

English 242.002: American Literature II
“American Visions, Voices & Dreams”—Fall 2008
TR 11:30-12:45 208 Clark

Dr. Lisa Wellinghoff
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Office Hours: MW 10-11, T 1-2, and by appointment
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Required Texts:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Ed. Nina Baym. 7th Ed. Vols. C, D, E. Norton: New York, 2007.
Critical articles as posted on Ecampus or as handouts.

Course Description:

Literature often reflects the anxieties and hopes of a nation. Past interpretations of the American Dream, like the dream itself, have become diverse and multiple. In this class we get to explore mid 19th century to 20th century American texts and see how they reflect or mirror contemporary versions of the American Dream and Spirit. We will consider how American short stories, novels, plays and poetry reflect us—our past, present, and future. We will consider the diversity of American voices and the legitimacy of American literature, especially the role of American poets in legitimizing American literature. We will consider the history of our nation—how war (the Civil War, WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, The Cold War, the Iraq Wars), Civil Rights (for labor, race, gender, and the environment), and Consumerism/Technology (the taming of the West, factories, cars, computers and internet) influence the visions, voices, dreams of America and create new spirits of America, new challenges, new crossroads, new texts.

We are exploring the American Dream in this class and how American challenge, support, criticize, miss, desire, and romanticize it. Within that dream, lie the hallmarks of American identity: individualism, mobility, innovation, diversity, optimism, criticism of ourselves and our country, multiculturalism, rising out of one class into another. All of these themes and issues arise in our texts and will be discussed both as a snapshot of the time the text was written and as a part of how we view ourselves today. Discussion, essays, and tests will require students to analyze these themes and ideas and express our present visions of America.

Policies and Procedures:

This class will discuss a variety of opinions and ideas that you may or may not agree with or find interesting. Regardless, I expect all students to respect their peers, as well as me, and keep in mind that without diversity, without contraries, we would have no progression. As future scholars, we strive for the enlightenment, not narrow mindedness. Respect each other and come to class curious, not hostile or indifferent. Turn all cell phones to silent mode. Come to class prepared. Check your tentative calendar often. Check WebCt often, at least once a day. Changes will be posted.

Late Work:

Late work will result in an F for that grade. Beware: any work left in my mailbox may not be picked up on time and will be considered late. Work is due at the beginning of each class period on the day it is due. Do not email papers or work to me unless I ask you to do so.

Attendance:

If you miss 3 or more days of class, your final grade will go down one letter. Missing 5 or more constitutes grounds for failure. If you need to miss class, it is your responsibility to check with a classmate to discover what you missed and to inform me at least 2 class periods ahead of the date of your intended absence. Attendance is not just showing up for class. It includes *participation* in class discussions and on WebCt, reading all assigned reading material, and coming to class on time. Much of class time will consist of discussions of material read; student input is necessary. Attendance is a part of your participation grade. Chronic lateness or tardiness will affect your grade. Each day late is a .5 days absent. If there is a reason you will be late to class, let me know the

first day of class. Come to class prepared, read assigned materials for class, come ready to discuss the readings, take responsibility for your work and your level of motivation in this class.

Grading and Course Assignments:

We will write three essay tests and write essay questions/reading responses on Ecampus in this class. Our class discussions, journals, posts, blogs, essays and tests will allow us to display our knowledge of American Literature, its themes and major movements. We will write journals and blogs based on our goals in this class that will teach us to read and write critically about American literature. The reading responses/questions on Ecampus are designed to help you engage with the texts and learn how to write about and analyze literature. They will also help you review for your tests. Almost every week you will respond to the reading assignments, blog, and journal on Ecampus for an accumulative grade. You should journal at least 3 times and blog at least 6 times.

Test 1	10%	Reading Responses	30%
Test 2	20%	Blogs, Journals	10%
Test 3	20%	Participation	10%

Reading Responses:

Almost each week, I will give you topics to write about that are due by Friday’s class on Ecampus. They will be posted on Ecampus in the assignments section. These topics will ask you to think critically about what you have read and support your ideas with evidence from the text. These are sample essay questions. These will be informal writing assignments, essay length (2-4 pages). They are designed to prepare you for the tests and papers, as well as highlight the major themes or questions of the text and/or time period. My comments on your work are more important than your actual grades in the sense that they will reveal the strengths and weakness of your analysis. From them, you will learn how to improve your arguments in the future. They will each be graded based on how well you answer the questions and how well you use the text to support your answers. You will write 7 of them and the lowest grade will be dropped. An average of those grades will become the reading response grade (30%) of your final grade.

Blogs/Posts and Journals:

On Ecampus you will journal and blog. Journals are read only by me. They can be a response or a question to a reading or an assignment. You must do this 3 times. If you do, you get an A, if you do not you get an F. Blogs will be read by the whole class. They should be reactions, interesting ideas etc. about the texts or the discussions in class and 3 or more sentences. You may also respond to another person’s blog post. A response should be 3 or more sentences to count. You must do 6 of them to get an A. If you do not, then you get an F. I will add up the number of blogs and journals that you do and that number will determine your final grade for this activity which is 10% of your final grade. You will have until 12/4to do this. (9 posts and journals equal an A+, 8=A, 7=A-, 6=B, 5=C, 4=C-, 3=D+, 2=D, 1=D, 0=F)

Participation:

Participation is worth 10% of your grade. If you come to class and miss less than 2 excused absences, if you read the required material, if your take or make up all of your tests, if you contribute to our online community, you will receive an A for participation. See the grade descriptions for A, B, C, D, and F participation criteria on Ecampus. If you miss 2 classes, you slip to B level participation. If you miss 3 you slip to C. If you miss 4 you slip to D. Any more is an F.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism means representing someone else’s work as you own. It includes recycled papers, stolen papers, internet papers, bought papers, roommate/friend written papers, etc. It will result in a failing grade for the course. I report all incidents of plagiarism.

Special Needs:

If you have special educational or physical needs which require accommodation please see me if I can help you in any way.

Tentative Calendar

Week 1

8/19 Introduction to the course/Syllabus

8/21 Norton Intro: Vol C pages 1-16; Walt Whitman: bio 17-21, "Crossing the Brooklyn Ferry" 21-25

Week 2

8/26 Walt Whitman: "Song of Myself" 30-74

8/28 Emily Dickenson 74-91

***Question 1 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 3

9/2 Mark Twain: "The War Prayer" 100-104, 322-324; Henry Adams: 347-359

9/4 Henry James: Daisy Miller 388-429;

***Question 2 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 4

9/9 Booker T. Washington: 663-687; W.E.B DuBois 893-910

9/11 Charlotte Perkins Gilman: 806-822

***Question 3 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 5

9/16 Realism and Naturalism: 911-930; Theodore Dreiser: 938-953

9/18 Debates over Americanization: 1147-1176; Review for Test 1

Week 6

9/23 Test 1

9/25 Norton intro: Vol. D pages 1177-1192; World War 1: 1371-1387

Week 7

9/30 Susan Glaspell: 1411-1421

10/2 Robert Frost: 1388-1410; Wallace Stevens: 1439-1456

***Question 4 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 8

10/7 William Carlos Williams: 1462-1477; John Dos Passos: 1853-1857;

10/9 Ezra Pound: 1477-1482; Modernist Manifestos: 1499-1513; H.D. 1514-1519

***Question 5 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 9

10/14 Marianne Moore: 1531-1537; T.S. Eliot: 1574-1580, 1581-1584; E.E. Cummings: 1807-1810

10/16 Langston Hughes: 2026-2037; Review for Test 2

Week 10

10/21 Test 2

10/23 Norton intro: Vol. E. pages 2083-2096; Postmodern Manifestos: 2485-2502

Week 11

10/28 Ralph Ellison: 2297-2314; Gwendolyn Brooks: 2409-2414, 2420

10/30 Elizabeth Bishop: 2166-2169, 2183-2184; Gary Snyder: 2672-2679

*** Question 6 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 12

11/4 No Class

11/6 Kurt Vonnegut: 2460-2472

Week 13

11/11 Allen Ginsberg: 2574-2586; Jack Kerouac: 2493-2440

11/13 Adrienne Rich: 2649-2651, 2656-2658; Amiri Baraka: 2743-2744, 2758-2759

***Question 7 Due on Ecampus by Friday at noon

Week 14

11/18 Joy Harjo: 3127-3134; Louise Erdich 3172-3175; Sherman Alexi: 3239-3241

11/20 Amy Tan: 3154-3163.

Week 15 Thanksgiving Break

Week 16

12/2 Sandra Cisneros: 3163-3171

12/4 Review For Exam/Test 3

Exam: Wed. Dec 10 3-5 P.M.
