

English 2305: Introduction to Fiction
FRONTIERS: FROM MANIFEST DESTINY TO DIGITAL LIVES
Fall 2017

<i>Instructor Name:</i>	Dr. Monica Urban	<i>Class Number:</i>	17339
<i>Office Location:</i>	C 101A	<i>Meeting Time:</i>	MW 4:00 – 5:30
<i>Office Hours:</i>	MW 2:30-3:30 and by apt.	<i>Class Location:</i>	M 103
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Course Description

The course will start with a traditional understanding of The Frontier during which we compare narratives of the West, especially those of encounter and manifest destiny. We will explore these texts from a variety of angles such as: What is the role of “the west,” and its settlement by Europeans, in American history? What is the place of the frontier, in its many iterations, in American popular culture? How does the idea of American exceptionalism persist today?

We will consider the multiple meanings and locations of borderlands including territorial expansion, sovereignty, immigration, labor, community formation, and race and ethnicity. The borders between humankind and nature as well as the body and mind will be explored in gothic and ecocritical texts. Many of the authors we will read were a part of the exploding print culture of the nineteenth century. Students will gain an understanding of the emerging frontiers of publishing, literary personas, and copyright laws. The end of the course will examine the digital frontier of the internet, which has become the principal medium in which literature is discussed, circulated, and (increasingly) created. We will investigate the ways in which literature is a crucial form for thinking about and representing the challenges, innovations, and transformations in human lives that have occurred because of the emergence of the internet.

This course offers students a broad introduction to the study of literary fiction. Focusing on the works of major writers, students develop analytical skills that will allow them to think, write, and speak intelligently about fiction. Additionally, students will learn and experiment with concepts and methods afforded by practitioners in digital humanities. In so doing, they will generate a project in which they will interrogate what it means to study the value of human expression in the context of a networked society.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students will achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. To read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions
2. To draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
3. To perform critical, formal analyses of literary texts
4. To learn to write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose
5. To employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments

Required Texts

- Henry David Thoreau (text TBD – free PDFs)
- Charles Darwin (text TBD – free PDFs)
- Edgar Allan Poe (text TBD – free PDFs)
- Frederick Jackson Turner “The Significance of the Frontier in American History.”
- Owen Wister, *The Virginian* (1902). Dover. ISBN: 0486449041
- Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972). Warner. ISBN: 0446517836
- Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* (1988). Harper. ISBN: 0060972459
- Jeannette Winterson, *The Powerbook* (2001). Vintage. ISBN: 0375725059

SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

*Readings should be completed before/on the day noted. For example, if the schedule reads, "Tues, Aug. 29: Chapter 1-4" you must complete the reading BEFORE Oct. 1 and be prepared to discuss it on Oct. 1.

M 8/21 Introduction - syllabus, in-class writing, and John Green

GEOGRAPHIC FRONTIERS

W 8/23 Frederick Jackson Turner "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." This essay is widely available, including on line as the first chapter in: <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/TURNER/>
&
Owen Wister, *The Virginian* I-II

M 8/28 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* III-IX

W 8/30 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* X-XV

M 9/4 LABOR DAY – No class

W 9/6 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* XVI-XXI

M 9/11 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* XXII-XXVI

W 9/13 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* XXVII-XXX

M 9/18 Owen Wister, *The Virginian* XXXI-end

ETHNIC FRONTIERS

M 9/20 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 1-3

W 9/25 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 4

M 9/27 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 5

W 10/2 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 6

M 10/4 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 7

W 10/9 Louise Erdrich, *Tracks* 8-end

SUPERNATURAL FRONTIERS

M	10/11	Edgar Allan Poe (text TBD) & Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 1-2
W	10/16	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 3-8
M	10/18	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 9-10
W	10/23	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 11-13
M	10/25	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 14-16
W	10/30	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 17-20
M	11/1	Rudolfo Anaya, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> 21-end & we will go over Final Paper Assignment (do not be absent)

DIGITAL FRONTIERS

W	11/6	Jeannette Winterson, <i>The Powerbook</i> : language costumier – virtual road
M	11/8	Jeannette Winterson, <i>The Powerbook</i> : SEARCH - night screen
W	11/13	Jeannette Winterson, <i>The Powerbook</i> : VIEW AS ICON - spitalfields
M	11/15	Jeannette Winterson, <i>The Powerbook</i> : HELP - SAVE
W	11/20	<Presentations> THANKSGIVING – No class
M	11/27	<Presentations>
W	11/29	<Presentations>
F	12/8	FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 11:59 PM (via Turn it In on BB)*