

English 3353: Modern American Fiction

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Spring 2012, T-Th 11:30-1 pm

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Course Description

Fiction in this time frame (1900-1940) is responsive to Modernism, an early twentieth century artistic movement in western culture currently receiving a great deal of scholarly attention. We will pay attention ourselves to modernist practices and perspectives, but we will also consider the socio-cultural/historical backgrounds of American fiction, including popular fiction, and the origins and construction of heroism. We will consider such intellectual movements as literary naturalism and existentialism, which overlap modernism and affect even post-modern literature. In addition to close reading, my emphasis tends toward studying texts as both constructing representations of and representing culture and gender. Of late, a renewed interest in the modernist period focuses on its structural, cultural, and philosophical similarities to the first decade of the twenty-first century.

This is an advanced English course that satisfies three hours of credit in the English major and minor. Students enrolling in this course must have completed the university Core Communication requirement. Competency in written English and composition at the advanced level is expected in **all** written performance. Completion of ENGL 3301 is highly recommended.

NOTE: ENGL 3353 **does not** satisfy the university Core requirement satisfied by ENGL 3350 and 3351.

Learning Objectives and Outcomes

- 1.** Students participating responsibly will gain knowledge about and insight into the modernist era of American fiction and will be introduced to applications of gender and cultural criticism..
- 2.** Students participating responsibly will increase their ability to read literature closely and to analyze literature critically.
- 3.** Students participating responsibly will increase their understanding of and skill in writing from a position of informed opinion about a topic, issues, etc.
- 4.** Students will learn that mature adult behaviors and performance are required of them as responsible members of their respective workforces and society. Professionalism will be stressed in this pre-professional learning environment that is a university.

Texts

Crane, *Maggie*

Cather, *A Lost Lady*
Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*
Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Assignments

Students will be responsible for informed, engaging class discussion and for a project comprised of research and an essay based on application of research. The project will combine library and internet research with close reading of text. Details for the topic, essay format, and submission requirements are provided in Blackboard in **Guidelines**. All essays must be properly documented (MLA, Chicago, or, for non-CLASS majors, APA style); that is, information, ideas, and text solicited, purchased, or otherwise procured from outside sources/benefactors must be acknowledged and acknowledged in the proper professional format. Failure to comply with documentation policy will result in failure of the project and, if plagiarism is detected, may result in more serious penalty, such as a formal hearing and/or failure in the class. Please consult the UH Academic Honesty Policy. **Students are required to turn essays into turnitin.com as well as to submit them in hard copy (See Guidelines). Failure to submit to turnitin.com will result in a 0 for the assignment.**

Quizzes may be administered to check reading and listening. There will be a midterm (date and format to be announced) and a comprehensive final examination (format to be announced) on the date and at the time scheduled by the university. Students must complete the essay portion of the final in blue books.

The Blackboard/Vista component of this course is an important repository of the technical requirements for this course and also of some, but not necessarily all, lecture/study/discussion topics and background information. Please consult Blackboard regularly for announcements, particularly if weather and other environmental conditions might hamper our attendance and interfere with testing and assignment submission. If I am not able to foretell an absence from class on my part, I shall put a notice up on Blackboard as soon as possible. Houston weather and traffic keep us guessin!

Attendance

Attendance—full participation in the class—is mandatory. Students with three recorded absences before midterm and/or who do not take the midterm will be dropped on the midterm rolls with a WP or WF depending on any evaluated work. Students who have submitted work and who accumulate three recorded absences before the last day to drop scheduled by the university will be dropped, the grade of WP or WF depending on the grade of evaluated work. Additional information will be supplied when class begins.

Grading

The midterm counts as 25% of the final grade. The essay project (proposal, research, completed essay) counts as 20% of the final grade, and the final exam counts as 50% of the final grade. Additional information will be supplied when class begins.