

English 7/8395

American Literary Movements: Modernism, Postmodernism, and The Ethics of the Subject

Spring 2016 Tuesday 5:30-8:30 Patterson Hall 319 CRN 24188

Professor Theron Britt

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TEXTS:

Kwame Anthony Appiah *The Ethics of Identity* ISBN-13: 978-0691130286

John Barth *The Floating Opera and The End of the Road* ISBN-13: 978-0385240895

Joan Didion *The White Album* ISBN-13: 978-0374532079

Don DeLillo *White Noise* ISBN-13: 978-0143105985

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

Kurt Vonnegut *Slaughterhouse-Five* ISBN-13: 978-0440180296

Jeanette Walls *The Glass Castle: A Memoir* ISBN-13: 978-0743247542

Jess Walter *The Zero: A Novel* ISBN-13: 978-0061189432

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This section of *English7/8395 Literary Movements* explores the movement from American modernism to postmodernism and its aftermath. The course will begin with fiction written in the first half of the twentieth century and then explore how the aesthetic and cultural concerns of American Modernism evolved historically in this fiction and creative nonfiction into postmodernism and beyond. In the course we will engage with contemporary issues in cultural and literary theory with an eye toward how postmodernism engages, in the end, issues of ethics. In particular we will explore the perceived problems of intellectual and social fragmentation associated with contemporary identity politics and social construction theories—i.e. the contemporary theoretical issues associated with studies of class, race, and gender—and what implication there may be for literary study .

GRADES: Grades will be figured on a **1,000 point scale**. Your final grade will be based on **short response papers (2 pages each)** over the assigned reading (**500 points**). Students will also write a **research paper (15-20 pages)** on a relevant or literary topic (topics to be cleared with the professor, **possible 500 points**).

MFA students, if they do not wish to write a seminar paper, have the option of taking a take home midterm and final exam.

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.).

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/>.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

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

- Demonstrate knowledge of American literary movements Modernism and Postmodernism and what follows
- Have a firm understanding of literary history in America and the world
- Understand basic modes of literary analysis beginning with but not limited to the techniques of close reading
- Have a critical understanding of how to write a scholarly paper about a literary work
- Understand and use the conventions of scholarly citation

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 . DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.