English 2326 – Readings in American Literature
“The Pursuit of Happiness”: Literature and Values
Fall 2017

Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.

Ezra Pound, How to Read

Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts - the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art.

John Ruskin

…the function of man is to live a certain kind of life, and this activity implies a rational principle, and the function of a good man is the good and noble performance of these, and if any action is well performed it is performed in accord with the appropriate excellence: if this is the case, then happiness turns out to be an activity of the soul in accordance with virtue.

Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics

Instructor: Dr. Chris Ellery
Office: A021B
Hours: 10-11 MWF, 1:30-3:30 MTWR
Phone: 486-6142
E-mail: cellery@angelo.edu

Catalogue Description
“A study of diverse works by American writers. Emphasis on reading, comprehending, appreciating, and thinking critically about the selected works within the context of American culture and literary history.”

Prerequisite: Credit for English 1301 and 1302 either by satisfactorily completing those courses or by receiving credit by examination.

Student Learning Outcomes
The following outcomes are based on the “General Objectives” stated in the Department of English description of sophomore literature courses and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Required Core Objectives in the component area of Language, Philosophy, and Culture—Critical thinking, Communication, Social Responsibility, and Personal Responsibility:

- Students will be able to define and apply the four critical approaches to literature (as explained by M.H. Abrams in The Mirror and the Lamp): expressive, mimetic, objective, and pragmatic.
- Students will be able to analyze literature as an expression of values and an interpretation of the human experience.
- Students will understand the interaction among American history, culture, and literature and how the historical and social contexts of the selected works affect meaning.
- Students will know and apply critical terminology related to three literary genres: poetry, fiction, drama.
Beyond these outcomes, I hope you will come to enjoy and value literature and will plan for a lifetime of reading as you learn to process texts with greater insight and understanding and to apply what you read to your own intellectual, emotional, moral, and spiritual development.

**Textbooks**


- “Literary Vocabulary” [web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/lit_terms_M.html).

**Grading**

| Daily Work | 10% |
| Exam 1     | 30% |
| Exam 2     | 30% |
| Exam 3     | 30% |

Daily work includes frequent reading quizzes, short response essays, and miscellaneous class activities and exercises. Exams are a mixture of objective and essay questions.

**Attendance and Make-up Policy:**

The following attendance policy is consistent with University OP 10.04 ("Academic Regulations Concerning Student Performance").

- **This is a face-to-face class.** Regular attendance is essential for success in the class. Attendance will be taken daily at the beginning of the period. Students who arrive late or do not answer the roll should see the instructor after class to be sure they are counted present. Students who enter during a quiz will not receive extra time to complete the quiz.

- **Be prepared for class each day.** An absence does not excuse the student from being prepared for the next class. Thus, students who miss class should contact a classmate or the instructor to be sure of the assignment for the next class.

- **All assignments are due when called for.** Being permitted to accept work after the
deadline gives students an advantage over those who turn work in on time; thus **late work will be accepted without penalty only in the case of excused absences.** The penalty for an unexcused late assignment is one-half letter grade for each day late.

- **Students must present credible documentation to receive an excused absence.** Absences are excused for school travel, illness, or personal or family emergency. Contact the instructor as soon as possible (before a school trip or personal travel) to excuse the absence and arrange make-up work.
- **Daily grades for quizzes and other in-class activities cannot be made up.** Two daily grades will be dropped at the end of the term.
- **E-mailed assignments will be accepted only at the request of the instructor.**

**Social Conduct and Personal Responsibilities**

“I am interested in people living in the margins of society, and I do have a mission to tell the stories of women of color in particular. I feel we’ve been present throughout history, but our voices have been neglected.”

Lynn Nottage

In this and all college courses, you should conduct yourself with professionalism and collegiality, and you should take responsibility for your own learning and performance. Excellent students are motivated, dedicated, and self-reliant; they have a positive attitude and a good work ethic. You will improve your chances of succeeding in this class by following these rules:

- **Stay focused.** Attend class and be actively involved. Pay attention and participate in discussions. Ask questions when you have them, and consult your teacher when you have concerns.
- **Be prepared every day.** Critically read all assignments. Conscientiously complete homework and class activities. Keep up with your work.
- **Follow instructions carefully,** especially those on assignment prompts, and prepare assignments according to the guidelines provided.
- **Encourage learning and collaborate** with classmates and support the instructor in the goal of learning.
- **Be courteous.** To avoid distracting others, arrive on time and leave when class is dismissed.
- **Avoid talking in class except when appropriate.** While it is sometimes acceptable and even desirable to question opinions and even facts offered by others (including the
teacher), you should do so respectfully and thoughtfully, with learning goals in mind.
- **Mute and put away cell phones.** Do not use any electronic devices, including smartphones and laptops, unless invited to do so as part of the lesson.
- **Take good care of your body and mind.** Keep yourself nourished and rested.

**Departmental Policy on Academic Honesty**

“All ASU students are expected to understand and to comply with the University’s policy on Academic Honesty as stated in the *ASU Bulletin* and in the *ASU Student Handbook.* Students who violate the Policy on Academic Honesty will be subject to disciplinary action including a failing grade in the course.”

**Accommodating Students with Special Needs**

“Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, Room 112 University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.”

**ASU Core Curriculum Objectives and Assessment**

English 2324 has been designated a core course by the ASU Core Curriculum Committee. To meet the Required Core Objectives in the component area of Language, Philosophy, and Culture, students in sophomore literature will practice the following core curriculum learning objectives in critical thinking, communication, social responsibility, and personal responsibility. Students will then demonstrate their capabilities in these objectives through reading quizzes, written analyses, reflections, or examinations.

**Critical thinking will be demonstrated in reading quizzes, written analyses, or examinations.**
- Students will gather, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information relevant to a question or issue by mastering a series of assigned literary works in terms of generic conventions and content.

**Communication will be demonstrated in reading quizzes, written analyses, or examinations.**
- Students will develop, interpret, and express ideas through effective written communication.

**Social responsibility will be demonstrated in written reflection on public reading or lecture.**
- Students will demonstrate ability to engage with locally, regionally, nationally, or internationally known literary artists and the texts they create, and to reflect upon the shared traditions of literary expression, the debates that help shape literature, and the conflicts, cultural differences, and shared experiences.

**Personal responsibility will be demonstrated in reading quizzes, written analyses, or examinations.**
- Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate choices, actions, and consequences by identifying, analyzing, and evaluating ethical decision-making in literary examples.
Tentative Schedule: The following assignments are subject to change; therefore, if you miss a class, always check with a classmate or with the instructor to make sure of the assignment. Inclusive page numbers for assigned literature are given in brackets and refer to the course text. Read the biographical introduction for each author in addition to the assigned writings.

Unit I. A Little Theory and Tools for Reading

Week 1
M 8/28 Introduction: Course Policies and Procedures
W 8/30 Finding Meaning: Four Critical Approaches
F 9/1 The Elements of Fiction
Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek” [1588-1595]

Week 2
M 9/4 HOLIDAY
W 9/6 Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek”
F 9/8 The Elements of Poetry
Anne Sexton, “The Starry Night” [1374]
William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” [784]

Week 3
Lucille Clifton, “homage to my hips” [1480]
W 9/13 The Elements of Drama
Susan Glaspell, “Trifles” [743-752]
F 9/15 Glaspell, “Trifles”

Week 4
M 9/18 A Theory of Reading: Literature and Values
William Dean Howells, “Editha” [307-317]
W 9/20 William Dean Howells, “Editha”
F 9/22 Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It” [1538-1539]
### Week 5
- **M 9/25**: Review
- **W 9/27**: Exam 1
- **F 9/29**: TBA

**Unit II. God and Mammon: The American Dream, a Divided Stream**

### Week 6
- **M 10/2**: E.A. Robinson, “Richard Cory” and “Miniver Cheevy” [674-675]
- **W 10/4**: Willa Cather, “Neighbor Rosicky” [679-699]
- **F 10/6**: Willa Cather, “Neighbor Rosicky”

### Week 7
- **W 10/11**: T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”
- **F 10/13**: F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Babylon Revisited” [980-994]

### Week 8
- **M 10/16**: F. Scott Fitzgerald, “Babylon Revisited”
- **W 10/18**: Ernest Hemingway, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” [1021-1037]
- **F 10/20**: Hemingway, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”

### Week 9
- **M 10/23**: Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* Act One [1235-1264]
- **W 10/25**: *Death of a Salesman* Act Two [1264-1298]
- **F 10/27**: *Death of a Salesman*

### Week 10
- **M 10/30**: Louise Erdrich, “Dear John Wayne” [1597-1598]
- **W 11/1**: Review
- **F 11/3**: Exam 1

**Unit III. “Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness”: Explicating America**

### Week 11
- **M 11/6**: Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” [1038]
- **W 11/8**: Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Chs. 1-7 [105-127]
- **F 11/10**: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* Chs. 12-18 [143-176]
Week 12
M 11/13  Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Chs. 19-23 [176-200]
W 11/15  Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Chs. 24-31 [200-236]
F 11/17  Adventures of Huckleberry Finn Chs. 32--Chapter the Last [237-278]

Week 13
M 11/20  Adventures of Huckleberry Finn
Lucille Clifton, “the mississippi empties into the gulf” [1481]
W 11/22  HOLIDAY
F 11/24  HOLIDAY

Week 14
M 11/27  Lynn Nottage, Ruined Act One
W 11/29  Ruined Act Two
F 12/1  Nottage, Ruined

Week 15
M 12/4  Richard Wright, “The Man Who Was Almost a Man” [1061-1069]
W 12/6  Recapitulation and Reflection
F 12/8  Review

M 12/11  Final Exam (8-10 a.m.)
“But I reckon I got to light out for the Territory ahead of the rest, because Aunt Sally she's going to adopt me and sivilize me, and I can't stand it. I been there before.”