

**English 239: American Literature from the Civil War (Online Version)****Dr. Debra Brenegan****Office: 224 Westminster Hall****email: [debra.brenegan@westminster-mo.edu](mailto:debra.brenegan@westminster-mo.edu)****Summer, 2015****Course Syllabus****Course Description**

This course is a survey of American literature from the middle of the nineteenth century to the present. This course examines changes in literary culture over time, tracing currents in the literature and the culture it reflects from the emergence of an industrialized society to the segmentation of 21<sup>st</sup>-century society. Among the authors studied are Twain, James, Chopin, Frost, Eliot, Moore, Hemingway, Faulkner, Miller, Baldwin, and Plath. Close reading and a variety of writing exercises will provide fodder for lively classroom discussion. ENG 239 fulfills the literature component of Tier II-D: Artistic Expression and Critical Appreciation Context.

**Online Teaching & Learning Philosophy**

This online setting will promote, encourage and support an environment conducive to the sharing of knowledge and various experiences. I hope to facilitate a learning process that encompasses a variety of methods to ensure all students gain knowledge and insight into the subject matter explored. This course offers a combination of techniques, including reading and critical analysis, written reflection, and online discussion in order to achieve a better understanding of American Literature through the promotion of a collaborative community.

**Learning Goals**

1. To gain a broader understanding and appreciation of American Literature from 1865 to the present utilizing close reading.
2. To learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of views in connection to the literary works read.
3. To develop skill in expressing oneself in both formal and informal writing modes.

**Learning Objectives**

1. Critically read and respond to a variety of literary works from the period regarding theme, symbolism, character, setting, point of view, style, and writerly techniques.
2. Compare and contrast writing techniques, modes, and strategies utilized by authors of the Realist, Modern, and Post-Modern literary eras.
3. Analyze works within the historical, social and cultural contexts of the eras, and present critical analyses of those works.

## **Required Texts & Materials**

- *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*, vol. II, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Susan Belasco and Linck Johnson.

## **ENG 239 and New Foundations, the General Education Program**

ENG 239 addresses goals 1 (Critical Thinking), 2 (Communication), 7 (Technology) and 10 (Aesthetic Sensitivity) of Westminster's *Statement of Mission, Goals, and Vision*. Here's how each goal will be met in this course:

**(1) Critical Thinking:** Definitions of critical thinking may vary somewhat from discipline to discipline, but in general, to think critically means to question and analyze texts, lines of reasoning or situations. It involves, among other things, identifying the essence of a text; finding connections among seemingly disparate ideas; identifying, deconstructing, and evaluating arguments; placing ideas in larger contexts; and employing reasoning skills to solve problems. The activities and assignments in ENG 239 develop many of these critical thinking skills.

**(2) Communication:** Many aspects of communication referred to in the *Statement of Mission, Goals, and Vision* are practiced in ENG 239, in particular reading and writing. We will use reading assignments as a basis for our written work and online discussion forums.

**(7) Technology:** You are required to use word processing and Moodle to navigate various aspects of the course, including the discussion forums.

**(10) Aesthetic Sensitivity:** We will read published authors and one another's work to develop an appreciation and understanding of literature.

## **Course Requirements (Plan to spend at least 22.5 hours/week on work for this class):**

**I. Quizzes/Homework:** There will be weekly open-book, open-note timed reading quizzes to be completed by Wednesday at midnight of each week, and possible occasional homework assignments.

**II. Exams:** There will be three open-book, open-note timed exams, including the final exam. These exams will be primary essay exams.

**III. Discussion Forums:** It is essential that you do all the assigned readings and are prepared to discuss them intelligently in the class's discussion forum. You will be expected to post your own answers to each discussion question by Thursday at midnight of each week and to post responses to your peers' posts by Saturday at midnight of each week.

**Discussion Forum Guidelines:** Each week, you will be asked to respond to a series of questions from the week's readings. Post your response under the correct question. Your post should tie together and apply the course material from present and past readings, by

making connections to other points previously discussed, and by analyzing the current week's readings. Be creative in titling your responses. In addition to your original posted responses to each question, please respond to at least two (2) of your classmates' responses for each posted questions. Your initial response should be **at least** 100 words long; your response to each peer should be **at least** 40 words long. You will get a maximum of 5 points for each discussion question with 2 of those points based on stylistics (complete sentences, proper grammar, logical flow, etc.) and 3 points based on the substance of your post (rich in thought, insight, and analysis; ties together ideas and concepts from past and present readings). Each peer response is worth a maximum of 2 points each, based mostly on substance.

### **Final Course Grade:**

1. Discussion Forums (35%)
2. Quizzes (20%)
3. Exam I (15%)
4. Exam II (15%)
5. Final Exam (15%)

### **English Department Course Policies**

**Late Work:** In the online version of English 239, it is particularly important that you turn in assignments on time. Late work will not be accepted and will result in a “zero” for that assignment. Likewise, I will not accept emailed work. In the event that you have a computer issue or crisis, please contact the IT help desk: [help@westminster-mo.edu](mailto:help@westminster-mo.edu) – include the phrase “Summer Online” in the subject line and they’ll be sure to get back to you right away.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, simply put, is passing off as your own the words and ideas of others – those of your classmates, friends, and/or professional writers. While students often do not intentionally plagiarize, it is still a serious offense; a plagiarized post, response, or exam answer will result in an automatic zero for the entire assignment. Please do not be tempted to “borrow” or “cut and paste” answers from any source. Your posts, responses, and exam answers must be your own original work. I am required to uphold the Westminster Honor Code, and so are you. I advise you to read it carefully, especially Article IX Definition of Violations, in the *Student Handbook*. You can obtain the *Student Handbook* on-line through the “Current Student” link.

**Harrassment:** Westminster College expects all members of its community to treat one another with respect and dignity. Westminster prohibits harassment based on an individual's race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or any other proscribed category set forth in federal or state regulations.

**ADA Accommodation:** Any student who feels that he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me as soon as possible. At that time, we can discuss the course format, anticipate your needs, and explore possible accommodations.

**Netiquette:** Every voice and opinion in the class matters. Please respect one another's postings no matter how different or controversial they may be perceived. Tolerance and respect are especially important in the online environment. You are encouraged to comment, question, or critique an idea but you are not to attack an individual. Our differences can serve to add richness to this learning experience. Please understand that sarcasm and humor can be easily misconstrued as *hurtful* in online interactions. Working together as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful atmosphere to foster learning for all of us.

\*Note: This policy sheet is subject to change.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1, June 1-7:**

- Read Syllabus – Take sample online quiz, post sample answer to discussion forum, and post sample response **by Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at midnight.**

#### **American Literature, 1865-1914**

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup> at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

1 - Read pgs. 2-39 (Introduction)

2 - Read pgs. 40-60 (Realism, Regionalism, and Naturalism)

3 - Read pgs. 61-70, 109-111, 142-163 (Mark Twain & Henry James)

4 - Read pgs. 213-229, 239-260 (Kate Chopin, Charles W. Chesnutt & Pauline E. Hopkins)

5 - Read pgs. 276-305 (Abraham Cahan & Edith Wharton)

#### **Week 2, June 8-15:**

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, June 11<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

1 - Read pgs. 329-358 (Frank Norris & Stephen Crane)

2 - Read pgs. 382-397 (Willa Cather & Jack London)

3 - Read pgs. 399-425, 437-457 (José Martí, Zitkala-Ša & W.E. B. DuBois)

**\*Exam #1: To be completed by Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at midnight**

### Week 3, June 15-21

#### *American Literature 1914-1945*

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, June 17th at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, June 18th at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

- 1 - Read pgs. 488-525 (Introduction)
- 2 - Read pgs. 526-557 ("Make It New": Theories of Modern Poetry)
- 3 - Read pgs. 569-583, 614-628 (Robert Frost & William Carlos Williams)
  - Read Frost: "The Mending Wall," "The Road not Taken," "Out, Out –," "Fire and Ice," "Nothing Gold Can Stay," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"
  - Read Williams: "The Widow's Lament in Springtime," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to Say," "These"
- 4 - Read pgs. 663-671, 703-709, 743-756 (T. S. Eliot, Edna St. Vincent Millay & Langston Hughes)
  - Read Millay: "First Fig," "Second Fig," "I, Being Born a Woman and Distressed," "Oh, Oh, You Will be Sorry for that Word," "I Forgot for a Moment"
  - Read Hughes: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "I, Too," "The Weary Blues," "Harlem"
- 5 - Read pgs. 765-809 (Susan Glaspell & Eugene O'Neill)

### Week 4, June 22-28

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, June 25th at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, June 27<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

- 1 - Read pgs. 811-839 (Introduction & From the Great War to the Great Depression: American Writers and the Challenges of Modernity)
- 2 - Read pgs. 840-875 (Gertrude Stein, Sherwood Anderson & Katherine Anne Porter)
- 3 - Read pgs. 876-878, 883-894, 918-940 (Zora Neale Hurston & F. Scott Fitzgerald)
- 4 - Read pgs. 952-967, 981-1000 (William Faulkner & Ernest Hemingway)

**\*Exam #2: To be completed by Sunday, June 28<sup>th</sup> at midnight**

### Week 5, June 29-July 5

#### *American Literature Since 1945*

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, July 1<sup>st</sup> at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, July 2<sup>nd</sup> at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, July 4<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

- 1 - Read pgs. 1058-1087 (Introduction)
- 2 - Read pgs. 1088-1101 (From Modernism to Postmodernism)
- 3 - Read pgs. 1101-1122 (Theodore Roethke, Elizabeth Bishop)
  - Read Roethke: "My Papa's Waltz," "Root Cellar," "The Waking"
  - Read Bishop: "The Fish," "Sestina," "One Art"
- 4 - Read pgs. 1143-1151, 1157-1170 (Tillie Olsen & Ralph Ellison)
- 5 - Read pgs. 1338-1351, 1386-1390, 1458-1463 (Flannery O'Connor, Ursula K. LeGuin & Don DeLillo)

**Extra Credit Option: Read pgs. 1197-1276 (Arthur Miller), take quiz, and post initial responses to discussion questions and responses to peers' posts as usual. There will also be an extra essay question to answer for more extra credit on Exam III.**

### **HAPPY FOURTH OF JULY!**

#### Week 6, July 6-10

Read all of the assignments listed below and take the online quiz by Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post initial responses to discussion questions by Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

Post responses to peers' posts by Saturday, July 11<sup>th</sup> at midnight.

- 1 - Read pgs. 1379-1386, 1417-1427, 1452-1457 & 1540-1545 (Adrienne Rich, Sylvia Plath, Audre Lorde & Rita Dove)
  - Read Rich: "Diving into the Wreck," "Power"
  - Read Plath: "Blackberrying," "Lady Lazarus"
  - Read Lorde: "Coal," "Black Mother Woman," "Stations"
  - Read Dove: "The House Slave," "Kentucky, 1833"
- 2 - Read pgs. 1470-1479, 1502-1517 (Raymond Carver & Tim O'Brien)
- 3 - Read pgs. 1525-1534, 1545-1549 (Leslie Marmon Silko & Sandra Cisneros)
- 4 - Read pgs. 1589-1638 ("Inventing the Truth": The Contemporary Memoir)

**\*Exam #3: To be completed by Sunday, July 12<sup>th</sup> at midnight**