

English 2090
American Literature II
MW, 6:00-7:45
Mondays (Zoom) Wednesdays, Hudson 102
Mount Saint Mary College
Spring 2021

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Virtual Office Hours via Zoom: (email me for an appointment)

Course Description: This course approaches American literature chronologically, from the Civil War to just before WW II, emphasizing literary works in their historical context. As we explore the richness and diversity of American literature during this period, we will ask how the developing United States may have helped to shape the work of so many varied writers as well as how American writers may have influenced and responded to their times, how their work in turn may have also shaped the nation. With this in mind, some of the specific questions we might ask include the following: How did the aftermath of the Civil War and the legacy of slavery impact American writers? How did such historical forces as the growth of cities or the rise in immigration shape America's literary tradition? Are there recurring themes that seem to preoccupy American writers? What does it mean to be "American"? How have writers envisioned America? Does this change, and/or remain the same over time? In addition, the course will trace the evolution of literary forms and genres during this period. How have American writers experimented with, subverted or transformed literary art? And, while we will familiarize ourselves with traditional categories like "realism," "naturalism," and "modernism," we will also question the validity and usefulness of these categories.

Required Texts:

Levine, Robert S. et al, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Volumes C and D (Ninth Edition)
Course handouts and readings posted on eClass

Course Outcomes: By the end of the semester, students will

- *Develop writing, research, critical thinking and communication skills
- *Analyze and understand the diverse perspectives revealed in American literature
- *Be familiar with various intellectual and cultural trends such as Realism and Modernism
- *Demonstrate their knowledge of the American literary tradition by showing familiarity with major texts, genres, writers, movements, and cultural and historical contexts
- *Understand how and why American literature has evolved and how this tradition has shaped and continues to shape American culture
- *Generate thoughtful critical interpretations of American literature that consider formal and aesthetic features as well as social and historical contexts

Course Requirements:

1. (25%) Two short papers (3 pages each) that demonstrate your close reading and analysis (no research)
2. (25%) One longer paper (6-7 pages) on one of the topics to be assigned that incorporates research
3. (30%) A Final Exam that will ask you to identify and comment on passages, to write an essay in which you discuss in detail specific texts we have read, and to synthesize a number of course readings.
4. (20%) Thoughtful participation and the occasional quiz

Course Delivery Details:

This course has been designed as hybrid-flexible (“Hy-Flex”), a combination of in-class and virtual learning that will enable us to accommodate individuals’ diverse needs during the Covid 19 pandemic as well as smoothly switch to remote learning should health guidelines require us to do so. We will meet remotely on Mondays via Zoom and face-to-face on Wednesdays in Aquinas 307. All learning resources such as PowerPoints, class handouts, film clips etc. will be hosted on eClass.

In-Person and Virtual Meetings:

In-person class meetings will be held in Aquinas 307 on Wednesdays from 6:00-7:45 pm. Zoom meeting links will be provided for our Monday class meetings via eClass Announcement. If any given class meeting needs to be cancelled due to an unforeseen circumstance, I will notify you as soon as possible, and if a temporary or permanent shift to remote instruction should occur, you will be notified and provided with instructions.

Instructor and Student Communication:

The best way to reach me is through email (rather than my office phone). Please use your MSMC email account for all email exchanges. I will not respond to email addresses that do not end in @my.msmc.edu.

I will be using our eClass Announcements forum located on the eClass General/Welcome page to communicate all course updates/reminders, usually on a weekly basis. This forum will send a copy of the message to your MSMC email. Please pay close attention to all communications on our Announcements forum, as well as your MSMC email account.

Technological Requirements and Recommendations

<i>Requirements</i>	<i>Recommendations</i>	<i>Support</i>
Office Software: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Microsoft Office’s current Version (Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel, etc.)	Recommended Internet Browsers: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Google Chrome Use of Mobile Devices: <p>While you may be able to conduct most work on a mobile device (e.g. smartphone, tablet), it is highly recommended that you do all course work on a desktop or laptop computer.</p>	IT Support Center: <p>The IT Support Center is here to assist you with your general technology needs. To obtain technology support, please visit https://helpdesk.msmc.edu/support/ to submit a ticket or email it.support@msmc.edu.</p> eClass (Moodle): <p>Please consult your instructor for all eClass related questions or concerns.</p>

Instructional Tools

Please familiarize yourself with the instructional tools that will be used in our course: eClass (Moodle) Learning Management System and Zoom.

eClass

eClass will be used to deliver course materials (communication, resources, activities and assignments). Log into eClass with your MSMC credentials at my.msmc.edu or eClass 2. msmc.edu., and if you have any questions about eClass please contact me directly.

Zoom

Zoom will be used to facilitate all our virtual course meetings. You will find our Zoom meeting link in the General Section of our eClass page. You do not need to make a personal Zoom account. Please log in to class 10 minutes before class begins, and when entering the meeting, please provide your full name. If you are having internet trouble, a phone number to dial in to the meeting will be provided with the meeting link.

Required Tutorial for First Time Online Learners (OLSOT)

If this is the first hybrid-online course you are taking at MSMC, you are required by the College to complete a tutorial to help prepare you with the academic and technical skillset required for a successful learning experience. The tutorial, called the “Online Learning Student Orientation Tutorial” or “OLSOT,” is 100% online and self-paced. For all fall 2020 courses, this tutorial can be accessed via an embedded information block located on the side of each eClass course. You can expect to spend (1) hour on the tutorial. If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Digital Learning & Instructional Design Services at onlinelearning@msmc.edu.

Self-paced resources provided by Zoom can be found here: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362193-Joining-a-Meeting>

Social Distancing Guidelines

For in-class meetings, students and instructor should follow the social distancing guidelines provided by the CDC in response to COVID-19. These include creating at least six feet of distance between oneself and others, wearing face coverings, and frequent hand washing/sanitizing. The College is committed to helping arrange campus spaces in accordance with these guidelines, but please take an active role in ensuring the health and safety of yourself and others by selecting seating that is at least six feet from another person and wearing a face covering to class. Please read more of the CDC's guidelines [here](#) and join me in endorsing the following statement:

As a member of the Mount community, I AGREE to take cooperative steps to protect the health and safety of every member of our campus and local community in the midst of this global pandemic. Furthermore, I recognize that my efforts keep me, and those with whom I live and learn, safer and healthier. I understand that my personal and academic success are dependent on staying healthy and agreeing to shared behavioral practices – wearing a face covering, maintaining sanitized work areas, and social distancing across campus – that will keep me and other members of the College and local community protected from illness. **I AGREE** to invite others to participate with me in our mutual responsibility to sustaining the health and wellbeing of our cherished community.

Class work, Participation and Classroom Etiquette

Although I will be providing information from time to time, this is not a lecture course; for the most part, classes will focus on student discussion and close analysis of the reading. Participation is therefore, essential, and remember that in order to participate, you need to be focused, attentive and engaged so *please put your electronic devices away and do not text during class*.

Technology is a tool; it can enhance our learning and understanding, but we have to use our tools wisely. Technology can also get in the way of learning, especially in a discussion-based class that requires your full presence—that is careful listening and responding to both your professor and your classmates. Moreover, students who have “checked out” and are focused on their devices actually negatively impact the learning of the other students in the room. Here are some links to some of the recent research on education and technology:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/28182528>

<https://sites.udel.edu/victorp/files/2010/11/Psychological-Science-2014-Mueller-0956797614524581-1u0h0yu.pdf>

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0360131512002254>

In order to partake fully in the learning process, you should do the assigned reading before class and bring your textbook to each class. Usually, the most valuable contribution a student can make is to ask a thoughtful question. Because talking about literature (in addition to writing about it) is one of the ways we come to a better understanding of literature, I expect everyone to make an effort to participate, and I will do what I can to ensure that everyone is given the opportunity to do so. I may occasionally call on you, or if you have already spoken, I may ask, “How about a response from someone who hasn’t spoken yet?” in order to encourage others to participate. Sometimes you may discuss in small groups, and other times students will take turns leading the discussion. I may also administer a quiz at the beginning of class from time to time to check the class’s progress and ensure students are coming prepared. Attendance is therefore required.

After three absences, your grade will be lowered

Texting during class will also lower your grade

Short Papers or Close Reading Exercises

I am asking that you hand in two close reading exercises that will demonstrate your careful analysis of that day’s assignment. While these papers are informal—meaning you may write in the first person, and you may decide the approach or focus you’d like to take with your analysis ---I will grade these assignments. Papers are *always* due at the beginning of the appointed class; some days these exercises may be used to start class discussion. Because of the “timely” nature of these assignments (they show me you are keeping up with the reading, are prepared for class that day etc) late papers will be downgraded. In fairness to all, and so that I may return your work as quickly as possible, I am strict about deadlines. Please note on your syllabus the days or weeks papers are due and plan ahead.

In addition to turning in a hard copy of each paper assignment, all students are required to upload their paper to turnitin.com. **Our class ID is 28703382 and the enrollment key is american2**

Some Guidelines

*All close readings should be typed and double-spaced and have a title

* *Focus*. These are short papers. There is no room here for fluff; you need to make your points efficiently. And you obviously can't talk about everything in a couple of pages, nor do I expect you to. The general rule of thumb for assignments like this is "less is more." Unless you are making very specific connections between readings, it is probably best to write on just one of the texts assigned that day. Also, try to focus your attention on one problem, one question, one image, one character or one quote from that text. This will help you write papers that are more detailed, more substantive, more analytical as opposed to papers that are merely plot summaries or vague generalizations.

* *Avoid plot summaries*. Remember that you are writing for readers who have already read the text and are eager to hear your ideas about its significance. You need to do more than show that you've read the material; you need to show that you've thought carefully about it. I will be looking for evidence that you have read the work critically, that you are engaged with it, that you are wrestling with the issues the writers have raised. When grading your work I generally take into account *The Four Cs*:

1. **Content** (Substance and focus. Has the writer used specific examples, concrete details, relevant quotations or is the writing vague and general?)
2. **Clarity** (Is the writing clear, concise, organized, persuasive or graceful? Or are there grammatical and organizational problems which get in the way of effectively communicating ideas?)
3. **Critical Thought** (Does the writer show a strong intellectual engagement with the material? Is the writer analyzing (rather than summarizing or retelling the story)?)
4. **Correctness** (Has the writer followed the proper format for the literary research paper? Are quotations incorporated gracefully and correctly? Are sources correctly cited and acknowledged using MLA documentation? Are there spelling, punctuation and/or grammatical mistakes?)

Division Grading Scale

A	100-95	4.0	Superior
A-	94-90	3.67	Outstanding
B+	89-87	3.33	Excellent
B	86-83	3.0	Very Good
B-	82-80	2.67	Good
C+	79-77	2.33	Above Average
C	76-73	2.0	Average
C-	72-70	1.67	Below Average
D+	69-65	1.33	Poor
D	64-60	1.00	Passing
F	59-0	0.0	Failing

Exams

Exams must be taken in class on the day assigned.

Division Grading Scale

A	100-95	4.0	Superior
A-	94-90	3.67	Outstanding
B+	89-87	3.33	Excellent
B	86-83	3.0	Very Good
B-	82-80	2.67	Good
C+	79-77	2.33	Above Average
C	76-73	2.0	Average
C-	72-70	1.67	Below Average
D+	69-65	1.33	Poor
D	64-60	1.00	Passing
F	59-0	0.0	Failing

Sometimes I may give a “slash” grade like a B-/C+ or an A-/B+ because students often fall on the borderline. These grades will be translated to 79.5 and 89.5 respectively when I calculate final grades.

Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken during class meetings (in person and/or Zoom). It remains your responsibility to be regularly engaged in the course, and familiar with our Course schedule and the deadlines for assignments. Please plan your time accordingly and communicate any conflicts with me well in advance.

Plagiarism

Using the words or ideas of another writer without giving that writer credit is intellectual theft and a serious offense. Plagiarism could range from ‘borrowing’ a sentence or an idea from an article to submitting another student’s essay as your own. You are expected to turn in original work and to properly document your sources when conducting research for this course. Please familiarize yourself with the College’s Policy on Academic Honesty:

Academic Honesty Policy

The mission of Mount Saint Mary College is concerned with “...the development of sound values, goals and commitments on the part of students. Equipping students to play responsible roles in society has been a consistent aim of our institution.” Instances of academic dishonesty subvert the mission of the College and the experience students derive from it. These instances harm the offender as well as students who maintain academic honesty. The Mount community, therefore, commits itself to do all in its power to prevent such dishonesty and imposes impartial sanctions upon those who harm themselves, their fellow students and the College in this way. Definitions: Generally, academic dishonesty may be defined in the following ways:

- a. **Cheating:** using or attempting to use, giving or attempting to give, unauthorized materials, information, assistance or study aids in any academic exercise or evaluation (tests), unless the nature of the academic exercise legitimizes cooperative learning;
- b. **Plagiarism:** copying or imitating the language, ideas or thoughts of another person, and passing off the same as one’s original work;
- c. **Falsification:** forgery, alteration or misuse of academic documents, records or forms. For additional information, please go to the Student Handbook located at www.msmc.edu under Student Life.

And one final, important note:

These are challenging times and I want you to know that I am here to assist you as we navigate our way through this unusual spring semester. I urge you to “drop by” to continue class discussions or to clear up questions, but don’t feel you need to have a problem or a question to come to my office hours. I welcome

your input, am available for help with assignments, and look forward to getting to know you. Please also reach out to your advisors and the other academic resources listed below if you need additional support. If you are not sure who to reach out to, you can always speak to me first and I can help connect you to the proper resources.

Resources and Offices

Student Support Services Counseling Services (https://www.msmc.edu/Student_Services/Counseling/):

Many students face personal challenges or have psychological needs that may interfere with their academics, social life, or emotional well-being. MSMC Counseling Services offers a variety of confidential services to help students through difficult times including counseling, crisis intervention, consultations, and mental health screenings. Counseling Services can be reached at counseling@msmc.edu.

Disability Services (https://www.msmc.edu/Student_Services/Disability_Services/):

It is the policy of Mount Saint Mary College to accommodate students with disabilities in accordance with federal and state laws. If you, as a student with a disability, have difficulty accessing any part of the course materials or activities for this class, please notify the instructor immediately. Accommodations for test-taking should be arranged in advance. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office as soon as possible so that appropriate accommodations can be determined. Please call the office at 845-569-3638, or email them at disabilityservices@msmc.edu. If you have met with the Coordinator in the Disability Services Office and have been given an accommodation letter, please make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss the logistics and implementation of your accommodations.

IT Support Center (https://portal.msmc.edu/ICS/Offices/Information_Technology/):

The IT Support Center is here to assist you with your general technology needs including Mount Account support, computer hardware/software issues, and more. IT will continue to assist with hardware, software, and/or network/connectivity issues during remote operations. Seek support from the IT Help Desk by emailing IT.Support@msmc.edu.

Kaplan Family Library (<https://www.msmc.edu/library/>):

The MSMC Library creates a dynamic, responsive learning environment by connecting people with information. They facilitate teaching and learning, foster scholarship, and create a vibrant intellectual and social gathering place for the Mount Saint Mary College community. They offer outstanding information resources, expert information literacy instruction, attentive personal service, and relevant programming in a space designed for study, discovery, collaboration, and inspiration. For more information, visit the library website, email library@msmc.edu, or call 845- 569-3600.

Tutoring (https://portal.msmc.edu/ICS/Offices/Tutoring_Center/):

The Office of Student Success offers tutoring, coaching, and more through video or phone meetings. Contact oss@msmc.edu for more information.

The Writing Center (https://www.msmc.edu/Student_Services/writing_center/):

The Writing Center is the home for writing at Mount Saint Mary College. Their primary function is to support students as they are completing academic writing assignments. The Writing Center's team of trained writing tutors assists Mount students in all stages of the writing process: brainstorming and organizing ideas; structuring sentences, paragraphs, and essays; strengthening argumentation; incorporating research and appropriate systems of citation; improving grammar and style; and more! Students seeking help with their writing should email writing.center@msmc.edu.

Schedule: Unless otherwise noted, you will find all the readings in your *Norton Anthology*. Complete the readings before the class for which they are assigned, and always bring the text to class. If a class should be canceled, we will cover the material for the canceled class at our next class meeting.

Please note: This syllabus may be revised.

Week 1

March 22: Introductions and Whitman, “Song of Myself” (eClass) and “To a Locomotive in Winter” (eClass course packet)

March 24: Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (66-70), *Democratic Vistas* (course packet) and Dickinson, “I Dwell in Possibility,” “I’m Nobody! Who are you?” (packet) “Success is Counted Sweetest” (93), “There’s a certain Slant of light” (97) “Faith is a fine Invention” (94) “After great pain . . . (100) “ “Much Madness is Divinest Sense” (104) “I taste a liquor never brewed” (94) “Some keep the Sabbath” (95)

Week 2 **Close Reading # due this week Your choice: Close Readings on Davis, Howells, James or Twain are due March 29th and Close Readings on Bierce, Garland, Jewett or Freeman are due on March 31st**

March 29: Davis, “Life in the Iron Mills” (eClass) and Theories of Realism: Howells, *From Criticism and Fiction* (packet) James, *The Art of Fiction* (961-963) and Twain, “Fenimore Cooper’s Literary Offenses” (331-340))

March 31. Bierce, “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge,” (395-401) Garland, “Under the Lion’s Paw” (775-784) Jewett, “A White Heron” (516-523) and Freeman, “A New England Nun” (640-649) and “The Revolt of Mother” (649-659)

Week 3

April 5: Easter Monday. No Class meeting

April 7: Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (is long—plan ahead! 119-302) **Quiz**

Week 4

April 12: Woolson, “Rodman the Keeper” (374-93); Washington, from *Up From Slavery*, (701-724) and DuBois, from *The Souls of Black Folk* (920-936)

April 14: Turner, from *The Significance of the Frontier in American History* (1165-1169) and Crane, “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky”(eClass), Zitkala-Sa, Autobiography (1127-1140) and “The Soft-Hearted Sioux” (1141-1146) and Oskison, “The Problem of Old Harjo” (1102-1107)

Week 5

April 19: Yeziarska, “The Lost Beautifulness” (eClass) and Crane, “Experiment in Misery” (eClass) and “The Open Boat” (1048-1064)

April 21: Cather, *My Antonia* (34-168, Volume D) **Quiz**

Week 6

April 26: Introduction to Modernism. Eliot, "Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock" (355-358) Stevens, "The Snow Man" (271-72) "Anecdote of the Jar" (276), "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (277-78) "Of Modern Poetry"(280) Williams, "Spring and All," (286) "The Red Wheelbarrow," (288) and HD, "Sheltered Garden (handout) ***Close Reading # 2 due***

April 28: Anderson, "Hands" (253-56), Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited" (645-660), Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants" (803-807) and "Soldier's Home" (handout) and Parker, "Telephone Call," and "Arrangement in Black and White" (eClass)

Week 7

May 3 Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (669-764)

May 5: Continued Discussion of *As I Lay Dying*, and The Harlem Renaissance, Hughes, poetry (835-838) "Slave on the Block," "The Blues I'm Playing and "Deferred" (handouts) Hurston, "Sweat," (517-525) and Bonner, "On Being Young—a Woman—and Colored" (handout)

Week 8

May 10: Catch-up and Conferences on Final Research Papers

May 12: *Exam*

Final Papers due on or before noon on Friday, May 14th