

RE-MAKING THE AMERICAN: AMERICAN LITERATURE SINCE 1865
LIT272W, Section 1
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Office Hours: Monday & Wednesday, 4-6pm
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Course Description:

This class will be concerned with how American literature reflects the evolution of the American identity after the Civil War. We will read from and learn about the major American literary periods and authors from this point in American history. We will be exploring these topics as a means of better understanding our country, our society, our culture, and the literature/art that it produces and supports – not just how it was in the past, but how it is now.

Course Outcomes & Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be able to:

Outcome 1: Identify a representative sample of American literature since 1865.

Objectives

- A. Add meaningfully to class discussion of works listed on the course calendar.
- B. Summarize works (know “what happened”).
- C. Interpret the meaning of literary works based on an understanding of theme.

Outcome 2: Interpret literary works using symbol and metaphor.

Objectives

- A. Identify and explain symbols and metaphors.
- B. Connect symbols and metaphors with theme or main ideas.

Outcome 3: Historicize literary works.

Objectives

- A. Connect the works of literature with events, scientific advances, and ideas contemporary to the literary works.

Outcome 4: Recognize the diversity of American literature.

Objectives

- A. Connect the issues of race, class, gender and multiple points of view to themes contemporary to the literary works.
- B. Connect issues of race, class, gender and multiple points of view to themes contemporary to our lives.

Outcome 5: Define what makes a piece of literature “good.”

Objectives

- A. Analyze and balance aesthetic elements, thematic elements, and elements of reader connectedness.

Outcome 6: Generate writings on a range of topics related to the works read.

Objectives

- A. Compose and revise writings in whatever form the instructor identifies interpreting the literary readings.

Outcome 7: Define what it means to be American through the use of literary works on our course calendar.

Objectives

- A. Define "American."
- B. Use the readings for focus and explain what it means to be "American."

Outcome 8: Participate in "writing to learn" activities.

Objectives

- A. Perform writing tasks to promote learning
 - B. Write effectively for a specific audience and purpose.
- Demonstrate the learning of concepts through writing.

Course Materials:

You will need the following text which is available at the Delta bookstore:

- The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain
- The Awakening by Kate Chopin
- Tender Buttons by Gertrude Stein
- Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
- The House on Mango Street by Sandra Cisneros

Course Work & Requirements (You will be receiving separate detailed assignment instructions for all the major assignments listed here):

- **Reading Log:** You will keep a running journal of responses to each text that you read throughout this semester. I will expect at least 1 paragraph for each piece you read. Each entry should be clearly labeled with the title and author of the text and separated by the entries before and after it by spaces so that each entry is easy to find and so that you receive full credit for having done them. Each week you will hand in the most recent pages of your response journal. You will receive a check plus, a check, or a check minus. Your Response Journal is worth a total of 25 points.
- **Mid-term & Final Exams:** Both exams will be take home, essay exams that will result in literary analyses that cover the works we've been reading and their historical contexts and points that arise out of lecture. Each exam is worth 15 points. Both exams are worth 30 points total.
- **List of 10 Project:** You will create an annotated list of the 10 works in American literature that most accurately define what it is to be American. These works will be chosen from your textbook. At least 8 of these works must be chosen from your reading list. This annotated list will be prefaced by an introduction that details your understanding of American literature and how that understanding influences your own definition of "the American." Your List of 10 Project will be worth 25 points.
- **TBA Assignments:** Throughout the semester, I will give a variety of brief in class and homework assignments to be completed for points. These TBA Assignments are worth a total of 20 points.

Grade Distribution:

Reading Log:	25 points
Mid-term & Final Exams:	30 points
List of 10 Project:	25 points
TBA Assignments:	20 points
Total Points Possible:	100 points

***A note about grade distribution: Some students are uncomfortable with the idea of only receiving 100 points for the entire semester. If you are one of these students, I invite you to place a 0 at the end of all of the numbers above and think of it as a 1000 point scale instead. Like many writers, I am numerically challenged so it has always been easiest for me to use a small simple scale like this. After experimenting for the last year with “bigger” points, I realized that it made absolutely no difference in the grades my students ended up with. It just made it much more difficult for me to process student grades in a timely fashion. I understand that it might be awkward for some of you but in the end, you will benefit from having a sane teacher who is on time with your grade.**

Grading Scale:

Points &Percentage	Grade
91-100	A
90	A-
81-89	B
80	B-
71-79	C
70	C-
60-69	D
59 or less	E

Grades of B+ or C+ will be given at my discretion if a student has earned 89% or 79% respectively AND has demonstrated extreme effort and engagement in class.

OTHER STUFF

Other Stuff:

- **Attendance and Tardiness:** To get everything you can out of this class, you'll want to be here and be on time. If regular tardiness becomes a problem, I will let you know. Not being present for class will likely have an enormous affect on your grade since you won't be in touch with what's due or what I'll be expecting of you. If you have to miss class, do not ever ask me if we “did anything important” and do not expect me to re-teach you the material – that's what class is for. If you have to miss a class, get in touch with someone from class and ask them to tell you what went on THEN you may come to me with specific questions about the material.
- **Late Work:** I will not accept assignments late.
- **Academic Dishonesty:** Handing someone else's work in with your name on it or Plagiarizing ON ANY ASSIGNMENT will cause you to fail this course and could be grounds for expulsion from the college.

- **Appropriate Behavior & Disruptive Conduct:** Delta has very strict rules about behaving appropriately in the classroom. Under Student Rights & Responsibilities in your current catalog, it states: “No member of the College community shall interfere with a College function by depriving any person of needed safety, quiet, or other physical conditions of work or study... no member of the College community shall fail to follow the reasonable instructions given by an appropriate College official to cease specified conduct if such conduct threatens disruption or interferes with the right of others, College discipline, College functions and/or order in the College Community.” In our class, I am the “appropriate College official” and you are “members of the College community.” The following “specified conduct” will result in the “reasonable instructions” of either talking with me outside in the hall during class or leaving the classroom entirely for the day. *Specific conduct that endangers the positive learning environment of our classroom: excessive talking, particularly when others are talking; excessive late arrivals, early departures, absences, or “unscheduled” breaks; eye rolling; wise-cracking – explicit or implicit bashing of instructor – I am easily distracted by wise-apples; the backpack shuffle – getting ready to leave before class is actually over; inappropriate or offensive language; bashing of another student or another student’s writing or ideas; cell phones or pagers – use of cell phones or pagers is prohibited during class time – switch devices off or to the silent mode before entering class; personal music devices are not allowed to be used during class time; cheating; plagiarism; completing homework for this class or another during class time; lack of respect for diversity; under/over participation – includes sleeping or refusal to engage in classroom discussion and activities and/or excessive/ disruptive talking or monopolizing group discussions; alcohol/ tobacco use; offensive personal hygiene; clothing that impedes communication; excessive eating during class time (snacks are fine – meals are not); any other behavior that disrupts and/or disrespects the class, the instructor or individual students.* If such conduct persists (meaning, if it happens more than once or twice), I will respond using Delta’s Disruptive Students policy as outlined in the current college catalog – which could eventually lead to your being expelled from the class for the rest of the semester.
- **Disabilities:** Delta College is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical or learning disabilities. If you have a disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact me and Mike Cooper in Disability Support Services, located in the Counseling and Multicultural Office in D-102, as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.
- **Extreme Weather Policy:** There might be times when my fear of driving through a blizzard overrules Delta’s policy to stay open despite said blizzard – in the case of extreme weather when Delta has decided to remain open, please double check that I am still going to have class by calling my office phone. If I am going to cancel, I will leave a message on my voicemail letting you know.
- **My inability to read minds:** I became a teacher because I love my subject and I love to teach. Consequently, I am unconditionally fond of my students and want them very much to succeed. But, I have never been able to develop a knack for reading minds. I’ll keep working on that but in the meantime, please understand that if you are having trouble in or with class, I do not know that unless you come talk to me, call me or email me. Please know that I am available to you. There is no reason to keep your discomfort a secret – it only wastes *your* time and money, and worst of all, hinders your ability to learn.