

Course Description

The catalog description of ENGL 242 is pretty bare-bones: "A historical introduction and survey from the mid-19th century to the present." We'll do all that, and try to cover some more unusual texts and authors, as well, as we sort through various themes, genres, and styles to explore the question "What makes American literature *American*?"



Contact Information

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 Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays 2:30-4:00 p.m. and by appointment

Social Justice Statement

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700). Feel free to talk with me about how we can work together most effectively.

Texts

Alexie, Sherman, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*.
 Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
 James, Henry. *Turn of the Screw and Other Stories*.
 McMichael, George, ed. Pearson/Prentice Hall *Anthology of American Literature, Vol. II* (9th ed.)

Attendance Policy and Daily Procedures

It should go without saying, but **please turn off cell phones and put them away during class**. If you're expecting an important call, please set your phone to vibrate and take the call in the hallway.

Attendance—Most of the learning in this course will come through class discussions, not lectures. Therefore, regular attendance and participation is expected, and will factor into your final grade. Should you miss a class, I trust that you'll check in to find out what you've missed, and that you will get notes from another class member. ***Missed quizzes or other in-class work must be made up before the next class meeting—no exceptions.***

Late arrivals—We will start class on time, and quizzes will almost always be given at the start of class, so please plan to be here at 1:00 p.m. Late arrivals are really disruptive, and if you arrive after a quiz is underway, you will not be permitted to take it.

Leaving early—Please let me know before class begins if you need to leave early, and what time you will need to leave. In this situation, I'd also appreciate it if you'd sit close to the door so that you can slip out without disrupting the class.

End of class—I know that some professors have a bad habit of going way over the scheduled ending time for their classes (I had some of them myself in college)—but I do keep track of the time and promise to always let you out at the class' scheduled ending time. Frequently, the end of the period will be devoted to summarizing material or making announcements, so please refrain from packing up books, etc., so that you don't miss anything yourself or distract others. I will verbally dismiss the class after this wrap-up, and promise to do so on time so that you can get to your next class.

Course Requirements

Your grade will be calculated according to the following breakdown. Detailed instructions about each of these assignments will be provided separately.

Quizzes & other in-class work	25%
Blog posts	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Attendance and participation	10%

Grades

Blog posts and exams will be graded on a 100-point scale, with 90-100 being an A, 80 to 89 a B, 70 to 79 a C, 60 to 69 a D, and anything below 60 an F. Shorter assignments (such as quizzes and in-class writing) will be graded on a 5- or 10-point scale, or (in some cases) just with a checkmark to indicate completion.

Late Papers/Assignments, Make-up Work, and Extensions

Deadlines for blog posts and penalties for late posts will be discussed in more detail on the blog assignment. Missed quizzes or other in-class work must be made up before the next class meeting. E-mail me to arrange a time when you can come by my office to make these up.

Plagiarism

My policy regarding plagiarism is zero tolerance: plagiarize even one part of one assignment, and fail the entire course. Period. If I can document the plagiarism, I will also turn the materials over to the Dean of Students and the Academic Review Board. If you are in any doubt about how to document sources, please see me—I'm very happy to help you figure out how to cite others' work correctly, since that's one of the most important skills a college student must acquire. But please see me with questions *before* you turn the assignment in.

DAY-TO-DAY SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

T Jan 12 Introduction to course
 R 14 READ: Anthology, selections from Whitman: "I Hear America Singing" (117-118); "Poets to Come" (118); "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" (136-137); and "The Wound-Dresser" (140-142); also Ginsberg's "A Supermarket in California" (1810-1811) and Alexie's "Defending Walt Whitman" (2385-2386)

WEEK TWO

T 19 READ: Anthology, Background reading on "The Literature of the Late 19th Century" (1-12); Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* sections 1, 6, 24, 48, and 52; Dickinson, poems #280, 324, 341, 435, 632, 1129, 1624
 IN CLASS: Context quiz over background reading
 R 21 READ: Anthology, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* chapters 1-16

WEEK THREE

T 26 READ: Anthology, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* chapters 17-30
 R 28 READ: Anthology, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* chapters 31-end

WEEK FOUR

T Feb 2 READ: Anthology, Chesnut's "The Goophered Grapevine" and "The Wife of His Youth" (497-518) and Harris, "How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox" (519-521)
 R 4 IN CLASS: Quiz, continued discussion of local-color writers and dialect use

WEEK FIVE

T 9 READ: James, *The Turn of the Screw*, chapters 1-12
 R 11 READ: James, *The Turn of the Screw*, chapters 13-end

WEEK SIX

T 16 READ: Anthology, Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (639-650)
 R 18 READ: Anthology, Chopin's *The Awakening* chapters 1-22 (661-712)

WEEK SEVEN

T 23 Anthology, Chopin's *The Awakening* chapters 23-end (713-750)
 R 25 IN CLASS: MIDTERM EXAM

WEEK EIGHT

T Mar 2 READ: Anthology, Background reading on "The Literature of the 20th Century" (981-990); Pound's poems "A Pact" and "In a Station of the Metro" (1286); Cummings' poems "in Just," "Next to of course god america i," "anyone lived in a pretty how town," and "pity this busy monster,manunkind" (1335-1341)
 R 4 READ: Anthology, Frost's poems "Birches" (1111-1112), "Design" (1114), and "Desert Places" (1118); Jeffers' poems "Hurt Hawks" (1411-1412) and "Carmel Point" (handout)
 IN CLASS: Context quiz over background reading

WEEK NINE

- T 9 READ: Anthology, Stevens' poems "Sunday Morning" (1385-1388), "Anecdote of the Jar" (1390), and "The Idea of Order at Key West" (1391-1392); Williams' poems "Spring and All" (1401-1402), "The Red Wheelbarrow" (1404), and "This is Just to Say" (1406)
- R 11 READ: Anthology, DuBois' "Forethought" to *The Souls of Black Folk* (1065) and excerpts from Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1040-1062)

WEEK TEN

- T 16 READ: Anthology, Locke's Foreword to *The New Negro* (1420-1421); Dunbar's "We Wear the Mask" (897) and "Sympathy" (904); Cullen's "Yet I Do Marvel" (1446), "Incident" (1447), and "Heritage" (1448); Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1563), "Harlem" (1566), and "Theme for English B" (1567)
- R 18 READ: Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* chapters 1-10

WEEK ELEVEN

- T 23 READ: Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* chapters 11-18
- R 25 READ: Finish Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
IN CLASS: Quiz

SPRING BREAK—HAVE A GOOD ONE!**WEEK TWELVE**

- T Apr 6 READ: Anthology, Fitzgerald's "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" (1483-1499) and Hemingway's "Big Two-Hearted River" (1516-1528)
- R 8 READ: Faulkner's "Barn Burning" (handout)

WEEK THIRTEEN

- T 13 READ: Anthology, Background reading on "The Literature of the 20th Century (1945-Present)," 1593-1604) and Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" (1868-1889)
IN CLASS: Context quiz on background reading
- R 15 READ: Anthology, Updike's "A&P" (1902-1906) and Vonnegut's "Welcome to the Monkey House" (2027-2039)

WEEK FOURTEEN

- T 20 READ: Anthology, Walker's "Everyday Use" (2099-2105) and Kincaid's "Girl" (2240-2241)
- R 22 READ: Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, through p. 116

WEEK FIFTEEN

- T 27 READ: Finish Alexie's *Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*
- R 29 IN CLASS: Continued discussion of Alexie, course wrap-up

FINALS WEEK

FRIDAY, MAY 7TH FINAL EXAM, 3—5 P.M.

NOTE: NO EARLY EXAMS CAN BE GIVEN. PLEASE CHECK YOUR SCHEDULE AND PLAN ACCORDINGLY.