English 7/8394 **Modern American Literature**
Spring 2027 Wed 5:30-8:30 Patterson Hall 317 CRN 22972 & 22973
Dr. Theron Britt
Patterson Hall 453; tbritt@memphis.edu
Office Hours: Wed 3-5 p.m., or by appointment

TEXTS:

Kwame Anthony Appiah ***Experiments in Ethics*** *ISBN-13-978-0-674-02609-4*
Appiah ***Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*** ISBN-13: 978-0393329339
James Baldwin ***Nobody Knows My Name*** ISBN 978-0-679-74473-3
Joan Didion ***The White Album*** *ISBN-13: 978-0374532079*
Don DeLillo ***White Noise*** ISBN-13: 978-0143105985
Percival Everett **James** ISBN-13: 978-0593686867
Michael Herr ***Dispatches*** ISBN-13: 978-0679735250
Ernest Hemingway ***The Sun Also Rises*** ISBN-13: 978-0743297332
Jean-Paul Sartre ***Existentialism and Humanism*** ISBN-13: 978-0413776396
Kurt Vonnegut ***Slaughterhouse-Five*** ISBN-13: 978-0440180296
Jeanette Walls ***The Glass Castle: A Memoir*** ISBN-13: 978-0743247542

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This section of ***English7/8394 Modern American Literature*** explores the movement from twentieth century American modernism to postmodernism and its twenty-first century 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 into postmodernism and beyond. In the course we will engage with contemporary issues in cultural and literary theory with an eye toward how postmodernism and what follows it 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. Course syllabus and other materials will be posted on Canvas.

GRADES: Grades will be figured on a 1,000 point scale. Your final grade will be based on short weekly response papers (2 pages each) over the assigned reading (400 points). Students will also help present one of the weekly assigned readings (100 points), and will also write a research paper (15-20 pages) and present their research to the class at the end of the semester on a relevant theoretical or literary topic (topics to be cleared with the professor, possible 500 points). 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 the American literary movements of Modernism and Postmodernism and what follows in the twenty-first century
- Have a firm understanding of modern literary history in America
- Understand advanced modes of literary analysis including techniques of close reading as well as the application of literary theory to literary interpretation
- Have a critical understanding of how to write a theoretically informed scholarly paper about a literary work
- Understand and use the conventions of scholarly citation
- Give a class presentation of their scholarship

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/.

GENERATIVE AI: As we all now know, various generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and others are widely available. These tools can help you in your coursework but they cannot replace your own careful engagement with the course material. To help guide you, here are some guidelines for using Generative AI in your coursework for this class:

- First, students are welcome to use generative AI tools like ChatGPT as supplementary invention and editing aids. *But such tools are NOT approved for completing entire assignments.*
- In general, AI-generated content must be revised for clarity, correctness, and audience appropriateness. Please note that these tools may not be used in ways that violate the university's policy on academic integrity.
- SO, what this means in practice is this: first, don't rely on GenAI tools alone to complete assignments. Second, be careful not to use GenAI tools to violate academic integrity. And third, don't assume GenAI output is always correct or appropriate.

DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS: The University of Memphis is committed to providing equal opportunity to all academically qualified students with disabilities in compliance with federal law. Students who have a disability that may necessitate accommodation to satisfy

course criteria can use the online portal to begin the registration process. Disability Resources for Students (DRS) also works with students who do not yet have a diagnosis. DRS helps instructors provide accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The University of Memphis embraces the diversity of students, faculty, and staff, honors the inherent dignity of each individual, and welcomes their unique perspectives, behaviors, and worldviews. In accordance with UofM Policy GE2004, the University will ensure students receive consistent and fair treatment and affirmation of the University's commitment to diversity.

WRITING AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES serves all members of the University of Memphis community (undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become better writers and speakers. Consultants are trained in writing- and speech-tutor methodologies and can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing or speech in any stage of development. While Writing and Communication Services welcomes the opportunity to assist in writing and speaking, it does not function as an editing service. Writing and Communication Services is located on the first floor of the Ned R. McWherter Library, with a satellite writing-only location in Patterson 223. Appointments are strongly recommended, especially during midterms and finals. Visit memphis.mywconline.com to schedule an in-person appointment using your U of M login credentials. For virtual appointments, go to memphis.upswing.io, login with your U of M credentials, and search for "Writing" to find available consultants. If you have any problems with making an appointment or your MyWC account, please email casa-writecomm@memphis.edu or call 901-678-1694 for assistance. For technical assistance with online appointments, please contact Jamion McNeil (jgmcneil@memphis.edu or 901-678-3528), Student Success Resources Coordinator.