

## English 2235: American Literature II

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Hours: MWF 10-11, MW 2-3, M 5:30-6:30, and by appt.

Spring 2000  
Section 1

### Course Description

In this second course of the two-part American literature survey, we will sample some of the literature written in the United States between the end of the Civil War and 1990. Along the way, we will cover the major literary movements and the contributions of some of the important writers of this time span. In addition, we will look at some of the historical, social, and political forces that shaped the literature of this period and our perceptions of it. Readings will include primarily short fiction and poetry, but we will also read two novels and a play; works from both "major" and "minor" writers will be included for a more comprehensive view of "American literature."

### Course Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you should be able to:

- Read, discuss, and interpret selected works of American literature from approximately 1865 to the present.
- Understand how the selected works of American literature studied reflect the characteristics and values of the people and times in which they were written.
- Explain the literary movements of Romanticism, Local Color, Regionalism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Post-Modernism.
- Place selected American authors within one or more literary movements.
- Understand the important historical events and socio-political movements from the 1860's to the present.
- Recognize distinguishing characteristics of modern American literature.
- Explain the various shades of modern American realism in literature.
- Analyze and discuss specific works of literature using terms such as character, point of view, plot, structure, conflict, setting, theme, symbol, allegory, metaphor, simile, scansion, meters, feet, end rhyme, rhyme scheme, metonymy, synecdoche, onomatopoeia, and irony.
- Read selected works of American literature and present, through activities such as group discussion, journals, response papers, critical essays, reviews, and examinations, a personal interpretation and evaluation of the selected works of literature.
- Appreciate the ways in which literature helps us understand ourselves, other people, and the world around us.

### Required Texts

Nina Baym, et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Shorter 5<sup>th</sup> edition. 1998.  
Willa Cather. *My Antonia* (1918). Dover Thrift Edition.

### Requirements and Evaluation

**Papers (66 points):** You will write **three** analytical papers during the semester. More details will be provided in handouts and in class discussions; the due dates will be announced in class. All three papers must be submitted to pass the course.

**Examinations (110 points):** There will be **five** exams during the semester. The exams may include identification, short-essay, and essay questions. You will be allowed to bring a **study sheet** (which I will provide) with you to each exam. Finally, you may only miss an exam if you are ill, and you need to let me know this **before** the exam begins. All five exams must be completed to pass the course.

**Participation and In-Class Writing (22 points):** Your preparation for and your active participation in class discussions is expected and will be evaluated; both the quantity and quality of your participation will be considered. In addition, there may be “pop” reading quizzes, informal written responses, and group work during the term; these activities **cannot** be made up if you are absent.

### **Participation and Attendance**

In my experiences, the best literature classes are those which have stimulating and enjoyable discussions. We understand, enjoy, and appreciate literature more when we have an opportunity to discuss it—which is also “active learning.” For these reasons, small- and large-group discussions will be an important part of this class. If the discussions are good, this class will be both informative and enjoyable. A silent class, or a class filled with lectures, is too much work and no fun for anyone.

With this in mind, I welcome your ideas and questions about the literature and class discussions because they are the only way I know what’s clear, what’s not, what intrigues you, and what frustrates you. And, chances are, your peers will welcome your questions as they might have the same questions, or your ideas might prompt them to see the story or poem in a different way.

Obviously, discussion-based courses assume a high level of responsibility and maturity from the participants. You are expected to attend class each day, to have read the assignment scheduled for the day, and to participate actively in every class. Don’t worry about whether you completely understand what you’ve read; just be willing to share your questions, ideas, feelings, reactions, and opinions with the rest of us. Finally, it is not possible to “make up” discussions and in-class work, and missing class or being unprepared for class will affect the “Participation and In-Class Writing” portion of your final grade.

### **Policies**

**Attendance:** If you miss more than **twelve** (12) class periods for **any** reason, you will receive an “F” for the course, regardless of your other grades. If you must be absent due to a medical or family emergency, please notify me as soon as possible to keep current with your progress in the course or to determine if an incomplete is warranted.

**Class Disruptions:** Coming into class late or leaving class early is disruptive and disrespectful to both your classmates and me. Chronic late arrivals or early departures will be considered absences. Other disruptions will be handled on an individual basis and, if serious enough, could involve the dean of educational services.

**Reading Notebook:** I strongly encourage you to keep a reading notebook for this class. In addition to class notes, you can keep track of the literature as you are reading by writing lists, summaries, definitions, details, questions, and personal notes. I will never collect this notebook, but it can help you by providing material for class discussions, information for the examination study sheets, and ideas for your papers.

**Record-Keeping:** Please keep all exams and papers that are returned to you. If questions about grades arise, you will need to produce the original documents.

**Incompletes:** Incompletes will only be granted to students who have a **documented** medical emergency in the final weeks of the semester. These students must have completed all of the other work for the course with an average grade of “C” or better, must not have missed more than six (6) hours of class, **and** must demonstrate the ability and willingness to complete the work before the third week of the following semester. It is **your** responsibility to notify me as soon as possible if this scenario applies to you.

**Plagiarism:** Knowingly presenting another person's ideas or writing as your own without appropriate citation will result in an “F” for the course and notification of the appropriate college officials.

### **Academic Support Center**

The Academic Support Center (ASC), located on the second floor of the College Services (CS) building, offers free, trained writing tutors who work with student writers at any stage in the writing process to improve their writing. I strongly encourage you to meet with a writing tutor early in the term so that you can discover how helpful the tutors can be to you.

### **Important Dates**

**Class Meetings:** MWF / 1:00 – 1:50 p.m. / H 223

**No Classes:** M 1-17 / M 2-21 / M 3-6 – F 3-10 / F 4-21

**Last Day to Withdraw:** T 4-11

**Final Examination:** W 5-17 / 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

**Extra Credit Options:** Robert Bly Visit / A.R.C.C. Spring Play / Dates to be Announced

**Note:** This syllabus is subject to change; changes will be announced in class.