

English 2326—Introduction to American Literature (online)

Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. John Wegner
Office: Academic 0101C
Hours: MW 8:00-10:00, TR 8:00-10:00, and by appointment
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"Something else an academic education will do for you. If you go along with it any considerable distance, it'll begin to give you an idea what size mind you have. What it'll fit and, maybe, what it won't. After a while, you'll have an idea what kind of thoughts your particular size mind should be wearing. For one thing, it may save you an extraordinary amount of time trying on ideas that don't suit you, aren't becoming to you. You'll begin to know your true measurements and dress your mind accordingly." (J.D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, 190)

Required Texts:

Lawn, Beverly, ed. *40 Short Stories: Portable Anthology*. New York: Bedford, 2000.
Wilson, August. *Fences*.
Cisneros, Sandra. *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*.

Please note: We are reading some contemporary fiction. Much like contemporary movies, these works of literature explore complicated, and often uncomfortable, issues. If you are not prepared to read works that discuss race, sex, violence, and other issues you will find in the daily newspaper, you should probably not remain in this class. You should also be prepared for some rough language within some of our works. We will encounter language that might make you feel uncomfortable, but we must manage the discomfort and approach the works as reflections of the literary culture of America.

Purpose and Objectives:

This course is designed as a sophomore introduction to American literature. The reading list is not comprehensive, nor is it designed to create an exhaustive list of "classic" American fiction. Instead, the goal of the reading list is to create opportunities for discussion using accessible works written in America. In large part, I hope you leave the class with a renewed appreciation for American literature and an increased aptitude for critical thinking. The works we read will allow us to explore both American culture and American identity, while gaining a greater sense of our shared humanity.

The objectives of the course are 1) to gain factual knowledge (terminology, classifications, methods, trends--I will expand on these in class to provide an understanding of the cultural trends and artistic influences at work.) 2) to gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, literature--you can help facilitate this understanding by visiting the San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts); 3) to learn to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view.

Attendance: There is a direct correlation between attendance and performance. You are responsible for all the material covered in class. Your attendance in an online class is based on your completion of assignments. As a general rule, I recommend that students designate multiple days and times during the week to complete a DE course work.

Important Note: While portions of the course are self-paced, we do have some specific due dates for quizzes, exams, and essays. You are responsible for knowing those dates and preparing ahead of time to submit assignments on time.

Readings and quizzes: Quizzes can be simple reading quizzes (ten fill in the blank or multiple choice) or short essay questions (thirty minutes of writing). Quizzes will be timed in Blackboard. Do not start the quiz until you are ready to complete the quiz.

Exams: You will take three **timed** exams during the semester (one will be the final). These exams will consist of two parts: objective (fill in the blank, defining terms, and quote identification) and short essay. All exams will be in Blackboard. You do **not** need any lockdown browsers or extra technology to complete the exams. Exams are open book and open note; however, avoid being complacent. Because the exams are timed, students who are unprepared often spend all their time looking for answers and often fail to complete the exam.

Be aware that anything we discuss in class is potential test material and the exams reflect the class discussion. I will keep in mind that you're writing is timed, but time constraints are no excuse for illiterate writing. Multiple errors in spelling, grammar, and other mechanical skills will influence your grade. I expect sophomore-level writing ability that is clear, concise, and contains complete sentences. You might want to review your freshman English class notes to review the thesis sentence and other important parts of the argumentative essay. Note, also, that you will be required to make specific textual references to support your answers. In other words, you must provide data (textual references and quotes) to support your claims and show your familiarity with the texts.

Major paper: You will write a paper outside of class on a topic TBA. Your paper needs to be 1000-2000 words and utilize no outside sources. Your paper should be a thoughtful response defended by a close analytical reading of the text. The out-of-class essay will be graded for content and mechanics. See the grading outline for a clear, concise explanation of the grading criteria. If you have not written about literature in the past (or recent past) visit [the Purdue OWL](#) for some useful help. They discuss research; we will not research for this paper. I will provide a detailed handout as we get closer to the due date. Plagiarism will result in automatic failure for the class. As we will discuss in class, I'm less interested in the correctness of your response and more interested in your ability to engage with the text and provide specific evidence from the text or texts to support your ideas.

Short Video: As part of your essay submission, each student will also submit a short (3-5 minute video) synopsis of the essay. More details when we get closer to the date.

PLAGIARISM (Academic Honesty):

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both print and web versions of the Student Handbook. See the [Current Student](#) page and click on Academic Honor Code. In essence, the willingness to cheat undermines our purpose at the university. To read more, check out the [Center for Academic Integrity](#).

Counseling Services: Students struggling with events in their lives or with mental health issues should seek out allies and resources available on campus. The following are institutional sources of support, but you may seek out faculty, staff and others on campus for help, including me. Campus Counseling Services 325-942-2171 Campus Police 325-942-2071 San Angelo Police 911 Michelle Boone, Title IX Coordinator 325-486-5367

Students with Disabilities: 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.

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GRADES:

Quizzes/blogs/daily work	10%
Major paper and video	20% (must complete both for the grade)
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%

Out of class papers will be scored in the following manner for organization, development, and content:

A+= 98	C+= 78	F= 59
A = 95	C = 75	
A-= 92	C-= 72	
B+= 88	D+= 68	
B = 85	D = 65	
B-= 82	D-= 62	

Once a letter grade is established, the following points will be deducted for mechanical errors:

You get 2 free points a page, for up to 5 pages. (3 pages= 6 free points. 4 pages= 8 points. 5 pages= 10 points. 6 pages= 10 points, etc.)

Each spelling error will be worth 2 points. (Typos are spelling errors.)

Each of the following errors in grammar will be worth 2 points:

1. comma splice in compound sentences
2. fused or run on sentence
3. subject/verb agreement error
4. person and number shift
5. pronoun antecedent unclear
6. pronoun antecedent agreement error
7. verb tense shift (only once)
8. sentence fragment (unless you write [sf] in the margin beside it).

Each of the following punctuation errors will be worth one point:

1. apostrophe in possessives missing
2. comma in complex sentences incorrect
3. improper punctuation at the end of the sentence
4. failure to underscore or use quotations marks with title
5. failure to use quotation marks with quotations
6. Capitalization mistakes.

2326 Schedule—Fall 2021 (Subject to Change)

Note: While portions of the course are pre-built, I update the course weekly. Each week will be updated prior to the start of the week or by the end of day Monday. In other words, Week one will be completely updated by end of day 8/23. Week two will be updated by end of day 8/30. Etc. You must check your email and announcements.

Week	Assignments
Week 1 (8/23-8/29)	Course Introduction; plagiarism, “Reading Short Stories Closely” (p 415-421); notes on reading literature; Hawthorne "Young Goodman Brown";
Week 2 (8/30-9/5)	Bierce “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”; Chopin “The Story of an Hour”; Gilman “The Yellow Wallpaper”
Week 3 (9/6-9/12)	Faulkner “A Rose for Emily”; Olsen “I Stand Here Ironing”; Jackson “The Lottery”;
Week 4 (9/13-9/19)	Hemingway “Hills Like White Elephants”; Cheever “The Swimmer”
Week 5 (9/20-9/26)	Wilson’s <i>Fences</i>
Week 6 (9/27-10/3)	Exam Review; Exam 1 (Objective); Exam 1 (essay); Discuss outside essay (
Week 7 (10/4-10/10)	Carver “Cathedral”; Oates “Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?”; Discuss major paper (Read p 423-438)
Week 8 (10/11-10/17)	Cisneros <i>My Wicked, Wicked Ways</i> (reading list TBA)
Week 9 (10/18-10/24)	Bambara "The Lesson"; Kincaid “Girl”; Erdrich “The Red Convertible”

Week	Assignments
Week 10 (10/25-10/31)	Tim O'Brien "The Things They Carried"; Cisneros "The House on Mango Street" Exam Review
Week 11 (11/1-11/7)	Exam 2—objective; Exam 2—essay; Major paper conferences (held synchronously via Collaborate in Blackboard)
Week 12 (11/8-11/14)	Atwood "Happy Endings"; Ellison "Battle Royal"; work on your major paper
Week 13 (11/15-11/21)	O'Connor "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; Baldwin "Sonny's Blues"; Walker "Everyday Use";
Week 14 (11/22-11/28)	Saunders "Sticks"; Cisneros "The House on Mango Street" Thanksgiving
Week 15 (11/29-12/5)	essay due; short video due
Week 16 (12/6-12/10)	Final exams—Final will cover readings since exam 2