Guidelines for each essay will be posted on CourseDen. All essays must be typed. Essays will be assessed on the basis of an argumentative thesis, organizational structure, interpretive content, use of supporting evidence from the literary work, standard grammar, MLA paper format, and writing style as outlined in the grading rubric.

Writing Assessment Grading Rubric: Critical essays will be evaluated using the department's grading rubric. A copy of the rubric is available here: (<http://www.westga.edu/~dnewton/students/rubric.html>). You may find it useful to consult this rubric as you write your essays in this class. I will use the rubric when grading your formal essays in this course. Please see me if you have questions about these departmental standards for writing assessment.

Writing Format and MLA Documentation Style: Critical essays must follow Modern Language Association (MLA) format. All essays must use Times New Roman typeface and 12 point font. Guidelines for all major writing, grammar, and MLA format requirements can be found on CourseDen. I will use these guidelines when I assess your essays and examinations. I encourage you to be thoroughly familiar with them.

Late Assignment Policy: I realize that extenuating circumstances sometimes occur; therefore, you are allowed to turn in one of the critical essays one class period late without penalty, if you make arrangements with me to do so in advance. You must email me prior to class on the day the assignment is due to make your request. This policy applies ONLY to the critical essays, not to the midterm and final exams. Other written work (especially if it is due as part of a workshop or presentation assignment), should be completed on time since it is usually related to specific topics or works we are covering in class. Assignments that are turned in late will be penalized as follows:

Turned in late (after the start of class) on due date: 1/3 of grade (e.g., B to B-)

Turned in one day after due date: 2/3 of grade (e.g., B to C+)

Turned in by the next class period: (e.g., B to C)

Turned in more than one week after due date: docked two grades (e.g., B to D)

Turned in more than two weeks after due date: F (50)

Not turned in at all: Zero

Please note that if you miss in-class assignments or presentations additional deductions will be added to the list above.

Revision Policy: I will be available to meet with you prior to the essay deadlines to discuss paper topics, possible ideas for a thesis, and other questions you may have about the writing process. While I will not proof-read drafts of your essays, I will answer specific questions that you might have about drafts of any of your essays, *if* you arrange to meet with me in advance. Please note that I probably will not be able to offer any substantial assistance if you wait until the

last minute to write your draft/essay or request to meet with me the day the essay is due. Advance planning on your part is essential. Students who make a grade of C or lower on the first critical essay may choose to revise the essay for a higher grade, *if* the essay has been turned in on time. The maximum a grade can be increased through revisions is one letter grade (for example, a grade of D can be revised to a C if all the revision criteria are met). Revisions for a higher grade are only allowed on the first essay.

Extra Credit: I do not give extra credit for additional work beyond the assignments listed here. Please focus on completing the above assignments successfully.

Electronic Devices: Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before entering class. No text messaging or phone calls are permitted during class. Use of them will result from your dismissal from class. Laptops can be used for class-related work only. Use for other purposes will result in your dismissal from class.

CourseDen (D2L) & Technology: This is a technology-supplemented course; therefore, you need to be familiar with CourseDen (<http://westga.view.usg.edu>) and have basic technology skills to participate in this course. Reading and homework assignments, lecture notes, and other supplemental information related to this course will be posted on CourseDen. General information about CourseDen is available online including student tutorials. Let me know if you need assistance with using the UWG online platform.

UWG Email: The official email communication method for all UWG classes is through campus email (MyUWG). UWG students are provided a MyUWG e-mail account. This email account is the official means of communication between the university and the student. The purpose of the official use of the student e-mail account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the student's responsibility to check his or her email. Please use your UWG email when communicating with me about this course. Do not use outside email accounts. You can also communicate with me about this class through CourseDen.

Remind: In addition to UWG email, I use Remind (<https://www.remind.com/>) to communicate with participants in this course. Announcements may include such things as reminders about upcoming assignments, changes in the schedule, or—in rare instances—class cancellations. Information about Remind and how to use it can be found on CourseDen. You can receive announcements directly via text message or you can download the Remind app. Using Remind means you do not have to be signed on to CourseDen to see new course announcements or updates. To sign up for Remind, text @engl2130wg to this number: 81010. Once the course has ended, you will be removed from the notification system.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with a documented disability may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential services specific to their disability. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. *Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given.* If you have a registered disability through UWG that requires accommodation, see me at the beginning of the semester so that I can work with you to determine what accommodations might be needed. For further information about accessibility services and how to schedule an appointment: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php.

Credit Hour Policy: The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning

outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

University of West Georgia Honor Code: At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class, including essays, quizzes, and materials submitted for a grade. The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG. Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. It is your responsibility to report instances of academic dishonesty if you see them occur. UWG Honor Code: <http://www.westga.edu/handbook/59.php>

Department Policy on Disruptive Behavior: Students may be dismissed from any class meeting during which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or texting, and using personal electronic devices. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the course attendance policy. If you have concerns about disruptive behavior or would like to talk about the classroom environment or your participation in the class, please set up a time to meet with me. For more information see http://www.westga.edu/vpsa/index_4615.php

Conferences and Outside Assistance: I am always available to meet with you outside of class to discuss your progress in this class, upcoming and graded writing assignments, research topics, or reading assignments we are currently studying. If you are having trouble with the material in this course or have questions and/or concerns you would like to discuss, please set up a time to meet with me. My office hours are listed above, but I will be glad to meet with you at other times, if we arrange a mutually convenient time in advance. I am usually here throughout the week and can arrange to meet at days and times outside of my scheduled office hours.

NOTE: Please make a paper and/or electronic copy of all written work you turn in to me, in case it is misplaced or lost. I will not give you credit for work you claim to turn in that I do not have in my possession.