

ENGLISH 2326: INTRO TO AMERICAN LIT

Work It! Literature of the American Workplace



2326.010: MWF 11-11:50AM • **Room:** Academic Building 005

2326.020: MWF 12-12:50PM • **Room:** Academic Building 005

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Office Location: Academic Building 39C

Office Hours: MW: 1-3; T/R: 11-12; 2-4; or by appointment
(If these times do not work with your schedule, we can schedule an appointment on a day and at time convenient for both of us.)

COURSE PHILOSOPHY & THEME:

Work is an inherent part of human life that affects each of us mentally, physically, economically, materially, spiritually, and so on. Work, the pursuit of a paycheck or the work we do that remains uncompensated, remains a vital part of daily human life. Whether it's the need for economic security, the desire to find fulfillment, the attempt to better oneself or escape poverty, the search for meaning, the desire to amass wealth, all these motivations are tied in one way or another to the notion of work. Work touches politics, morality, art, consciousness, dynamics of race, gender, and ability, the definition of the self, our future and our past. What better vehicle into a survey of American Literature than through a thematic (necessarily incomplete) tour of the grind, the day-to-day, the reason you're here in school (maybe, probably), the jobs that define us and the ones that do not. The complex, kaleidoscopic notion of work.

This course is a survey in American Literature, in other words, it is not a comprehensive account of the vast and rich scope of American Literature, rather a sampling meant to offer you an understanding of the kinds of works that have been produced in this country over time. Most of what we read will be contemporary, but we will also explore a few key older texts. My aim for each of you is to consider the role of literature in the United States both in its historical context as well as within contemporary life. Read, appreciate words on the page, think critically about the role and purpose of literature in the American experience. Consider the following key questions to guide our exploration: What is literature? What is American Literature? In what ways does art represent the world in which we live? In what ways does it impact or effect change in the world in which we live? What role does or should literature have in contemporary society? What differences exist between genres (poetry, fiction, essay, plays, etc.)?

LEARNING GOALS & OUTCOMES

Below are listed specific core objectives and student learning outcomes for sophomore literature courses.

- 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

REQUIRED TEXTS & MATERIALS:

- *Luster* by Raven Leilani
- *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry
- *Death of a Salesman* by Arthur Miller
- Course readings including all assigned readings and any other handouts available in class and through Blackboard. I will post all readings to Blackboard AND often give you a paper copy in class.
- A notebook dedicated to this class (for in-class writing assignments and brainstorming).
- Pen and Paper for in-class writing and quizzes.
- Access to Microsoft Word, your ASU email, and Blackboard.

COURSE EVALUATION CRITERIA:

Over the course of the semester you will be graded on the following assignments/tasks:

Item	Percentage
Discussion Board Posts	40%
Discussion Co-Leader	10%
Close-reading Essay	10%
Personal/Creative Response Essay	10%
In-Person Reading Response	5%
Beginning/Ending Reflections	5%
Final Presentation & Under-paper	20%

<i>Course Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	90-100%
B	80-89%

C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	59% and below

Discussion Board Posts: In our course, participation is crucial to effective class discussion. To participate effectively you must come to class having carefully read the assigned readings (or listened to the podcast, etc.) and be prepared to share your thoughts, insights, critiques, joys, concerns, and so forth. A good discussion isn't dominated by a few voices but is an egalitarian conversation where everyone's voice matters equally. Respect goes without saying, both of one another's points of view, but also of the works we read for class. To aid in our discussions, therefore, and to encourage everyone to read carefully, prior to each class, I will ask you to post a brief response on our Blackboard discussion board for the day. These will be **150-250 word posts** which respond to a specific prompt about the assigned reading(s). I might ask you to practice close reading, to relate the content to your own experiences, to analyze an aspect of the work's style. There aren't wrong answers, but I want you thinking, and I want you reading. These posts make up the bulk of your grade because what is most important to me this semester is that you are actively reading and consuming the course materials. I much prefer posts to reading quizzes, but I hold the right to use quizzes if folks aren't reading.

Discussion Leader: Twice over the course of the semester, you will be assigned the role of co-discussion leader along with another student. As discussion leaders, I will expect you to prepare five questions each prior to the start of class (via Blackboard) and to coordinate your questions to avoid repetition. During class, I will expect you and your co-leader to take an active role in leading our conversation on that day's material. We will sign up for discussion slots in the first few weeks of the semester. The intent of this assignment is to enable a diversity of outlooks in our readings, and to give everyone the experience of leading a discussion. On the days you are discussion leader, you're excused from that day's discussion post.

Close Reading Essay: In the study of literature, close-reading is an important skill that allows scholars the ability to make specific arguments about their interpretation of a text. In real life, you are likely already practicing this skill on a regular basis, analyzing text messages, reading into lyrics, or the messages behind advertisements, etc. We will practice close-reading often in class, and in your discussion board posts in the lead-up to this essay. The close-reading essay asks you to write a short paper (300-500 words) analyzing the sentence level meaning of a passage of your choice from a text we've read and discussed in class. Through your analysis you will make a brief argument about your interpretation of the text. More specific guidelines to follow.

Personal/Creative Response Essay: Literature should be fun. It should connect you to your own life and experiences as a person. The best works help us articulate something about ourselves that we were not able to say on our own. They give us voice. For this essay, you will have a range of options that center around your personal reaction to a work that we've read and discussed in class. You might write an essay connecting a work to an outside experience of your own, or to another article or something you've learned outside of class. You also have the option to write a short creative work in the style of something we've read. Good writing should inspire and that is the idea that undergirds this assignment. Specific guidelines to follow.

In-Person Reading Response: On March 3rd and 4th, ASU hosts the annual Elmer Kelton Writer's Conference. During this event, there's a key-note speaker (this year poet, Naomi Shihab Nye) and there will be readings from eighteen other contemporary writers. In lieu of class on Friday, March 4th, I ask that you attend a reading of your choice. I will give you the schedule ahead of time, and you may attend the reading that best fits your schedule. You will write a short, single-page, double-spaced reflection on the reading you attend. You may write about your reactions, your feelings, your perceptions. What does it mean to hear contemporary writers share their work?

Reflections: At the beginning and end of the semester, I ask that you write a brief, single-page, double-spaced reflection about your thoughts on literature. I will give clearer guidelines for each reflection, but the aim here is that I want to best serve each of you via the readings in class, and also so that I can get a sense of your initial thoughts on literature and whether or not this changes over the semester. There are no wrong answers, honesty is what I ask for.

Final Presentation & Under-paper: For our culminating activity, you will give a brief presentation either solo or with a partner (your choice). The presentation will demonstrate your ability to connect the ideas and materials discussed in class with outside works in any medium or genre. This is a place for creativity and a way to connect our work in class to your interests academically or otherwise. Over the semester, we'll talk about the kinds of materials or subjects these presentations might encompass. I suggest a visual element. You're also welcome to assign brief readings to the class as a whole prior to the presentation. Literature does not exist in a vacuum (as hopefully we'll see throughout the semester), this presentation is your chance to draw your own connections and emphasis into the real world in which we live. Along with the presentation, you'll turn in a brief under-paper that explains your decisions and materials used in the presentation. More details forthcoming.

GENERAL POLICIES FOR STUDENTS:

Absence & Tardiness Policy: Given the discussion-based focus of our course, attendance is crucial to success. I will keep track of attendance each class and missing in-class assignments and activities will impact your grade. There is a clear connection between students attending class and doing well on assignments, so please make it your aim to be present. Life happens, I understand this, so keeping me aware of anything that might get in the way of your attendance or timely completion of assignments will help me help you. Three tardies counts as an absence. Consider attending class as a job; you want to be prepared and on time.

Class Behavior and Etiquette: I expect everyone to be respectful of one another's work, perspective, and time. We will be reading many works that delve into potentially sensitive areas of human experience, including but not limited to themes of race, sex, religion, sexuality, economic insecurity and so on. Defensiveness, closemindedness, bigotry of any kind, and rudeness will not be tolerated. Listen to one another. We have all had different life experiences and we come from different backgrounds, therefore, even though you might believe your experiences are universal, they are in fact your experiences. We learn by listening critically, and believing other's stories of their lives. In this class, we value empathy, the ability to understand and value/share the feelings of another.

Makeup/Late Assignment Policy: The main issue with late work is that I don't want anyone to fall behind, and I want you to be able to participate fully in the class discussions and in-class writing time. Consistent late work will affect your grade. If you're absent, check Blackboard. I post everything to

Blackboard prior to the start of class, so there's never a reason not to know what took place during a session you missed. Most importantly, I'm a resource for you, so don't be shy about reaching out if you need more time or if something has come up in your life outside class.

Electronics: Please keep cellphones on silent and laptops closed during class time. This is a class focused around our ability to share ideas and work with one another and electronics will only impede said interaction. If you must, for some reason, have an electronic device, please make special provisions with me beforehand. If you need to have your cellphone on for emergency purposes, please keep it on vibrate and let me know if there are extenuating circumstances.

Email: Please check your ASU email regularly. This is how I will communicate with you. Please always email me from your school email and not your personal email. This is important for FERPA considerations. Please also check Blackboard frequently. If you ever miss class, check Blackboard to see what we covered and what you might have missed.

Software: You will submit all homework and writing assignment responses through Blackboard. All assignments must be submitted in Microsoft Word format. You cannot upload links to Google Docs within Blackboard. As an ASU student, you have **free access** to [Office 365](#), which includes MS Word. Visit the Office 365 website and log in with your ASU email and password. You can download the software onto your computer or compose and save writing within the site's cloud-based storage. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download some reading assignments and other course materials. Likewise, I encourage each of you to get in the habit of using One Drive (through Outlook) or GoogleDocs or DropBox, or any file sharing service so all your materials are available to you anywhere (helpful for our lab work days).

Technical Support: If you are having technical issues with Blackboard, contact technical support one of the following ways: 325-942-2911 or toll free at 1-866-942-2911

Any course content-related questions should be directed toward me.

Office Hours: I want to talk to you about your writing. Please, don't be shy and feel free to make an appointment to discuss your work with me at any point in the semester. If my scheduled hours don't work, please email me and we can set up a time to meet.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Title IX: The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency, interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty member, I am a Responsible Employee, meaning I am obligated by law and ASU policy to report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance.

Students are encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU's Office of Title IX Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator:

Michelle Miller, J.D.

Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator
 Mayer Administration Building, Room 210
 325-486-6357
 michelle.miller@angelo.edu

You may also file a report online 24/7 at www.angelo.edu/incident-form.

If you wish to speak to someone about an incident in confidence, you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345.

For more information about Title IX in general, you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

Accommodation Statement: If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this class or complete course requirements, contact the Student Affairs Office as soon as possible at 325-942-2047 or studentservices@angelo.edu. It is located in the Houston Harte University Center, Suite 112. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with Student Affairs. Student Affairs works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is a type of academic dishonesty. It occurs when writers deliberately use another person's language, ideas, or materials and present them as their own without properly acknowledging the source.

Types of Plagiarism

Plagiarism can include any of the following:

- Failing to quote material taken from another source,
- Failing to cite material taken from another source,
- Submitting writing that was written by another person *or for another class* (even if it was for a 1301 course you took and dropped), and
- Submitting writing that was substantially edited by another person.

Procedures for Handling Plagiarism Cases

If an instructor thinks a student may have plagiarized, they will follow these steps:

- Meet privately with the student to discuss the assignment in question and the evidence of plagiarism,
- Identify the appropriate consequence, and
- File a report with the Office of Student Services.

Possible Consequences

The instructor and the English Department Chair decide the academic consequence to be imposed, depending on the seriousness of the violation. Sanctions include the following:

- Adequately redo or revise the assignment in question,
- Fail the assignment in question,
- Fail the class, or
- Be subject to more severe sanctions imposed by the Dean of Students.

All students suspected of plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Student Services, who maintains a file of past plagiarism cases. The [ASU Student Handbook](#) further elaborates ASU's Academic Integrity policy.

Observances of Religious Holidays: A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within what the instructor deems a reasonable time after the absence.

Writing Center Information: The Writing Center is an academic support service available to all ASU students. Peer tutors help experienced and inexperienced writers with all steps of the writing process: locating an angle, writing a thesis, organizing ideas, developing paragraphs, locating grammar and punctuation errors, documenting sources, etc.; however, tutors ***do not edit or proofread papers***. To learn more about their services, visit the Writing Center's [website](#).

CLASS SCHEDULE

(Subject to change)

(The reading indicated is what is due that day and what we will be discussing in class. Links to the readings will be posted in Blackboard and copies will be distributed the class before the reading is due.)

Week	Day	Topic	Reading Due	Assignments Due
Week 1	Monday Jan. 17	MLK DAY		
	Wednesday Jan. 19	Syllabus, Introductions, What is literature?	“Finger” by K-Ming Chang	
	Friday Jan. 21	What is work?	“After working sixty hours again for what reason” by Bob Hicoock; “I Once Was A Child” by Victoria Chang; “What the Living Do” by Marie Howe; “Minuet” by Rumaan Alam	
Week 2	Monday Jan. 24	A Brief Overview of American Literature	TBD selection of poems/excerpts	Reflection #1 Due
	Wednesday Jan. 26	Agriculture	“Mimis in the Middle” by Domingo Martinez; “Farm Sonnet” by Kitty Carpenter; “Lying in a Hammock at William Duffy’s Farm in Pine Island, Minnesota” by James Wright; “mulberry fields” by Lucille Clifton	
	Friday Jan. 28	Ranch Life	“Brokeback Mountain” by Annie Proulx;	
Week 3	Monday Jan. 31	The Factory	“Factory Work” by Deborah Boe; “Factory Night” by Sol Funaroff; Excerpt from <i>The Jungle</i> by Upton Sinclair; excerpt from “The Scab” by Jack	

			London; “Blowing up on the Spot” by Kevin Wilson	
	Wednesday Feb. 2	Labor	“What Work is” by Phillip Levine; “The State” by Tommy Orange; “Work Boots: Still Life” by Jim Daniels; [It would be neat if with the New Year] by Jimmy Santiago Baca	
	Friday Feb. 4	Education	“The School” by Donald Barthleme; Excerpt from <i>The Souls of Black Folks</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois;	
Week 4	Monday Feb. 7	The Office	“Bartleby the Scrivener” by Herman Melville;“	
	Wednesday Feb. 9	Corporate America	“The Swimmer” by John Cheever; “Get Back to Work” by Jim Redmond; Excerpt from <i>The Office</i> ; except from <i>Office Space</i> ; “Orientation” by Daniel Orozco;	
	Friday Feb. 11	Retail	“The Knight’s Tale” by Claire Jimenez;	
Week 5	Monday Feb. 14	The Service Industry	“Suck it” by Merritt Tierce; “A Clean, Well-lighted Place” by Ernest Hemingway	
	Wednesday Feb. 16	Medicine	“The Case of the Red Leg” by Atul Gawande;	
	Friday Feb. 18	Healthcare	“Somaly Serey, Serey Somaly” by Anthony Veasna So	Close Reading Essay Due
Week 6	Monday Feb. 21	The American Dream	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> , Act I	
	Wednesday Feb. 23	The American Dream	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> , Act II	
	Friday Feb. 25	The American Dream	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> , Act III	
Week 7	Monday Feb. 28	The American Dream	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller, Act I	

	Wednesday March 2	The American Dream	<i>Death of a Salesman</i> by Arthur Miller, Act II	
	Friday March 4	WRITER'S CONFERENCE	Attend a reading!	
Week 8	Monday March 7	Domestic Work	"A Manual for Cleaning Women" by Lucia Berlin; "Homes" by Charlotte Anna Perkins Gilman;	In-Person Reading Response Due
	Wednesday March 9	Domestic Work	"A Sheltered Woman" by Yiyun Li	
	Friday March 11	Spiritual Work	"St. Marie" by Louise Erdrich;	
Week 9	Monday March 14	SPRING BREAK		
	Wednesday March 16	SPRING BREAK		
	Friday March 18	SPRING BREAK		
Week 10	Monday March 21	Out of Work	"Out of Work" by Langston Hughes; "Above and Below" by Lauren Groff	
	Wednesday March 23	AWP CONFERENCE	TBD Reading	
	Friday March 25	AWP CONFERENCE	TBD Reading	
Week 11	Monday March 28	Arts	"Sonny's Blues" by James Baldwin	Creative Response Essay Due
	Wednesday March 30	Military	"Refresh, Refresh" by Benjamin Percy	
	Friday April 1	Tech	Excerpt from <i>Silicon Valley</i> ; cyborg poems	
Week 12	Monday April 4		<i>Luster</i> , chapters 1& 2	
	Wednesday April 6		<i>Luster</i> , chapter 3	
	Friday April 8		<i>Luster</i> , chapter 4	
Week 13	Monday April 11		<i>Luster</i> , chapter 5	
	Wednesday April 13		<i>Luster</i> , chapter 6	
	Friday April 15		<i>Luster</i> , chapters 7 & 8	

Week 14	Monday April 18	Law & Criminal Justice	Excerpt from Throughline episode 23 “Mass Incarceration”; excerpt from <i>Law & Order</i> ; TBD poems	
	Wednesday April 20	Other Kinds of Work	“Odd Jobs” by Jericho Brown; TBD	
	Friday April 22	Presentations		
Week 15	Monday April 25	Presentations		
	Wednesday April 27	Presentations		*Last day to withdraw from courses with a W
	Friday April 29	Presentations		
Week 16	Monday May 2	Presentations		
	Wednesday May 4	Retirement	“Perhaps the World Ends Here” by Joy Harjo;	Reflection #2 Due

*Final Exam (not observed) for 2326.010 is 5-11-22 10:30AM-12:30PM

**Final Exam (not observed) for 2326.020 is 5-09-22 1:00PM-3:00PM