American Literature

Dr. Joshua Myers Section 3-4, Fall 2023

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

*“The American Literature course begins with literature of the* [so-called] *New World and ends with contemporary period literature. There is an emphasis on critical thinking, close reading, and the development of writing skills. The course is organized by theme, by genre, or by literary and historical period, depending on the approach of the teacher. Students will have a wide variety of writing assignments, opportunities for oral participation, and other activities connecting literature, history, and culture.”* – Indiana Academy Course Catalog.

Moreover, this course will immerse learners in the fascinating history and diverse cultures of the North American continent, primarily the United States, as reflected in varied cultural productions of prose, poetry, and drama. Through our critical considerations of stories in their varied forms, we will consider what it truly means to be *American* and how each of our own unique stories is shaped by the environment, nation, and even the world of which we are a part.

LEARNING OUTCOMES & GOALS

* Utilize reading and discussion to develop critical thinking, reading, and listening skills.
* Communicate thoughtfully, professionally, and kindly to contribute to civic discourse.
* Situate American literature in its historical and cultural contexts.
* Appreciate the role and relevance of culture and entertainment to our everyday lives.
* Compose formal academic writings and conduct scholarly research.

REQUIRED TEXTS & SUPPLIES

*The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Volumes A-E.

Editor Nina Baym, 2007 editions.

* Occasional short works not included in the Norton anthologies will be provided to students by the instructor.
* Notebook and a writing implement (pencil, pen, etc.)

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Participation (graded monthly) 10%

Quizzes/ Short Writings (several – agglomerate score) 10%

Group Presentations 20%

Individual Author Research Project 30%

Major Literary Analysis Paper 30%

**Grade Scale:** A (95-100%); A – (90-94%); B+ (87-89%); B (83-86%); B – (80-82%); C+ (77-79%); C (73-76%); C – (70-72%); D (69% and below)

**Assignment sheets with specific graded instructions and requirements for each project will be made available to students at the appropriate time during the semester.**

**You will have plenty of time to complete all assignments and plenty of opportunity to receive assistance from me. Thus, there are no re-writes/revisions of an assignment *after* the grade for that assignment is returned to you – no exceptions!**

**You can always talk to me about your individual work and progress throughout the semester, so please don’t hesitate to reach out. 4**

PARTICIPATION

We all learn from insightful and lively discussion, and that will make you better prepared to generate original ideas and make interesting connections in your writing. Students are expected to actively participate by paying attention, taking notes, discussing, etc.

* Participation is graded monthly.
* Any of the following will result in a loss of participation points: cell phones, sleeping, not bringing required materials, general refusal to participate, excessive absences.
* Each time you engage in any of the above behaviors, you lose ten points for participation.For example:texting once, sleeping once, and one day when you refused to take notes/be engaged means that your monthly participation would be a 70/100.

ATTENDANCE

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected and required of all students. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. If you arrive to class more than 5 minutes after the appointed time, you will be considered tardy. If you are more than 10 minutes tardy, you will be marked absent for the day.

It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor. Although all absences, both excused and unexcused, are tracked within the Office of Academic Affairs, professors of each class are free to use discretion with a student’s first three unexcused absences. Four or more unexcused absences in any particular class a student takes will lead to academic and residential consequences to be determined by the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Residential Life that may include detention, residential groundings, parent/principal conference, among others.

* I do not grant individual extensions on assignments. **If** I decide to grant an extension, it will be communicated to the entire class in a timely manner.
* If the absence has been communicated to the instructor and/or documented, then a make-up assignment will be given.
	+ That make-up assignment will be do no later than one week from the date of when it is assigned. Failure to submit the make-up assignment within the one-week deadline will result in a zero on the assignment.
	+ If a student cannot communicate with the instructor before the absence, then they must speak to the instructor during the next class they return to and arrange a make-up. Failure to communicate with the instructor upon returning to class means that no make-up assignment will be permitted.
* Again: as stated in the grading policy, **there are no re-writes/revisions of an assignment *after* the grade for that assignment is returned to you – no exceptions!**

ELECTRONIC DEVICES POLICY:

I have found that the use of laptops in the classroom environment is often more distracting than productive, so computers are generallynot permitted unless I have given permission to the class (for instance, in a writing workshop or when we are working on a specific project). Cell phones are not permitted – you can text/call/browse the internet on your own time outside of class. Violation of this policy will result in a loss of participation points, as described earlier.

E-MAIL

--- I check my e-mail regularly and often — so should you.

--- My response may not be instantaneous since, like you, I have a life outside of this classroom, including other classes. I will always reply as soon as possible, please be patient.

--- Please feel free to e-mail me anytime, but if you e-mail me after 6 p.m. you probably will not get a response until the next morning.

--- **Considering all of the above, you will ALWAYS get a response within 24 hours. If a full 24 hours go by, and you do not receive an emailed reply from me, then you should resend your e-mail because I did not receive it.**

THUS, please be aware that email mishaps are not acceptable excuses for missed work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are responsible for the integrity of your work, and you must produce work that is

academically honest. This means that all your coursework must be your own and must be created specifically for this course. Failing to maintain the integrity of your work can have serious consequences. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following: submitting someone else’s paper, including papers you obtain online, as your own writing; and, attempting to take credit for someone else’s (or an AI’s) words or ideas without properly citing them. If you are even remotely uncertain about whether or not any part of your work is academically honest, please contact me for assistance. Also, please refer to the student handbook for additional information, especially the quoted portions below:

* *Plagiarism: representing as one’s own work any material obtained on the Internet (such as term papers, articles, etc.). When Internet sources are used in student work, the author, publisher and website must be identified. (See policy on Academic Dishonesty in the student handbook.)*
* *Students are prohibited from using any electronic device to capture, record, and/or transmit test, quiz, exam, or other class information or any other information in a manner constituting fraud, theft, cheating, or academic dishonesty and students are prohibited from using electronic devices to receive such information.*
* *Plagiarism or violations of procedures prescribed to protect the integrity of an assignment, such as: a. Submitting an assignment purporting to be one’s original work, which has been wholly or partially created by another person; b. Presenting as one’s own work ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgment of sources; c. Submitting as new work, without the faculty member’s prior consent or knowledge, one’s own work which has been previously presented for another class elsewhere; d. Knowingly permitting one’s work to be submitted by another person as if it were the submitter’s original work; e. Cooperation with another person in academic dishonesty, either directly or indirectly, as an intermediary agent or broker; f. Knowingly destroying or altering another’s work, whether in written or digital form, computer files, artwork, or other format; g. Aiding, abetting, or attempting to commit an act or action that constitutes academic dishonesty.*

LITERATURE NOTE

Important literature is often about the deepest and most difficult struggles of humans to live authentically in a complex world. Through the thoughts and experiences of literary characters, we can examine and evaluate our personal responses to life’s mysteries, complexities, disappointments, and joys. In addition, we begin to understand how a writer, in his or her own struggle to experience creatively, has responded to the social, political, and artistic environment of their times. The English Department at the Academy selects reading material that reflects these human struggles, has endured the test of time, and has earned a respected place in the universe of letters. The instructors will often include recently published poems, stories, and articles that reflect the diversity of contemporary cultures and experiences. **If, because of the powerful nature of the reading experience, you are unable to read and study a** s**pecific text with reasonable analytic objectivity, please confer with your instructor.** Alternative texts are available.

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found here.

RESPECTFUL EXPRESSION

* Opinions, discussions, and different interpretations are the bedrock of cultural and literary study; however, **please participate in a manner that respects the viewpoints of everyone in the class.** I.e., no dismissiveness, name-calling, or general meanness.
* **Please exercise discretion in what you share in this class**, both in class discussions and in your writing. Language, by its very nature, can be misunderstood. Instructors are responsible for reporting any evidence of a student’s possible intent to harm themselves or to harm others.
* **Please recognize that all feedback you receive from me in this class, including graded comments, is constructive**. I genuinely want to assist your academic progress and professional growth by helping you become better writers and stronger critical thinkers! However, this means that I must hold you accountable to both course requirements and the standards of higher education. Just like learning an instrument, playing a sport, or any other life achievement, you cannot improve unless you confront your mistakes and learn how to fix them.

DISABILITY SERVICES

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. The Office of Disability Services coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at **765-285-5293** or **dsd@bsu.edu.**

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