

American Survey 2

ENGL 382 | Section A | Eisenhower Hall 21 | MWF 10:30 | Fall 2006
Course Website: www.ksu.edu/english/eiselei/engl382/
Gregory Eiselein | Phone: 532-0386 | Email: eiselei@ksu.edu | Office: ECS 108-C
Office Hours: MWF 11:30-12:30, M 3:30-4:30, plus many more by appointment

Course Description

Designed for English majors, American Survey 2 is an examination of American literature from the Civil War to the present. We will trace the development of significant literary styles and periods and examine authors important to our contemporary understanding of America's literary history.

American Survey 2 takes a literary-historical perspective on American writing.

Literary: we will read texts carefully, paying close attention to what is said and how it is being said. Such close reading will help us to discover not only what texts mean but also *how* they mean and how they come to have different, sometimes contradictory meanings in different contexts.

Historical: we will read texts to learn about past ideas, cultures, societies, peoples, events. We will consider questions such as: What was the significance of those writings in their original contexts? What did those writings *do* in the past? What is the importance of those past writings to us in the present? Historical literary analysis means figuring out how literary texts relate to other texts and events of the same period; it also means figuring out how literary texts relate to the larger course of American literary history.

As we explore the ways historical knowledge enriches our understanding of literary texts and examine the divergent meanings and various functions of literary texts at different moments in history, this literary-historical perspective will enhance our understanding and appreciation of American literary texts.

Course Goals

When they finish ENGL 382, students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate familiarity with American literary traditions from 1865 to the present, including prominent authors, literary movements and styles, and the historical and cultural contexts important to those traditions.
- Identify the place of a text in American literary history using an understanding and appreciation of its style.
- Draw on relevant historical knowledge to analyze and interpret the literary works studied.

This course also aims to intensify students' proficiency in the skills fundamental to a university education: the ability to reason, think critically, communicate effectively, and appreciate excellent writing and thinking.

ENGL 382 builds upon the writing skills learned in Expository Writing and Honors English and the critical-analytical skills learned in Introduction to Literary Studies; this course is preparation for 600 and 700-level courses in American literature.

Course Work and Course Policies

Reading. The most important work in this course will be careful, patient, thorough reading of the assigned texts. You will need to finish the assigned readings by the time indicated on the reading schedules. I encourage you to keep a reading journal or take reading notes on each text.

Attendance and Participation. In addition to careful reading, I expect active participation and good attendance from everyone. I absolutely believe in the educational benefits of a dynamic, interactive classroom. Students learn more, absorb more, and remember more in classes where they are expected to respond actively to the course materials and to participate in the classroom activities and conversations. Thus, lack of preparation for class and irregular attendance will hurt your grade; good attendance and active participation in class discussions will improve your grade.



Because students have different ways of actively contributing to the class, I will be flexible about how I evaluate participation. In general, however, I will generously reward students who contribute week after week to the discussions with intelligent, thought-provoking comments that demonstrate careful reading of the texts and thoughtful attention to what others have said. Students who skip a lot of class or don't seem to listen to what others have to say or never ever say anything should expect a lower grade for participation.

Your attendance is absolutely essential to the learning that happens in this course. I do understand, however, that every once in a while circumstances may make it impossible for you to attend. If you miss one or two classes during the semester, don't worry about it. If you miss more than that, you may want to start worrying about how your attendance might hurt your grade. To be specific, students who miss no class will earn five extra credit points. Students who miss two weeks of class or six class sessions will receive zero points for attendance (10% of your grade). Students who miss more than three weeks of class (nine or more classes) automatically fail the course.

Papers. The writing in our course will consist of two major essays and several informal and in-class writing assignments. The two major papers will focus on developing skills related to the third course goal (learning how to draw on historical knowledge to analyze and interpret literary texts). In these two papers, we will work on articulating the connection between a literary text and the following:

- its era of publication
- its literary-historical style
- its reception since initial publication
- relevant historical events, developments, or documents

During the semester, I will distribute handouts describing these assignments in more detail. I don't usually accept late papers, but in certain, limited circumstances I will accept papers after the due date. Assignments will lose a letter grade for every class period that they are late. I collect papers at the beginning of class on the due date.

Exams and Discussion Project. I will also ask you to take a midterm examination and a comprehensive final and participate in a small group class discussion project. These assignments will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate skills related to the first two course goals.



Revisions. If you would like, you may revise your two major papers. Each revision is due exactly one week after I return the initial draft. A revision does not automatically receive a better grade. The revision must be substantially improved. It must demonstrate significant change in ideas and focus, arrangement and organization, or evidence and development. Simply correcting typos or making editing corrections will not change the grade.

To submit a revision, you need to:

- Write a summary explaining why and how you revised—for example, how and why you decided to change the focus and organization; why you deleted or added a certain part; why and how you rearranged information; and so on.
- Hand-in your revision, your original paper, and my original comments along with your summary explaining the changes.

Revisions that don't meet these criteria (arriving by the deadline, offering substantial change, providing a summary of changes, and enclosing the original version) will be returned.

Extra-Credit and Make-Up Assignments. If you miss class on a day we do in-class writing, you can make up the missed assignment by writing a review of a poetry or fiction reading, play, or lecture related in some way to American culture. If you miss no assignments, you may write such a review for extra-credit. During the semester I will announce as many of these events as I hear about. If you know of others, please tell the rest of us.

The first step is to attend such a reading, play, or lecture. Compose a brief summary of the event; describe what happened with *details*. Then give us your thoughtful opinion of the event: Did you enjoy it? What did you dislike about it? Was any particular part of the event moving, brilliant, or clever? What was it like to be there? The review should be about one (typed, double-spaced) page or so.

This assignment is worth five points: 5 is for one of the best reviews I ever read (I rarely award this score); 4 is for a detailed, specific, insightful review; 3 is the score I will award most often; 2 is for reviews that are pretty vague; and 1 is the score you will earn if I'm not sure you even attended the event. You may hand in as many as three reviews. You may turn in a review anytime before December 10. A maximum of 20 extra-credit points are available: 15 for reviews + 5 for perfect attendance.

Grades. When I figure final grades, I will consider all of your class work: attendance, participation, class discussion project, in-class writing assignments, longer writing assignments, midterm, and final. In determining final grades, each course requirement carries the following weight:

Midterm Examination	10%
Final Examination	20%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Class Discussion Project	10%
Attendance	10%
Participation and In-Class Writing Assignments	10%

If at any point during the semester you'd like to discuss your work and your performance in the class, please drop by to see me in my office. I enjoy talking with students, and I don't want anxiety or uncertainty about grades to interfere with more important questions (Why does W.E.B. Du Bois criticize Booker T. Washington? What the hell is going on in *The Sound and the Fury*? Why are folks sympathizing with Willy Loman when he's really not a very good person?)

The Honor Code. Kansas State University has an Honor Code, which stipulates that you should do all your academic work at the university individually. Do not collaborate on any academic work unless specifically approved by your instructor. On all of your assignments, exams, and other course work, the following pledge is implied, whether or not it is explicitly stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."



Perhaps the most serious violation of the Honor Code in an English course is plagiarism—taking or copying someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper, or project; the truly gnarly XF grade for the course; and/or expulsion from the university

Complete copies of the academic dishonesty policy are available in the Office of Student Activities and Services in the Union, or you may visit the Honor System web page at www.ksu.edu/honor.

Course Listserv. You have also all been subscribed to a course listserv, and we can all post comments, information, and queries by sending messages to american2@k-state.edu. The purpose of this listserv is to try out ideas and facilitate communication among class participants outside of class. Posting to this listserv is not required; it is here for our convenience. The only rule is this: all postings to the list should be related to our class in some way or another. If you have your K-State e-mail forwarded to another address, the University will subscribe you to that address also so that you can send messages to this list from either address. If you have technical questions about using a listserv, you might want to check out K-State's listserv information page www.ksu.edu/cns/services/listserv or contact the Help Desk: helpdesk@k-state.edu or 532-7722.

Students with Disabilities. If you need special accommodation in this course for a learning or physical disability, please contact Disabled Student Services in Holton Hall, Room 202 (532-6441), so that they may assist us in making arrangements.

The Texts

The following books are available at the K-State Union Bookstore and Varney's Bookstore in Aggieville:

- Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, 2, 1865 to the Present* (Norton) [= NAAL]
- William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (Norton)
- Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (Norton)

Photographs: Louisa May Alcott (page 2), Langston Hughes (page 3), William Faulkner (page 4).

Reading and Assignments Schedule 1

Part 1: American Literature 1865-1914: Civil War to World War I: Realism and Naturalism

Aug 21	M	INTRODUCTIONS
Aug 23	W	"American Literature, 1865-1914," NAAL, 3-16 Louisa May Alcott, <i>Little Women</i> , 1-84
Aug 25	F	Alcott, 85-151
Aug 28	M	Alcott, 152-253
Aug 30	W	Alcott, 253-313
Sept 1	F	Alcott, 313-80
Sept 4	M	LABOR DAY/NO CLASS
Sept 6	W	Henry James, NAAL, 468-506 Discussion Preferences Sheet Due
Sept 8	F	Mark Twain, NAAL, 212-15, 219-53
Sept 11	M	Twain, 253-99
Sept 13	W	Twain, 299-338
Sept 15	F	Twain, 338-78
Sept 18	M	Twain, 378-407
Sept 20	W	Kate Chopin, NAAL, 620-633
Sept 22	F	Booker T. Washington, NAAL, 744-780
Sept 25	M	W.E.B. Du Bois, NAAL, 876-901
Sept 27	W	Jack London, NAAL, 971-987 Online Quiz C Due

Important Upcoming Dates

Part 2: American Literature 1914-1945: World War I-World War II: Modernism

Sept 29	F	Paper #1 Due
Oct 2	M	FALL BREAK/NO CLASS
Oct 11	W	Midterm Examination
Oct 13	F	Beverly Lyon Clark Visit
Nov 1	W	Online Quiz D Due

Part 3: American Literature 1945-2006: World War II-Iraq War II: Postmodernism

Nov 3	F	RESEARCH DAY/NO CLASS
Nov 20	M	Paper #2 Due
Nov 22	W	THANKSGIVING BREAK/NO CLASS
Nov 24	F	THANKSGIVING BREAK/NO CLASS
Dec 1	F	Online Quiz E Due
Dec 8	F	CONCLUSIONS
Dec 15	F	Final Examination (11:50-1:40)