

## English 6346 Studies in American Literature

Fall 2020 T/Th 2:40—4:05 PT 315 CRN 93955

Prof. Theron Britt

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Office Hours: TBA

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### TEXTS:

Ernest Hemingway *The Sun Also Rises* ISBN-13: 978-0743297332

Robert S. Levine, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Ninth Edition, Volume II: 1865 to the Present*. ISBN-13: 978-0393264531

Jeannette Walls *The Glass Castle*. ISBN-13: 978-0743247542

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This section of *English 4346/6346 Studies in American Literature* explores the aesthetic and cultural movement from nineteenth century American realism to twentieth century modernism and on to postmodernism and its current aftermath—a return to a realism of sorts through creative nonfiction. We will focus to start with on problems of authority and agency in American fiction—novels and short stories—by examining nineteenth century realist works, but then move to modernist works written in the twentieth century that question and revise the premises of realism and point toward more contemporary postmodern concerns. We will finish the course by turning toward recent work in creative nonfiction. Throughout the course, the enduring problems of literary authority and agency will lead us to engage with equally enduring literary figurations of class, race, and gender. Course syllabus and other materials will be posted on *eCourseware*.

**GRADUATE COURSE REQUIREMENTS:** Students in the graduate crosslisted section will complete all the same course requirements (see below) as for the undergraduate section, but instead of a five page paper will be expected to write a more substantial seminar paper (approximately 15 to 20 pages, including notes and Works Cited).

**OUR UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES:** Our class will be in person. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has upended all our lives for over a year, it may be that the University will mandate certain precautions in the Fall 2021 semester (e.g. social distancing in the classroom). If so, we will adapt as needed.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify the aesthetic differences between realist, modernist, and postmodernist American literature
- Utilize contemporary modes of literary analysis including techniques of close reading
- Explain how issues of class, race, and gender have been presented in American

literature from the post-Civil War era to the present

- Write a short (five pages) scholarly paper about a literary work
- Correctly use the conventions of scholarly citation

**ASSIGNMENTS, WRITTEN WORK, and GRADES:** The course will be graded on the basis of **1,000 points** as follows:

- **Three midterm exams** of equal weight, each worth **150 points**. The midterm exams will be equally weighted and focused on the assigned readings and class discussions. Typically, the exams will have three specific questions for you to answer.
- **One 5-page research paper** due at the end of the course on a relevant literary topic chosen by the student (**150 points**).
- **Frequent quizzes over the reading**, worth a total of **100 points**.
- **Three short response papers** (two pages) over the reading material, worth a total of **150 points** submitted to a Dropbox folder in *eCourseware*. Response papers will be approximately two pages (double-spaced) and will be on assigned topics designed to encourage you to think about the reading material ahead of class and formulate a response that you can share with others. Students will have several days to write a response paper. However, response papers turned in after the date for which they are due will suffer significant point reduction.
- **Discussion posts** in response to a specific prompt about the weekly readings, worth a total of **150 points** (15 points each).
- **Attendance and participation** are required.
- **Optional or Bonus Paper Assignments.** To substitute for a missed quiz or just to improve your grade you will have two options to write short papers (3-5 pages) on the material that was missed, or for extra credit (25 points each), one in the first half of the semester, and one in the second half. The optional short papers for extra credit will be on assigned topics. These short papers are expected to conform to the *MLA Handbook, 8<sup>th</sup> edition* Works Cited citation format. You can either buy the *Handbook* or look up what you need online. See: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research/citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research/citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)
- **Plus/minus grading.** Note that final grades will be rated on the plus/minus scale as follows: an "A+" 966-1000; an "A" 935-965; an "A-" 900-934; a "B+" 866-899; a "B" 835-865; a "B-" 800-834, and so on.
- **Preparation.** This class will cover a broad range of issues and texts and consequently means that you have a good amount of reading to do. You are expected to do your reading *before* each class period.
- **Your written work** may be submitted to **Turnitin.com** for an evaluation of the originality of your work and, where appropriate, proper use and attribution of sources. By taking this course, you agree that all written assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included in *Turnitin.com's* restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** In general, late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangements, though exceptions may be made for medical, financial, or familial emergencies. If a problem arises that makes it difficult to impossible for you to finish an assignment on time, the earlier that you are able to contact me about it the better, as this class moves quickly through the reading material and the writing assignments.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work submitted for the class must be your own, and you are not allowed to use previously submitted academic work to fulfill requirements. If you use the work of others in your assignments (including anonymously published analyses, comments, or postings on websites), you must acknowledge and accurately cite their contributions. Plagiarism of any kind or extent will result in failure on the assignment and other consequences as per University policy, which can include failure in the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university. For further information, please see “Academic Dishonesty” at the website for Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** For further information on University policies regarding classroom conduct, plagiarism, and other issues, please see the website for the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

**DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS:** Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities. Students who have a disability or condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to contact *Disability Resources for Students* (DRS) to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modification or accommodations. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to all students with disabilities who present a memo from DRS. Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to discuss your specific needs with me in private. Students with disabilities should also contact DRS at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880 or at [www.memphis.edu/drs](http://www.memphis.edu/drs). DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION:** The CWC serves all members of the University of Memphis (UofM) community (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become successful writers and speakers. CWC consultants are trained in writing- and speech-tutor methodology and can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing or speech in any stage of development. While the CWC welcomes the opportunity to assist clients with their writing and/or speech, it does not function as an editing service. While COVID-19 continues to demonstrate its presence, all CWC consulting will take place via Upswing, UofM’s online academic support online platform. Students can schedule online appointments via Upswing by visiting the following link: <https://memphis.upswing.io/>. Once logged in, English 6346 Studies in American Literature  
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students should search “writing” in the search bar and scroll all the way down. By choosing “writing” or “Center for Writing and Communication,” CWC consultations will populate first. ***Students are strongly encouraged to use CWC consultants whenever possible, rather than Upswing consultants.***

### SYLLABUS

WEEK 1	Introduction—Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism, and beyond Bret Harte “The Luck of Roaring Camp” (307) <i>August 20: Last day to add or change sections</i>
WEEK 2	Mark Twain “The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” (104) William Dean Howells “Editha” (316) Drop Period - Courses dropped on or before <b>August 31</b> will not have grades assigned and will not appear on your transcript. Courses dropped <u>after</u> August 31 to October 2 will have “W” grades assigned and will appear on your transcript. Courses cannot be dropped online after October 2 <sup>nd</sup> .
WEEK 3	Booker T. Washington “The Atlanta Exposition Address” (471) W.E.B Dubois “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others” (568)
WEEK 4	Edith Wharton “The Other Two” (526) Kate Chopin “Désirée’s Baby” and “The Story of an Hour” (442,446) <b>First Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 5	Stephen Crane “The Open Boat” (614) Ernest Hemingway <i>The Sun Also Rises</i>
WEEK 6	Ernest Hemingway <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> Ernest Hemingway “Hills Like White Elephants” (1032)
WEEK 7	F. Scott Fitzgerald “Winter Dreams” William Faulkner “Barn Burning”
WEEK 8	Ralph Ellison from <i>Invisible Man</i> , “Battle Royal” (1210) Eudora Welty “Petrified Man” (1097) <b>Second Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 9	Sartre <i>Existentialism and Humanism</i> (e-copy) Flannery O’Connor “Good Country People” (1367) <i>October 18: Last day to drop a class and still receive a “W”; no refund</i>
WEEK 10	Norman Mailer “The White Negro” (e-copy) James Baldwin “The White Boy Looks at the Black Boy” (e-copy)

WEEK 11	Toni Morrison "Recitatif" (1429) Don DeLillo from <i>White Noise</i> Part II, "Airborne Toxic Event" (1501) <b>Third Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 12	Jhumpa Lahiri "Sexy" (1708) Joan Didion, from <i>Slouching Toward Bethlehem</i> (1653) Hunter S. Thompson, from <i>Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas</i> (1652)
WEEK 13	Jeannette Walls <i>The Glass Castle</i> Jeannette Walls <i>The Glass Castle</i>
WEEK 14	Jeannette Walls <i>The Glass Castle</i> <b>Last Day of Class</b>
WEEK 15	<b>FINAL EXAM</b> from 1-3 p.m.