

English 3353: Modern American Fiction

Dr. Patricia Yongue

Spring 2015 Th 8:30-10m

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Course Description

Fiction in this time frame (1900-1940) is responsive to Modernism, an early twentieth century artistic movement in western culture that draws a great deal of scholarly attention. We will pay attention ourselves to modernist practices and perspectives, but we will also consider the socio-cultural/historical backgrounds of American fiction, including popular fiction, and the origins and construction of heroism. We will consider such intellectual movements as literary naturalism and existentialism, which overlap modernism and affect even post-modern literature. My emphasis tends toward studying texts as both constructing representations of and representing culture and gender. I also pay very close attention to language and detail and narrative perspective. Modernist writers, anticipating the post-modernists, began to question the vagaries of language and perspective. Of course, we shall compare and contrast cultural past with present.

This is an **advanced** English course that satisfies three hours of credit in the English major and minor. Students must have completed the university Core Communication requirement. Competency in written English and composition at the advanced level is expected in **all** written performance. Students are also expected to have some knowledge of literary “behaviors.” Completion of ENGL 3301 is highly recommended.

NOTE: ENGL 3353 **does not** satisfy the university Core requirement satisfied by ENGL 3350 and 3351.

Learning Outcomes

- 1.** Students participating responsibly will gain knowledge about and insight into the modernist era of American fiction and will be introduced to applications of gender and cultural criticism.
- 2.** Students participating responsibly will increase their ability to read literature closely and to analyze literature critically.
- 3.** Students participating responsibly will increase their understanding of and skill in writing from a position of informed opinion about a topic, issues, etc.

Texts

Crane, *Maggie*

Cather, *A Lost Lady*

Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Assignments

Students will be responsible (1) for reading the texts by the first date indicated on the schedule, (2) for informed, engaging class discussion, and (3) for at least three in-class writing assignments which may be in response format and/or exam format. Depending on a successful midterm grade and early in-class responses, students who for academic reasons may need to write a longer, out of class essay may request to do so. Graduating English majors (seniors graduating in the current semester) **may** write an essay. This essay, which will substitute for at least two of the in-class assignments, will be comprised of research (not just literary criticism articles) and an essay based on application of research. The project will combine library and internet research with close reading of text. Details for the topic, essay format, and submission requirements are provided in Blackboard Learn in **Guidelines**. All essays must be properly documented (MLA or Chicago Style); that is, information, ideas, and text solicited, purchased, or otherwise procured from outside sources/benefactors must be acknowledged and acknowledged in the proper professional format. Failure to comply with documentation policy will result in failure of the project and, if plagiarism is detected, may result in more serious penalty, such as a formal hearing and/or failure in the class. Please consult the UH Academic Honesty Policy. **Students are required to turn out of class essays into turnitin.com as well as to submit them in hard copy, both by the assigned date (See Guidelines). Failure to submit essays in both forms will result in a 0 for the assignment.** There will be a midterm (date and format to be announced) and a comprehensive final examination (format to be announced) on the date and at the time scheduled by the university. Students must complete the essay portion of the final in blue books.

Attendance

Attendance—full participation in the class—is mandatory. Students with three recorded absences before midterm and/or who do not take the midterm will be dropped on the midterm rolls with a WP or WF depending on any evaluated work. Students who are discovered not paying attention or not having read the assignment should expect a loss of one point in the averaging of the final grade (see Grading). Students who have submitted work and who accumulate three recorded absences before the last day to drop scheduled by the university will be dropped, the grade of WP or WF depending on the grade of evaluated work. Students who accumulate four absences in the course will lose the 5 % participation grade and incur the loss of a partial course grade (e.g., B+ to B, etc.) for each day of recorded absences after three absences. Students who enroll in the class late and/or begin attendance after the first day of class will have the missed days counted toward absences. Lateness and early departures—these constitute disruptions for the lecturer and for the audience—will be recorded: two moderately late arrivals and/or early departures will count as one absence. Arrival 15 minutes after class has begun is an absence. Departure from class earlier than 15 minutes before class officially ends is an absence.

Students who know in advance that their schedules will require at least three absences or that they will habitually be late for class should probably not take this class. Students who for medical reasons must regularly leave class must provide a medical excuse and sit as close to the door as possible to limit the distraction to others. *Nota bene:* Students

who plan to drop the course at any time during the semester **must file the paperwork themselves** to insure they meet university deadlines for withdrawal without penalties. Even if by your calculations your absences exceed the limit, I might not take attendance on given days and therefore might not have the data I need to drop you according to my and the university policy. Do not risk an F grade.

If you miss class, please ask a colleague for the material you missed.

Emergency situations (personal or public) will be handled on an individual basis and as the occasion arises—heavy rains and flood potential on Houston streets, for example,

Exams and quizzes must be taken in class on the scheduled dates. Essays must be submitted in hard copy and to turnitin on the due date.

Depoartment

Mature adult behavior and courtesy in class and conference are expected, in fact required. This requirement is part of the professionalism and humanity towards which all components of university class participation and performance are directed. We are a team as well as individuals. Prospective employers and graduate schools have become most interested in the development of mature behavior, courtesy, and professionalism.

Again, students **must not migrate in and out of class**. Such practice is distracting and discourteous to your instructor and your colleagues. Certainly do not walk in front of the instructor while she is lecturing. Take care of personal matters ahead of time. If medical reasons require you to leave class periodically, please advise me and try to sit close to the exit to avoid distracting others. Don't slam the door on your way in or out!

During class, turn off all telephones, pagers, texting and twittering devices, etc. Put away non-class materials. Students are free to take notes on laptops, tablets, etc., but must not do email or Facebook, etc.

Emergency situations will of course be recognized and handled as they turn up.