

Valley City State University
English 340: Studies in American Literature: The 20th Century Novel
Spring 2008

Instructor: Dr. Julee Russell
Office: McFarland 315
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Office hours: M-F 10 and by arrangement

Course Objectives:

- To trace the development of the American novel as it relates to the American Experience;
- To gain valuable experience in interpreting and analyzing novels by diverse American writers;
- To identify those characteristics and themes commonly associated with American literature in general and the American novel in particular;
- To expand one's reading and cultural background.

Course Ability:

The Ability developed in this course is Global Awareness. The project required for this course allows students to "look beyond one's immediate self and local community." Specifically, projects will demonstrate that the student

- Examines a situation from a different perspective;
- Interprets and applies an understanding of cultural difference in a social situation
- Studies and critiques cultural perspectives;
- Appreciates the values of different perspectives;
- Presents an informed interpretation, which combines research and interpretation to create a new work – the video book review.

Course Activities:

1. Weekly Response Papers. These are due each Friday; topics will be assigned each week. You will be asked to respond to the ideas in the literature, discuss literary techniques in the work, or use some internet materials to develop an idea we discuss in class.

2. Novel Exams (8). Expect a test over the literature, to include themes, content, and literary devices discussed, for each unit. Formats for exams will vary.

3. Class Participation. To include class discussion, in-class group work, occasional research activities, and possibly quizzes.

4. Group Research Activities. These will be assigned in class. The points will come in two parts, one for the research and one for the presentation. If you miss group assignments, you may complete the project individually for ½ of the total points. The individual work is due at the same time as the group work.

5. Abilities Project. The abilities project for this course is a video book review. Requirements and deadlines will be presented in class. Each student will choose a

different 20th century novel by an author from an historically underrepresented cultural or ethnic group, and the choice of novel as well as the script/storyboard must be approved by the instructor before work on the project begins.

6. Final Exam. The class will meet during the official final exam time. Attendance and participation are required. (Monday, May 5, 2008, 1:00p.m.)

Course Text:

Bradbury, Malcolm. *The Modern American Novel*. New York: Penguin Books, 1994. [1983]*

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1980. [1957]

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage Books, 1980. [1947]

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage Books, 1930. [1964]

Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926. [1970]

Lee, Harper. *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Momaday, N. Scott. *House Made of Dawn*. New York: Harper, 1999. [1966]

Ruland, Richard and Malcolm Bradbury. *From Puritanism to Post Modernism: A History of American Literature*. New York: Viking, 1991.*

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. [1977]

Tan, Amy. *The Joy Luck Club*. London: Penguin Books, 2006. [1989]

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: HarperCollins, 2005. [1940]

*not required

Evaluation: point totals are estimates

A – 93-100% B – 83-92% C – 73-82% D – 60-72% F – 59% and below

Response papers—10 pts each (120-150 pts total, depending on how many are assigned)

Novel Exams —20 pts each (160 pts)

Class Participation— 50 pts total, depending on activities assigned

Group Research Activities – 10 pts each (100 pts)

Abilities Project—100 pts

Total points: about 560 points

Course Policies:

1. Students are expected to keep up with the course readings, attend class regularly, and participate in class discussions. If you must be absent, check Blackboard for your assignment and get notes from a friend. You are responsible for timely submission of all work in the class, regardless of your reason for absence.

If you are absent, please email your assignment to me with the subject line “ENGL 340 Absent” and make certain you clearly label the item you send so I know which assignment you are responding to. DO NOT ask for the assignment or any response in this email—it will be filtered into a folder and I may not open it immediately.

Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made. If arrangements have been made, attach the email you receive from me to the assignment when you submit it. My email message will indicate that you have made prior arrangements. Plan accordingly.

2. **CASS Policy on sources:** Wikipedia is a *wiki*—a place where anyone may place his or her ideas, thoughts, and work regarding any subject. Furthermore, other people have the capability of editing other people’s work placed online. While Wikipedia does have a set of standards in accepting submissions, the information submitted does not go through the rigorous peer-review found in scholarly articles.

Wikipedia is not considered a credible or appropriate source in the academic setting. Wikipedia may be used for initial information about a subject, but will not be accepted as a source in papers, projects, or presentations.

3. **CASS Policy on Plagiarism:** Academic integrity is the foundation of intellectual pursuit and participation in a scholarly community. The student handbook describes the expectations for academic honesty and indicates the possible consequences of academic dishonesty. When an act of academic dishonesty is discovered, faculty are required to complete an Academic Integrity Report to document the incident and sanction to the Vice President of Academic Affairs (VPAA) as well as the division chair.

The Division of Communication Arts and Social Science (CASS) has a zero tolerance policy regarding plagiarism and cheating. Incidents of confirmed plagiarism and/or cheating, along with the sanction imposed by the instructor, will be immediately reported to both the VPAA and the CASS Division Chair. First offenses will receive a reduced grade or 0 (zero). Second and subsequent offenses (as documented in both the CASS and VPAA office) over the student’s entire academic career at VCSU will result in failure of the course, and the VPAA may impose additional sanctions, which may range from academic probation to expulsion.