

AMERICAN LITERATURE – Course ENG 03101

Fall 2021

Instructor: Meghan K. Riley

Elliott Hall B-008E

(765) 285-7418

meghan.riley@bsu.edu

Student Hours: Monday: 2:00 – 5:00 P.M.
Tuesday: 12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesday: 2:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Friday: 2:00 – 5:00 P.M.
*other times available by appointment

TEXTS:

Nina Baym, et al., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*

One novel for literature circles (texts TBA and provided at a later date)

Handouts/online texts, as necessary

OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVE:

This semester, we will be reading, discussing, analyzing, and writing about short stories, poems, novels, essays, and autobiographical works, examining some of the ways American writers have explored themes, including identity, freedom, nature, war, and the American dream. This course is designed to (1) introduce you to or further your acquaintance with the works of United States literature from the 17th through the 21st centuries; (2) help you appreciate, analyze, interpret, and discuss literature; (3) provide opportunities to think about fundamental questions about humanity, developing societies, participating in societies, rejuvenating and/or revolutionizing societies, and rejecting societies; and (d) develop your ability to speak and write clearly and thoughtfully. The class serves as an introduction to the skills required in Academy and college literature courses. I will emphasize reading attentively, discussing freely, thinking rigorously and creatively, supporting your assertions with textual and philosophical evidence, and writing with clarity, depth, and precision.

WHAT I EXPECT OF YOU:

I expect you to

Be responsible. Come prepared to *every* class. That means you've done the homework, you have all the required materials, and you're ready to focus on our work and participate.

Be accountable. Complete all assignments, formal and informal, on time **and** ensure they are of the highest quality. If you have an occasional lapse in responsibility, take ownership of your error; don't try to make excuses or look for exemptions.

Be honest. Don't lie, cheat, or steal. You will disrupt and negatively affect the atmosphere of the whole class if you do. That impacts everyone.

Work hard. Do your best, whether it's on an individual assignment or in a group project. Go out of your way to establish an impeccable work ethic.

Participate. I plan to make this course largely discussion-based; therefore, you need to contribute and to listen. Too much of one or the other is equally detrimental to the class environment as a whole. That noted, I provide a variety of ways to participate, from short reflective writing exercises to "ink shedding" and anonymous Google doc discussion question development exercises. While I understand and empathize if you occasionally have an "off" day, if you are uncomfortable participating regularly despite the variety of options for participating or if you are dealing with a life situation that prevents you from participating regularly, I recommend that you either discuss the matter with me or contact an SLC/the Director of Academic Affairs or some other person to advocate on your behalf (there is no need to disclose the details to me if you do not feel comfortable doing so, but I will need to receive some notification that there are extenuating circumstances on your part so that I can adjust accordingly).

Be alert and flexible. The syllabus will undoubtedly change throughout the course of the semester. Listen for changes and be consistent in noting them.

ATTENDANCE and TARDY POLICIES:

Absences and tardies will be reported to the Office of Academic Life. You will be counted tardy if you arrive to class *at any time after* the class is scheduled to begin.

It is **your** responsibility to find out about any work, assignments, announcements, syllabus changes, etc., that you miss due to absence or lateness. Get information and notes from a reliable classmate, pick up handouts from the folder on my office door, and contact me for any further information you need.

LATE WORK:

I tend to be understanding about late assignments, and provide feedback gradually from the date a paper is due up until about a week later. That noted, if there is a pattern of late assignments and it seems to be significantly impacting your performance in the course, I may discuss the matter with you and/or the Director of Academic Affairs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

I take this issue very seriously. It is extremely important that you hand in your own work and give credit for any borrowed ideas, words, or information. If you need more detailed information on plagiarism, see me; otherwise, if you're in doubt, cite it. Conducting yourself honorably with regard to tests and other graded assignments/projects goes without saying. Avoid a situation where we have to address this embarrassing and injurious issue. Should an incident arise, I will deal with it according to

the plan of action in the “Academic Honesty” section outlined in your *Student Handbook*. Consider your actions and their consequences carefully before you act.

COMPUTER USE:

Please ensure that if you choose to use your computer, you are using your computer *only* for class-related activities. For assigned class activities that involve the use of a computer, please ensure that your computer is in working order and ready for use at the beginning of class on specified days; you must employ them in academic pursuits only; you must have the sound turned off; and you must display the dock. Furthermore, do not utilize your camera or recording device without prior approval from me. Any deviation from these guidelines can result in my taking your computer and turning it in to Dr. Olufowote. You will then have to make an appointment with him (through his secretary) in order to retrieve it.

CELL PHONES:

Please turn the sound off and put your phone away when class begins. The instructor reserves the right to confiscate any electronic device that is being utilized inappropriately during class time. The owner will then have to meet with the Director of Academic Affairs in order to reclaim this property

PAPERS:

- Unless completed in class or otherwise stated, all assignments are to follow the following format:
- Typed in Times New Roman 12-point font or Arial 10.5 or 11-point font
- Double spaced
- *Original* title
- Follow MLA style citing and referencing
- Printed in black ink

You must submit a **hard copy** of your paper at the time it is due; if you prefer to email/turn in an electronic copy, please discuss that with me.

A note about your writing: Aside from in-class writing assignments, all written work should be thoroughly checked beforehand for grammar, punctuation, and spelling errors. (Please note that intentional use of world Englishes is *not* an example of an error; we will discuss this in the first week).

SCHEDULE OF DAILY READINGS / ASSIGNMENTS:

Please have each assignment thoroughly read by the date above it. Changes I note in class take precedence over what is printed in the syllabus.

PLEASE NOTE:

There will be various long and short term projects and assignments, as well as other formal and informal assessments throughout the course of the semester. Some are listed in this syllabus; many are not. Be sure to listen in class in order to receive these assignments as they are given so you are not stuck trying to scurry at the last minute in order to complete them by the due date.

PLEASE ALSO 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 readers 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 express experience creatively, has responded to the social, political, and artistic environment of the times in which they lived and wrote. 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. In addition, the instructors include recently published poems, short 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 specific text with reasonable analytic objectivity, please confer with your instructor. Alternative texts (of comparable length and degree of difficulty) are available.

GRADING:

The grading scale I will employ in this class is as follows:

A	93-100	B+	87	C+	77	D*	69 and below
A-	90-92	B	83	C	73		
		B-	80	C-	70		

I grade on a point system, rather than the percentage breakdown you will encounter in many other classes. Larger and smaller assessments will be weighted appropriately. **Class participation, though, is worth approximately 15%** of your overall grade. Class participation points will be added to your grade on a weekly basis. You need to be aware of this large "assignment" that has a significant impact on your overall grade. Also, be aware that the "Class Participation" heading covers but is not necessarily limited to the following:

- Class discussion
- Answering questions clearly and thoughtfully, evidencing your preparation for class
- Generating your own ideas clearly and thoughtfully without monopolizing the discussion
- Handling difference of opinion in a civil and mature manner (i.e. not personally attacking someone who disagrees with you; please note that if someone attacks your personhood or others' personhood – which hopefully does not occur – it is perfectly reasonable to not respond "civilly")
- Listening to others and responding to what they have said
- Focusing on the question at hand
- Citing textual evidence to support ideas put forth

- Attendance
- Attitude

- Making positive contributions to the class atmosphere, rather than negative ones (through your actions and other nonverbal communications)
- Contributing willingly, rather than complaining about it
- Conducting yourself in a reasonable and considerate manner at all times

- Compliance with course requirements and policies outlined in this syllabus and through the instructor's communiqués.
- Daily homework assignments can be worth anywhere between 10 and 50 points, depending on the nature of the assignment, and written homework will be given 2-3 times per week. Literature Circle work is worth 20 points for each meeting, and we typically have 7 meetings per semester. Research papers are the weightiest assignments in the class. The first "mini" paper is worth 100 points, and the final one is worth 200.

HELP:

Take advantage of my office hours. I'll be in or very near my office often, especially during the daytime hours. I expect you to think and work independently to a large extent, but if you need help, take the initiative to contact and/or visit me. (Impromptu visits are totally welcome, but if you would prefer to email me or do a quick video chat, that is fine too!)

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a **disability**, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me (or have someone contact me on your behalf) as soon as possible. My office location and hours are listed on this document. Please note that you need not share specific details with me to receive accommodations; if you choose to have someone contact me on your behalf, all I need to know is what accommodations you should receive and the duration of those accommodations.

PAPER HEADING FOR ASSIGNMENTS:

First Name Last Name

Due Date

Title of assignment

Riley Section #

DIVERSITY:

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 at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter> (Links to an external site.).

UNITS OF STUDY:

This semester, we will be reading a combination of novel-length and short texts, both fiction and nonfiction. We will broadly address four major themes:

- Overt structures of power

- Covert structures of power
- Direct Resistance
- Passive Resistance

Grades/assignments will take the form of class discussion (see description above), short written responses (announced and unannounced), close reading written exercises. A cumulative final paper or project will conclude the semester and will be worth approximately 200 points, while unit exams and major papers will be worth approximately 100 points. Daily homework assignments and written responses will be worth anywhere between 10 and 50 points, depending on their depth and complexity.

Please read the notes under the **GRADING** heading above for additional information.

Indiana Academy Mask Policy

The Indiana Academy will follow [Ball State University's mask policy \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (see Section IV). Based on current CDC guidance recommending the wearing of face masks for all people—regardless of vaccination status—in public indoor settings in communities where the rate of coronavirus transmission is high or substantial, all employees, students, and campus visitors are required to wear a mask while inside any University building. This requirement is effective on August 9, 2021. Fully vaccinated people are not required to wear masks outdoors.

Individuals who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 are required to wear face masks while inside campus buildings and outside when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

If a student declines to wear a face mask as required, the student will be referred to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. If the situation occurs in a classroom or other academic setting, it is considered a classroom management issue, and the teacher will remind the student of the requirement and give the student a chance to comply with it prior to referring the matter to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. Wearing masks is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19 to others.