



Undergraduate Extended Campus Syllabus Template

ENGL 2100

American Literature II: Civil War to the Present

Summer 2020 Online 7/6/20 - 8/10/20

Number of Credit Hours: 3

Instructor: Dr. Ben Railton

Office:

Telephone:

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Office Hours: I will be available by email throughout the course, and will be happy to chat on Zoom if that will help. Let me know if so and we'll figure out a time that works.

OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course surveys all genres of American writing from 1865 to the present, tracing the effects of social, economic, scientific and artistic turmoil on authors and their works. We explore the interconnections among succeeding eras of American literature: Realism, Modernism and Post-Modernism. Students who have declared an English Studies major may take concurrently with [ENGL 1200](#) with department approval. ART, LIT

Prerequisite(s): [ENGL 1200](#)

COURSE GOALS AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

There are any number of ways through which we can attempt to characterize the wide variety of American literature between the end of the Civil War in 1865 and our 2018 moment; none of them would or could adequately express or contain the diversity, quality, or sheer breadth of that textual output. One unquestionably defining and ever-deepening feature of late 19th, 20th, and 21st century American literature, however, is precisely its multi-vocality, the presence of an increasing number of voices on the scene. And so one way to approach American literature from this period is to consider it as a series of dialogues, of voices entering into conversation with one another, with American literary and social history, with ideas of American identity and community, and so on.

In each week of this course we will examine three such dialogues, a pairing of authors that can in some way illuminate each other, their moment, and American literature more generally. Our goal first and foremost will be to read and understand each text on its own terms, but we will in various ways attempt also to put them in dialogic relation to one another and to our developing ideas of American literature, history, and identity.

First and foremost, however, this class is an introduction to American literature and literary studies. As such, it is primarily a class in the close reading of texts, and much of our work will involve such reading. Both weekly responses and the papers and exam will all relate closely to this skill. Moreover, while I will

give brief introductory information for each of our four units, this class is largely designed as a seminar in every sense of the word; that is, your voices occupy center stage throughout the semester.

INSTRUCTOR'S ATTENDANCE POLICY:

TEXTS: All the class readings will be available online, under the Course Documents link on our class Blackboard site.

ASSESSMENTS/COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Weekly Blackboard Posts:

The bulk of our class work will take the form of weekly posts and follow up responses on our Blackboard Discussion forums. The initial posts, due by 11pm on Wednesday, will be roughly 2 paragraphs in length, and will be written on a particular question or prompt (see separate sheet at end of syllabus). I will grade those posts on a check plus (~A), check (~B), and check minus (~C) scale. By 11pm on Friday, you will then respond to at least one classmate's post with at least one paragraph of conversation with his or her ideas; these responses are participatory, meaning if you do each you will receive the full credit for this part of the class.

FINAL PROJECT/EXAM DESCRIPTION:

Papers and Exam:

Specific paper information and suggestions are available in the paper assignment sheets. The general progression will be from close reading of a passage from one text to an argumentative comparison of two texts. But a principle emphasis in both papers, and throughout this class, will be on reading closely and using evidence from texts to develop coherent and effective analyses of those texts. The short paper will be around 2-3 pages long; the final paper will be 5-6.

The final exam will be open-book (ie, you can use all class materials), and will focus on both close reading skills and broader analyses. It will be distributed toward the end of the class and will be due back to me by email at the end of the exam period.

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1: The Late 19th Century (1865-1900), July 6-10

Pairings: Harte and Far, Twain and Chesnutt, Chopin and Piatt

Week 2: The Early 20th Century (1900-1960), July 13-17

Pairings: Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Cather and Faulkner, Williams and Hughes

Week 3: The Late 20th Century (1960-2000), July 20-24

Short Paper due by Monday 7/20 at 11pm

Pairings: Updike and Plath, Silko and Morrison, Cisneros and Dove

Week 4: The 21st Century (2000-present), July 27-31

Pairings: Lahiri and Díaz, Evans and Johnson, Rankine and Brown

Week 5: Conclusions, August 3-7

Final Paper due by Wednesday 8/5 at 11pm, Final Exam answers due by Monday 8/10 at 11pm

Further Info on Weekly Blackboard Posts

General Guidelines:

Each post will be roughly two paragraphs in length. In the first, shorter paragraph (really just a couple sentences), you will state clearly what pairing you have chosen to address for that week's subject, identifying it in such a way that your classmates and I can follow your post and then briefly noting why you have chosen that topic. In the second, longer paragraph, you will flesh out your analysis of the subject and topic at hand, including at least one quote from each text to help you make your points. The entire post should be around one page double-spaced (in 12-point font).

You must post your work to the designated Discussion Forum by 11pm on Wednesday to receive full credit; each day a post is late will knock the grade down one level (from Check Plus to Check, and so on). **You should then separately respond to at least one classmate's post by 11pm on Friday;** these responses should be one paragraph in length, and are participatory (do them and get full credit). **To make responding smoother, please note the pairing you have chosen in your initial post's subject line.**

I will email each weekly post's feedback and grade by the end of the weekend.

ENG 2100 Short Paper: Imitation and Analysis

Due: Monday 7/20 by 11pm by email

Value: 20% of the final course grade

The Assignment: Write a short, **ungraded** passage in imitation of a passage from one of our first few readings. Then write a brief, **graded** analysis of that imitation and your work in producing it, thinking in particular about seemingly small elements (punctuation, word choice, syntax, style, etc). The passage should be about 1-2 paragraphs (probably between 15-20 lines) in length; the analysis around 2-3 pages (about 5 paragraphs).

The Imitation: There are three main steps in writing the imitation, which is **ungraded** and meant to give you material to help with your analysis section:

1) Choosing a Passage: Any passage from any of our readings can potentially work for this Assignment, so the first goal should be identifying a moment that seems interesting or worth further attention to you. It doesn't hurt to have more than one option, however, so you can begin step 2 for each and see what seems to be the most productive possibility.

2) Noticing Important Aspects: Here you'll want to note and list as many important elements of your chosen passage(s) as possible. Some will be big (the passage's subjects and themes; the author's overall tone) but many more will be small (individual aspects of punctuation, word choice, sentence length). You don't need to know what you think about these yet; you're just noticing them, and making sure that there's enough to your passage in the process. This step will also help when you write the analysis portion of the paper.

3) Imitating the Passage: Here you'll write a passage of your own, of roughly the same length,

which imitates the many elements (big and especially small) that you noticed in step 2. I'll share a sample of this **ungraded part of the paper**, and one key is that your content doesn't matter at all—that is, you can write about anything you want, as long as your passage imitates various elements from the original.

The Analysis: Here you will think, in the form of a short, structured essay (ie, with introductory and concluding paragraphs, and roughly three topically oriented paragraphs in between), about the imitation you have produced and what you would want to emphasize in terms of its various elements (not every single one, but a few on which you're focusing your analysis). Basically you'll be talking about the choices you made, what you saw in the original passage that led you to make them, and (to some degree) what the imitation process has helped you figure out about the forms and meanings of the text in question. Given the reflective nature of this section, you will unquestionably be using personal pronouns in your discussions, but otherwise the analysis should be a formal, academic analysis of some key aspects of the passage. You will not, however, have to worry about citation or bibliography for this paper.

ENG 2100 Long Paper: Comparative Analysis with Sources

Due: Wednesday 8/5 by 11pm by email

Value: 30% of the final course grade

The Assignment: In each of this course's Units, we have examined not just dialogues consisting of two authors, but a moment in American literary history: Romance/Realism and the late 19th century; Modernism and the early 20th century; Postmodernism and the late 20th century; 21st century American literature. In this paper, you'll **analyze any two authors from one of those Units**, examining them in relation to one another and developing an overall idea about their moment in the process. And to help you flesh out that overall idea, you'll also **bring in at least one outside source**, from one or more of three possible contextual areas. This paper should be 5-7 pages (around 10 to 12 paragraphs) in length.

The Three Research Contexts: Your options for outside sources fall into three possible areas; for the paper you should **include and cite (in MLA format) at least one such source**, which can come from any one or a variation on these areas:

- 1) Contemporary Literature: Other literary texts from the same time period as your two focal authors. Can include additional texts by Unit authors (whether your two focal authors or others) that we did not read in the class.
- 2) Historical or Cultural Evidence: Historical details/texts from the same era; can include primary texts accessed directly (autobiographies, newspaper or magazine articles, legal or governmental texts, texts from other media such as photographs, works of art, songs, or film/TV clips) or found in secondary works on the era (histories, collections).
- 3) Critical Perspectives: Scholarly analyses of either/both of the two main authors, and/or of their time period, literary or historical contexts, etc.

The Essay: Your principal job in this essay will be to **develop and argue for an overall idea about your two main authors and their moment**; that idea will be developed through the usual essay structures (intro with thesis, evidence paragraphs, conclusion). Your first task, then, will be to think about the two authors, identify points you want to make about each and both, and then begin to develop that main idea and think about what it might say about them and their moment. Once you have begun to do so, however, and well before you attempt to outline or write any portion of the paper, you'll **also identify, locate, and**

incorporate at least one outside source from one or more of the categories listed above; the outside source(s) should in some way help you either develop your main topic and idea or flesh out specific analytical topics from your evidence paragraphs/sections.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATE GRADING POLICY

Grade Distribution:

Short Paper: 20%

Final Paper: 30%

Final Exam: 20%

Weekly Blackboard Posts: 20%

Weekly Blackboard Responses: 10%

<u>4.0</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>95 – 100</u>
<u>3.7</u>	<u>A-</u>	<u>92 – 94</u>
<u>3.5</u>	<u>A-/B+</u>	<u>89 – 91</u>
<u>3.3</u>	<u>B+</u>	<u>86 – 88</u>
<u>3.0</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>83 – 85</u>
<u>2.7</u>	<u>B-</u>	<u>80 – 82</u>
<u>2.5</u>	<u>B-/C+</u>	<u>77 – 79</u>
<u>2.3</u>	<u>C+</u>	<u>74 – 76</u>
<u>2.0</u>	<u>C</u>	<u>71 – 73</u>
<u>1.7</u>	<u>C-</u>	<u>69 – 70</u>
<u>1.5</u>	<u>C-/D+</u>	<u>67 – 68</u>
<u>1.3</u>	<u>D+</u>	<u>64 – 66</u>
<u>1.0</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>60 – 63</u>
<u>0.0</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>0 – 59</u>
-	<u>IN</u>	<u>Incomplete</u>
-	<u>IP</u>	<u>In Progress</u>
-	<u>W</u>	<u>Withdrawn</u>

CLASS POLICIES:

Papers will be submitted by email; submitting a paper late will result in a penalty of one letter grade per day late. (Weekly Discussion posts will have their grade affected in the same way if they are late.) Papers should be typed and double-spaced in 12-point type. Plagiarism of any kind will result in immediate failure of the class.

POLICY ON DISABILITY

Disability Services is the primary support system for students with disabilities taking classes in the day and evening divisions. The office is located on the third floor of the Hammond Building and can be

reached at 978-665-4020 (voice/relay). If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, if you have emergency medication information, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment at the beginning of the course to talk with me. It is important that the issues relating to disabilities be discussed with me as soon as possible.

GRADE APPEAL

If you disagree with the evaluation of your work or believe an improper grade has been assigned, an appeal may be followed. Please discuss the matter with the instructor and refer to the Fitchburg State University Grade Appeal Policy in the university catalog.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The faculty in the Education Unit at Fitchburg State University that work submitted in fulfillment of course requirements will be solely that of the individual candidate and all other sources will be cited appropriately. University Academic Integrity Policy, as outlined in the University Catalogue, will be strictly adhered to.

Fitchburg State University encourages all Extended Campus students to take advantage of our online student services. We have created a “virtual student center” just for you. Here you will find access to Counseling Services, Career Services, The Student Activity Center, the university bookstore and many other helpful links. You can access our student center by going to the university homepage at <http://www.fitchburgstate.edu> and clicking on Offices and Services. Scroll down and click on Extended Campus Center. You will find links to Library Services, our Virtual Student Center and other important information.

FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY DISTANCE LEARNING & EXTENDED CAMPUS LIBRARY SERVICES

The Gallucci-Cirio Library at Fitchburg State University provides a full range of library services including borrowing privileges; document delivery (books and articles mailed to your home); Interlibrary Loan; reference assistance via: phone, email, IM, Blackboard’s Collaboration and Elluminate tools, Skype and in-person; library instruction; research help and more. Any questions relating to library services should be directed to the Linda LeBlanc, Access Services Librarian, at 978-665-3062 or dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu. There is also a special section for Distance Learning and Extended Campus Services at <http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices> outlining the wide range of services available to you and how to access them.

Students who are currently registered with the university may access any of the library’s subscription databases, including an increasing number with full-text, by visiting the Gallucci-Cirio Library’s homepage at <http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/library> and clicking on the Research Databases button in the center of the page. Select the resource you want to access from the alphabetical or subject listing. Once you click on the database title you will be prompted for your Falcon Key logon information; this is the same logon you will use for your Fitchburg State email account and if you have any online Blackboard courses. If you do not know your Falcon Key username and password or if you have any problems logging in, contact the university’s Technology Help Desk at 978-665-4500 or helpdesk@fitchburgstate.edu. The Library can issue you a temporary guest Falcon Key to use while the

Technology Department is setting up your account: contact us at 978-665-3062 or dllibrary@fitchburgstate.edu

All registered Fitchburg State University students are eligible for a Fitchburg State University OneCard ID which also serves as his/her library card. If you have not received your OneCard yet, you can still access all of our online services as long as you have activated your library account. Activate your library account online at <http://fitchburgstate.libguides.com/dlservices> or in person at the Circulation Desk. After activation by the Gallucci-Cirio Library and receipt of your OneCard, students may also use any Massachusetts State College/University Library as well as participating libraries in the Academic and Research Collaborative (ARC) during the current semester. OneCards are available on campus all year round. Students wanting a OneCard must either complete the online Extended Campus OneCard request form <http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/offices/technology/onecard/> or present a course registration confirmation at the OneCard Office in the Anthony Building, main campus. Please call 978-665-3039 for available times or if you have any questions about your OneCard.