English 250: Introduction to Literary Study—American

Spring 2012 TR, 9:20-10:50 Old Main 311

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Office Hours: **M**WF 9::30-10:30
& M 11:30-12:30
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Required Texts:

The texts that you buy for English 250 will become part of your library as an English major (hence the initial expense). They will be used in other courses and useful for life-long learning. You should own the following texts for this course:

Bressler, Charles, ed. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. 5th ed. New York: Prentice Hall, 2011.

Baym, Nina, ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vols. A-E. 8th ed. New York: Norton, 2012.

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. 2nd ed. Ed. Nancy A. Walker. New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2000.

Description:

Welcome to English 250. In this course, we will learn about several critical approaches commonly featured in contemporary literary study and use them to help us respond to a variety of texts from American literature. The focal point of the course, though, is you and your developing abilities. You will have daily opportunities to discuss course material and several other opportunities to put your thoughts into writing.

Outcomes:

Students in this course will demonstrate

1. the ability to discuss literature, including engaging in an exchange of ideas and offering and supporting insights
2. the capacity to sustain controlled, critical arguments that analyze and synthesize texts
3. an understanding of the craft of writing, including concision, diction, grammar, and syntax
4. the ability to produce creative writing that shows an awareness of language, freedom from cliché, and an understanding of genre, style, and topic
5. the ability to identify and use a range of sources suitable to the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, to evaluate and integrate source material, and to document accurately
6. an understanding of the literary tradition, the historical and cultural contexts of literature, and critical methods of reading
7. the ability to give well-planned, engaging presentations

We will pursue these outcomes through the following course assignments. →

Assignments:

50% ***Course Papers****
(detailed assignments forthcoming)
Essay 1: worth 20% of course grade (Outcomes 1-3, 6)
Essay 2: worth 25% of course grade (Outcomes 1-3, 5-6)
Creative Assignment: worth 5% of course grade (Outcomes 3-4)

30% ***Take Home Quizzes*** (Outcomes 1 & 6)
These four assignments will ask you to respond to essay questions about assigned material. Quizzes will be due two class periods after they are distributed. This interval (which will include the weekend) will give you enough time to refine your thinking and to polish your prose.

10% ***Presentation*** (Outcomes 1-2, 5-7)
At the end of the course, you will prepare a group presentation to be given during the final period. The presentation will examine works of your choice within historical, theoretical, and generic (genre) contexts. Details to come.

10% ***Participation*** (Outcome 1)
Your active participation is central to the learning process in any English course. While I will do *some* lecturing, much of our class time will be spent in small group or circle discussions. As always, "active participation" means that you arrive to class on time with the assignment thoroughly completed. It also means that you remain engaged and make a concerted effort to contribute to class discussion. The basis for your participation grade will be your attendance percentage, which will then either be enhanced or reduced by the level and consistency of **thoughtful speaking** (5%) ***and*** **engaged listening** (5%). Please note: inappropriately chatty students, text messagers, and/or sleepers cannot earn full credit in this category.

* **NOTE:** All papers should follow MLA style and format. They should be typed in 12-pt. Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and stapled. Points will be deducted from papers not meeting these standards.

* **NOTE:** You cannot pass the course if you do not complete each assignment.

GRADING SCALE

100% - 94% = A	89% - 88% = B+	79% - 78% = C+	69% - 60% = D
93% - 90% = A-	87% - 84% = B	77% - 74% = C	59% - 0% = F
	83% - 80% = B-	73% - 70% = C-	

Policies & Expectations:

- ✓ ***Attendance.*** Excessive absences will directly affect your grade. You may miss two classes. After these two, you will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each additional class you miss (e.g., an A- course grade will change to a B+; a B+ course grade will change to a B). Absences will be excused only in emergency situations, with appropriate documentation. Please be aware that "self-reported sick in room" notices from the Student Health Center will not change an absence from unexcused to excused. I reserve the right to mark text-messagers and sleepers absent.

- ✓ ***Preparedness***. Come to class prepared and ready to discuss the day's reading assignments. All readings should be completed before the class during which they will be discussed. Similarly, all writing assignments should be printed (as opposed to e-mailed) and submitted at the beginning of class on the day they are due. If a due paper is not submitted at the beginning of class, it is late. Late papers are penalized 10% per day late, including the first day and weekends. Computer, jump drive, or printer problems do not justify late or shoddy work. Please refrain from blaming your computer or the computer labs for late papers. Arrange to print your work well before class, and you will have no problems.

- ✓ ***Honesty***. The lasting reward of academic integrity is a good character and the ability to learn on your own. See the Academic Integrity Policy available online and in the Undergraduate Catalog. Note that failure to demonstrate academic integrity has serious consequences in the short term (grades) as well as for the rest of your life.

- ✓ ***Respect***. Maintain a respectful attitude toward the course, your fellow students, and me; in turn, I will do the same for you. Know that disrespectful behavior can negatively affect your participation grade. Also note: please adopt a professional tone (and include opening and closing salutations) in e-mail correspondence.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**: Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Corey Shaw, Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall. Phone: 724.946.7192; e-mail: shawcj@westminster.edu.

- **ATHLETICS & EXTRACURRICULARS**: If you are involved in College athletics or other extracurricular activities and will miss class meetings because of games, performances, etc., please notify me in advance of any class sessions you will miss. All work is to be submitted prior to the excused absence.

- **CELL PHONES** should be out of sight and turned *off* at all times. See *Attendance* under "Policies & Expectations" above and *Participation* under "Course Requirements" below for more information on my cell phone policy.

- **LEARNING CENTER**: Westminster's Learning Center is located at 211 Thompson Clark Hall and is staffed by upper-class undergraduate tutors who offer help with writing assignments. While the Center will not proofread your paper(s) for you, its staff can help you with larger-order issues, including thesis statements, organization, textual support, etc. Call 724.946.6700 to schedule an appointment. Please prepare specific questions before going to the Center so as to ensure the value of your session.

- **PAPER DRAFTS:** I encourage you to visit me during office hours so that we can discuss your writing. You may also e-mail me a draft of an assignment, as long as you give me sufficient time to review it ("sufficient time" = one week before paper is due).

Schedule of Readings:*

*Schedule is subject to change at any time.

Part One. Early Encounters: Defining America

T Jan 17 Columbus, Letters (A, 34-38)
Las Casas, "The Very Brief Relation of the Devastation of the Indies" (A, 38-42)

R Jan 19 Native Americans: Contact and Conflict (A, read 442-43 and 445-53)
Structuralism (Bressler 5: 85-105)

T Jan 24 Rowlandson, "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson" (A, 256-71)

R Jan 26 Rowlandson, "A Narrative of the Captivity . . ." (A, 271-88)
Deconstruction (Bressler 5: 105-122)

T Jan 31 Mather, "The Wonders of the Invisible World" (A, 327-33)
Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (A, 396-98, 430-41)

R Feb 2 Franklin, "Autobiography," selections from Part 1 (A, 455-57, 480-81: selections TBA).
I'll distribute Take-Home Quiz #1.

T Feb 7 Tyler, "The Contrast," Acts 1 & 2 (A, 775-94)

R Feb 9 "The Contrast," Acts 3-5 (A, 794-816). **I'll distribute the Essay #1 assignment.**
DUE: Take-Home Quiz #1

Part Two. The 19th Century: Romanticism, the Gothic, Satire

T Feb 14 Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (B, 25-41)
Reader-Oriented Criticism (Bressler 4: 65-84)

R Feb 16 Emerson, "The American Scholar" (B, 211-14, 243-56)
Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil" (B, 369-73, 409-18)

T Feb 21 Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (B, 920-42)
Postcolonialism & African-American Criticism (Bressler 10: 197-219)

R Feb 23 Melville, "Benito Cereno" (B, 1424-27, 1526-55)

T Feb 28 "Benito Cereno" (B, 1555-82)

R Mar 1 Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart," "The Black Cat" & "The Cask of Amontillado" (B, 629-33, 691-701, 714-19). **I'll distribute Quiz #2 & Creative Assignment.**
DUE: ESSAY #1

SPRING BREAK

T Mar 13 Whitman, "Song of Myself," sections 1-32 (C, 20-24, 24-46).

R Mar 15 Dickinson, poems TBA (C, 89-93, 93++ as announced)
DUE: Take-Home Quiz #2

Part Three: The Modern and The Postmodern

T Mar 20 Chopin, *The Awakening*, chapters 1-9 (22-48) & Contexts (140-66)

R Mar 22 *The Awakening*, chapters 10-22 (48-90)

T Mar 27 *The Awakening*, chapters 23-39 (90-139)

R Mar 29 Reader-Response Criticism, Deconstruction, and *The Awakening*: Groups read Treichler (352-73) OR Yaeger (311-36)
→ Reader-Response: see also 337-48
→ Deconstruction: see also 291-306

T Apr 3 Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (C, 790-804). **I'll distribute Take-Home Quiz 3.**
DUE: Creative Assignment

EASTER BREAK

R Apr 12 Stevens, "The Snow Man" & "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird" (D, 281-84, 291-3). Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" & "This Is Just To Say" (302-4, 309-10). Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (D, 365-71).
DUE: Take-Home Quiz #3

T Apr 17 Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (D, 695-98, 794-800)
O'Connor, "Good Country People" (E, 436-37, 445-58)

R Apr 19 Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, scenes 1-2 (E, 90-109)

T Apr 24 *A Streetcar Named Desire*, scenes 3-6 (E, 109-33)
DUE: ESSAY #2

R Apr 26 *A Streetcar Named Desire*, scenes 7-11 (E, 133-55). We'll begin watching Dir. Elia Kazan's 1951 film adaptation. **I'll distribute Take-Home Quiz #4.**

T May 1 FILM: *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)

R May 3 FILM discussion & Conclusions
DUE: Take-Home Quiz #4

T May 8 Final Period; 3:00 – 5:30
GROUP PRESENTATIONS