

English 3354
Contemporary American Fiction
Fall 2012
W. Lawrence Hogue

Contemporary American Fiction will be examined within the context of an emerging postmodern American society. Since the 1960s, a new phenomenon of American social reality has emerged. The emergent forms of a new commercial culture, the rise of computer and information networks, the mechanization of culture, the mediation of culture by the media, the shift from print literacy to images, urbanization, the absence of meta-narratives, and the co-existence of diverse cultures, races, and religions are all features of this new American society. We have diverse urbanization coinciding with the proliferation and extension of mass culture. This is a pregnant moment in the United States because you have the racial, religious, and cultural pluralization of institutions and practices and thus the creation of an image of the United States as a *newly* heterogeneous society. Within the span of the semester, we will hear as many of these diverse voices and examine as many of the literary trends as possible. We will read texts written mostly *after* 1980. The readings will be taken from the following texts: Paul Auster's *The New York Trilogy*, Don DeLillo's *White Noise*, Louise Erdrich's *Love Medicine*, Percival Everett's *Erasure*, Aimee Bender's *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt*, Darcey Steinke's *Jesus Saves*, Rikki Ducornet's *The Jade Cabinet*, Richard Powers's *Gain*, Andrew X Pham's *Catfish and Mandala*, Carole Maso's *Ava*, Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club*, David Foster Wallace's *Brief Interviews With Hideous Men*, A. M. Homes's *Music For Torching*, Brian Evenson's *Fugue State*, Lance Olsen's *10.01*, and George Saunders's *In Persuasion Nation*.

Requirements include a short paper, a mid-term exam and a final exam.