

Fayetteville State University  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Department of English  
English 431-01 The American Novel  
Spring/2012

### 1. Locator Information

Instructor: Dr. Micki Nyman

Room, Days and Time: SBE 211, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:00-9:15

Office Location and Phone Number: Williams Hall 206, 672-2426

Office Hours: M 10-12 & 1-3, W 1-3, F 10-12 and by appointment.

E-Mail: [mnyman@uncfsu.edu](mailto:mnyman@uncfsu.edu)

To ensure a prompt reply, please use email and follow email guidelines:

<http://www.uncfsu.edu/PDFs/EmailPolicyFinal.pdf>

### 2. Course Description

The FSU catalogue course description reads "A study of the development of the American novel with emphasis on selected major writers."

We will also focus on the distinctive nature of the American novel respective to style, genre, literary moment, culture, and approach. The methodology of this course will largely flow from an intertextual approach because of the secondary readings—cultural background and critical pieces—that reside along with each novel (primary text). However, we will also practice reading the novels under other critical lenses integrated from the principles of classicism, structuralism, deconstruction, post-structuralism, feminism, and cultural criticism. Another of our concerns will be to compare and contrast our own interpretation or "read" of a given text to those of the critics found in the Norton Critical Editions by way of oral, in-class informal presentations. Three of these nine presentations (your choice) will be crafted into short formal writing assignments. This critical practice will help prepare us to write 10-12 page research papers, products that will show our mastery of academic discourse, one or more novels, and one approach. Finally, we will discern how the process of reading these particular novels and criticism informs our reading of culture and other literary products.

### 3. Textbooks

Primary Texts: The following Norton Edition books are ones you will borrow in two packets from the FSU bookstore according to standardized FSU book procedures.

**Willa Cather**, *O Pioneers* (1913)

**Kate Chopin**, *The Awakening* (1899)

**Theodore Dreiser**, *Sister Carrie* (1900)

**William Faulkner**, *The Sound and The Fury* (1929)

**Nathaniel Hawthorne**, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)

**William Dean Howells**, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1884)

**Nell Larsen**, *Passing* (1929)

**Herman Melville**, *Moby-Dick* (1851)

**Frank Norris**, *McTeague* (1899)

**Amy Tan**, *Joy Luck Club* (1989) (Available for purchase in the FSU bookstore; you may purchase at a bookstore, online, either new or used, or you may borrow from a library)

Secondary Texts: These academic articles which appear as critical commentary or chapters in the critical editions serve to augment the intertextual methodology of the course; in addition, this practice of intertextuality (using more than one text to garner insight) will help you to master the discourse necessary to complete your own research project.

#### **4. American Novel ENGL 431 B.A. Degree (a) and B.S. Degree (b) Outcomes**

- 1 (a) (b) Describe characteristics of literature in English from diverse literary historical periods and cultures.
- 2 (a) (b) Correctly apply literary terminology for narrative, poetic, and dramatic genres.
- 3 (a) (b) Use literary critical perspectives to generate original analyses of literature in English.
- 4 (a) (b) Compose diverse researched and/or original texts in varied genres and formats, using various composing processes, technologies, and/or multimodal formats.
- 5 (a) (6b) Relate Language patterns to cultural values.
- 6 (a) (7b) Locate and evaluate discipline-specific sources, and incorporate and cite sources according to the MLA style manual.

#### **5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS**

##### **Attendance**

**Class attendance is required** for all students enrolled in **English 431**.

**Three** unexcused absences will result in an interim grade of EA on your transcript, which will indicate Excessive Absences. According to the catalog, "Students who receive EA interim grades must either withdraw or resume attendance...The EA is not a final grade, so students who are assigned an interim grade of EA, but do not withdraw from the class, will receive a final grade based on the evaluation criteria for the class."

**Cell phones:** Cell phones, pagers, iPods, Blackberries, and other electronic devices (including laptops) are a distraction to the learning process and can be used to aid academic dishonesty. Therefore, they must be turned off and *stowed out of sight* for the duration of class time. No headphones or earpieces or headgear of any kind is allowed.

**Academic Dishonesty:** According to the FSU Code of Student Conduct, a student violates the Academic Dishonesty Policy if he or she *attempts* to cheat or plagiarize, *cheats* (receiving unauthorized aid or assistance on any form of academic work), *plagiarizes* (copies the language structure, ideas and/or thoughts of another without giving appropriate recognition and/or adopting it as one's own original work), *falsifies* (unauthorized changing of grades or conduct involving any untruth, spoken or written, regarding any circumstances related to academic work), or *aids and abets* others to cheat or plagiarize. Penalties include failing the course and suspension.

#### **6. Course Requirements, Percentages, and Evaluation Criteria**

Required Assignments:	Percentage of Grade
1) Class Participation/Discussion You will sign up for specific articles to summarize and synthesize for the class.	10%
2) Reader/Response You will write guided informal responses for each novel so that you are prepared for class discussions	10%
3) 3 Short critical writing papers You will write-up three short responses, taken from your own critical in-class presentations two page minimum, MLA Citation style	10% each—30% total
4) Midterm and Final Including multiple choice, short answers, and essay questions	10% each—20% total
5) Final Research Paper/Project & Presentation Ten (10) source minimum Ten (10) page minimum MLA Citation Style Requirement In-class presentation (before paper is due) required	30%
	<hr style="width: 100%; border: 1px solid black;"/> 100%      Total Percentage

**Grading:** We will use a 10-point percentage grading scale:

90-100 A      80-89 B      70-79 C      60-69 D      59 and under F

Please note: All out-of-class assignments will be uploaded to Turnitin on Blackboard, no exception! All grades will be immediately posted and available on Blackboard.

### 7. Teaching Strategies

Large and small group activities, individual and group projects, reflections, structured overview, demonstration, discussion, Internet research, on-line discussion board.

**8. Disabled Student Services** In accordance with Section 504 of the 193 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ACA) of 1990, if you have a disability or think you have a disability to please contact the Center for Personal Development in the Spaulding Building, Room 155 (1st Floor); 910-672-1203

### 9. Academic Support Resources

FSU Library, Smartthinking, English Resource/Writing Lab, My Office

### 10. Course Outline

**Please have assigned articles and novels read by the day indicated they will be discussed in class.**

- Week 1:**     **1/10**   Read syllabus, Sign up for individual critical reading (*due 1/21*)  
                  Begin reading Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* (*due 1/19*)
- 1/ 12**   How-to: informal class presentations, summary/synthesis,  
                  reading critically, penning reader response
- Week 2:**     **1/17**   Begin discussion of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*
- 1/19**   Continue *The Scarlet Letter* discussion, Individual critical presentations  
                  Sign up for individual critical reading for *1/26*
- Week 3:**     **1/24**   Begin discussion of Melville's *Moby Dick*, Sign up for critical reading
- 1/26**   Continue discussion of *Moby Dick*, Individual critical presentations
- Week 4:**     **1/31**   Begin discussion of Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham*,  
                  Sign up for individual critical reading for *2/9*
- 2/2**    Continue discussion of Howells' *The Rise of Silas Lapham*  
                  Individual critical presentations
- Week 5:**     **2/7**    Begin discussion of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*,  
                  Sign up for critical reading for *2/16*
- 2/9**    Continue discussion of *The Awakening*, Individual critical presentations  
                  *First critical writing due*
- Week 6:**     **2/ 14**   Begin discussion of Frank Norris' *McTeague*  
                  Sign up for critical reading for *3/1*
- 2/16**   Continue discussion of *McTeague*, Individual critical presentations
- Week 7:**     **2/21**   How to: Using *Illiad* and other FSU library resources,  
                  Approaching a research paper.
- 2/23**   **Midterm**
- Week 8:**     **2/28**   Begin discussion of Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*  
                  Sign up for critical reading for *3/15*
- 3/1**    Continue discussion of *Sister Carrie*, Critical Writing Due (2)  
                  Individual critical presentations
- 3/3-3/10**   **Spring Break**

- Week 9:**     **3/13** Begin discussion of Willa Cather's *O Pioneers*  
Sign up for critical reading for 3/22
- 3/15** Continue discussion of *O Pioneers*, Individual critical presentations
- Week 10:**    **3/20** Begin discussion of Nell Larsen's *Passing*  
Sign up for critical reading for 4/5
- 3/22** Continue discussion of *Passing*, Individual critical presentations
- Week 11:**    **3/27** How to: Research Paper, process to product, computer lab or library
- 3/29** How to: Research Paper, process to product, computer lab or library
- Week 12:**    **4/3**    Begin discussion of William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*
- 4/5**    Continue discussion of *The Sound and the Fury*  
Individual critical presentations
- Week 13:**    **4/10** Begin discussion of **Amy Tan's** *Joy Luck Club*
- 4/12** Continue discussion of *Joy Luck Club*, Critical Writing Due (3)
- Week 14:**    **4/17** Class Screening of *Joy Luck Club*
- 4/19** Class Screening of *Joy Luck Club*
- Week 15:**    **4/24** Deliver presentations of Research
- 4/26** Take ***Final Exam*** (graduating seniors must submit research  
papers) Turn in **Reader Response Assignment**
- Week 16:**    **5/1**    **Final Exam Make-ups and Research Papers Due**