

## English 2326—Introduction to American Literature (online)

### Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. John Wegner  
Office: Academic 0101C  
Hours: Mon-Friday 8:00-10:00 am and by appointment. Contact hours will be virtual via Dr. Wegner's Collaborate Office in the BB course.  
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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. **6<sup>th</sup> edition**. (ISBN: 978-1-319-21570-5)  
Wilson, August. *Fences*. Plume, Reissue Edition. New York, June 1986. (ISBN: 978-0452264014)  
Cisneros, Sandra. *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*. Vintage, Reprint Edition. New York, April 2015. (ISBN: 978-1101872505)

**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, and you should log in every day. If you will be traveling and unable to log in to complete quizzes, blogs, and exams, you will struggle to do well in the course.

**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.

**Conferences:** We will have one virtual conference during module one and one virtual conference before you write your out of class essay. You will receive a meeting invite and the times will be flexible, but those conferences are required.

**Blogs and quizzes:** Quizzes are typically 10 fill-in the blank or short answer, and blogs will ask you to write 250-500 words (depending on the blog). Quizzes will be timed in Blackboard. Do not start the quiz until you are ready to complete the quiz. The quizzes and blogs prepare you for the exams. I design them based on the learning objectives of the course. There are quizzes and blogs over almost all readings.

**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 posted to the course (my videos, external videos, class notes, web links, etc) is potential test material. 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. I will provide a detailed handout as we get closer to the due date. Plagiarism will result in automatic failure for the class.

### 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.

**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	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	25%
Exam 3	25%

### 2326 Schedule—

Week	Assignments
Week 1 (January 17-23)	Course Introduction; plagiarism, “Reading Short Stories Closely” (p 415-421); notes on reading literature; Hawthorne "Young Goodman Brown";
Week 2 (1/24-1-30)	Bierce “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge”; Chopin “The Story of an Hour”; Gilman “The Yellow Wallpaper”
Week 3 (1/31-2/6)	Faulkner “A Rose for Emily”; Olsen “I Stand Here Ironing”; Jackson “The Lottery”;
Week 4 (2/7-2/13)	Hemingway “Hills Like White Elephants”; Cheever “The Swimmer”
Week 5 (2/14-2/20)	Wilson’s <i>Fences</i>

Week	Assignments
Week 6 (2/21-2/27)	Exam Review; Exam 1 (Objective); Exam 1 (essay); Discuss outside essay (
Week 7 (2/28-3/6)	Carver "Cathedral"; Oates "Where Are You Going, Where Have You Been?"; Discuss major paper (Read p 423-438)
Week 8 (3/7-3/13)	Cisneros <i>My Wicked, Wicked Ways</i> (reading list TBA)
Week 9 (3/14-3/20)	Spring Break
Week 10 (3/21-3/27)	Bambara "The Lesson"; Erdrich "The Red Convertible"
Week 11 (3/28-4/3)	Tim O'Brien "The Things They Carried"; Cisneros "The House on Mango Street"; Tomine "Echo Ave."; Exam 2 review
Week 12 (4/4-4/10)	Exam 2—objective; Exam 2—essay; schedule out of class essay conferences
Week 13 (4/11-4/17)	Atwood "Happy Endings"; Ellison "Battle Royal"; work on your major paper
Week 14 (4/18-4/24)	O'Connor "A Good Man is Hard to Find"; Baldwin "Sonny's Blues"; Walker "Everyday Use";
Week 15 (4/25-5/1)	Saunders "Sticks"; Ausubel "You Can Find Love Now"
Week 16 (5/2-5/8)	essay due; review for final
Week 17 (5/9-5/13)	Final exams—Final will cover readings since exam 2