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LIT 236L.01: Modern American Literature

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LIT 236: Modern American Literature

Spring 2022

Dr. Quan M. Ha
Office hours: Tues + Thurs 9:00-9:30 & 12:30-2:00
Class meetings: Tues + Thurs 9:30-10:50

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Objectives and Expected Outcomes

This course introduces you to canonical American authors and texts written between the two World Wars, 1914-1945, as well as major themes, critical issues, and literary movements of the period. In addition, we will spend one-third of the semester studying the literature of the Harlem Renaissance. We will situate modern American literature within its specific socio-historical, cultural, and philosophical contexts. The selected readings focus on (1) how the Great Depression had a significant impact on American writers, (2) the problem of race in literature of the Harlem Renaissance, (3) women writers and their imaginative explorations of gender politics, (4) the gap between the hopefulness of the Reconstruction era and the traditionalism of what became known as the Southern renaissance, (5) how modern authors critique American provincial life, and (6) poetry and the search for form.

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Analyze works of art with respect to structure and significance within literary and artistic traditions, including emergent movements and forms. Specifically, students will:
 - a) understand the historical, cultural, critical, and especially literary contexts of modern American literature
 - b) understand the major characteristics of American literary modernism and will be able to utilize those characteristics to analyze individual works of American literature.
2. Develop coherent arguments that analyze and critique these works from a variety of approaches, such as historical, aesthetic, cultural, psychological, political, and philosophical. Specifically, students will:
 - c) be able—while drawing on appropriate critical terms and concepts—to state clearly the central themes, concepts, and ideas at play in individual works
 - d) be able to evaluate the literary and cultural importance and/or significance of individual works of modern American literature
 - e) be able to engage thoughtfully and openly with a range of critical and theoretical perspectives on literary and cultural (and even controversial) issues, including the ability to state clearly the assumptions and premises of their own positions
 - f) be able to perform a literary close reading (both in class discussions, exercises, and assignments and in out-of-class writing assignments), demonstrating an ability to read and interpret literary works by thoughtfully integrating quoted passages into larger argumentative claims
 - g) be able to write clear, grammatically correct, and rhetorically effective papers of literary analysis and interpretation (and perhaps even of critique), driven by a thesis and sustained by logic, textual and historical evidence, and a reasoned, ordered, and coherent argument.

Required textbooks

- 1/ *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 1914-1945 (9th edition)
- 2/ Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Heaven*
- 3/ Langston Hughes, *Not Without Laughter*
- 4/ Jessie R. Fauset, *Plum Bun*

Assignments

Three research essays (6 pages/each): Specific instructions to be announced

One oral presentation: You will prepare 8 questions for class discussion over the readings you have been assigned.

Two in-class exams: Specific instructions to be announced

Reading quizzes: Submit your quiz answers to Moodle twice a week

Grades

Grades will be assigned as percentage scores (0-1000) throughout the term. Ultimately, your final grade will be converted to the university's letter grade system using this scale:

A (931-1000)	A- (900-930)	
B+ (870-899)	B (840-869)	B- (800-839)
C+ (770-799)	C (740-769)	C- (700-739)
D (640-699)	F (below 640)	

Three essays-----500 points (essays 1 & 2: 150 points/each; essay 3: 200 points)

Reading quizzes -----200 points

One presentation -----50 points

Two exams -----250 points (125 points/each)

TOTAL: 1,000 points

Classroom policies

1. You are not allowed to read newspapers or class-unrelated materials while class is in session.
2. The use of cell phones, beepers, or other electronic devices is prohibited during class.
3. Any persistent talking or sleeping while the instructor or another student is speaking will result in (1) a warning and (2) then your dismissal from the classroom.
4. You are permitted to use laptops during class for note-taking and other class-related work only.
5. Behave in a courteous and respectful manner toward your instructor and your fellow students.

Covid

1. Mask use is required within the classroom.
2. If you feel sick and/or are exhibiting COVID symptoms, please don't come to class and contact the Curry Health Center at (406) 243-4330.
3. If you are required to isolate or quarantine, you will receive support in the class to ensure continued academic progress.

E-mail correspondence

Use your UM e-mail account for electronic correspondence with the instructor. You may expect my response within 48 hours (except weekends and holidays). I expect you to use a professional tone in your correspondence with me. E-mails that have no greeting or express a disrespectful tone will not be answered.

Attendance and Tardiness

1. Tardiness of between 5 and 10 minutes will be noted: each such tardiness after the first two will be counted as an unexcused absence; tardiness of 20 minutes or longer will be treated as an unexcused absence.
2. If you have to leave class early due to personal problems, inform me before class starts.
3. You are allowed TWO free absences. After your second unexcused absence, 10 points will be deducted for each additional absence. More than 5 unexcused absences will result in the failure of the course.
4. Make-up quizzes are for excused absences only.

Policies on written assignments and in-class tests

1. Late papers will be penalized with a 10% deduction for each day after the due date, including weekend days. If extenuating circumstances prevent you from turning in a paper on time, please talk to me BEFORE the paper is due. I am not likely to make allowances after the deadline has come and gone.

2. All papers are to be typed in 12-point font, Times New Roman, double-spaced. Follow the MLA guidelines for formatting, citations, and documentations.
3. For each formal essay, you must turn in a revised draft.
4. Do not ask me or Chris to proofread your essays electronically (via email). If you need help with your papers, please schedule an appointment, or just come during our office hours.
5. Under no circumstance will I offer make-up tests/exams.

Grade Appeals

If you wish to appeal a grade, you should first consult with me. You will have 7 days, from the time the grade is assigned/posted, to set up an appointment with me to discuss the grade. After 7 days, all grades are final.

Accommodations

Students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodations for coursework. To request accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible in the semester. I will work with you and Disability Services in the accommodation process. For more information, visit the Disability Services website at <http://www.umt.edu/dss/> or call 406.243.2243 (Voice/Text).

Academic Integrity

Refer to https://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/community-standards/um_student_code_of_conduct_2021-2020.pdf information about academic misconduct. If you are found guilty of academic misconduct, legal action will be taken. It is your responsibility as a student to understand the Student Conduct Code described in the link above.

Reading schedule (subject to change)

The symbol ● indicates readings that will be posted on Moodle.

Modernism

WEEK 1: Jan 17--23

Tues: Syllabus & Introduction

Thurs: Edwin A. Robinson (p. 27) + The Sculptor's Funeral (p. 168)

JOSIE

WEEK 2: Jan 24--30

Tues: Chaplinesque (p. 785) + At Melville's Tomb (p. 785) + *Trifles* (p. 241)

ANASTASIA

Thurs: Robert Frost (p. 218)

SIERRA

WEEK 3: Jan 31--Feb 6

Tues: Sherwood Anderson (p. 251)

SETH-ALLEN

Thurs: Tender Buttons (p. 190) + Carl Sandburg (p. 266)

CELESTE

WEEK 4: Feb 7--13

Tues: *This Side of Heaven* (book 1 + interlude)

JOSH + STEFAN

Thurs: Wallace Stevens (p. 269)

KYLEE SMITH

WEEK 5: Feb 14--20

Tues: *This Side of Heaven* (book 2)

SARAH + KAYLEE

Thurs: William Carlos Williams (p. 281)

KAYETLIN

Harlem Renaissance

WEEK 6: Feb 21--27

Tues: *Not Without Laughter* (pp. 1-111)

CLINT + MOLLIE

Thurs: *Not Without Laughter* (pp. 112-end)

ZANE + ZOE

*****ESSAY # 1 DUE: Sunday, 11:00 PM**

WEEK 7: Feb 28—Mar 6

Tues: Claude McKay (p. 467) + *Compromise: A Folk Play* • MORGAN
 Thurs: Jean Toomer (p. 617) SHYANNE

WEEK 8: Mar 7--13

Tues: **EXAM # 1**
 Thurs: Sweat (p. 517) + *Mulatto* • SKYLER + MATILDA

WEEK 9: Mar 14--20

Tues: *Plum Bun* (pp. 11-162) CHRISTOPHER + MATHIAS
 Thurs: Langston Hughes (p. 833) HANNAH

WEEK 10: Mar 21—27

☺ **SPRING BREAK** ☺

WEEK 11: Mar 28—Apr 3

Tues: *Plum Bun* (pp. 163-end) AUNDREA + GRANT
 Thurs: Countee Cullen (pp. 853-858) + The Man Who Was Almost a Man (p. 958) **MADISON GOFF**
*****ESSAY # 2 DUE: Sunday, 11:00 PM**

*Modernism (continued)***WEEK 12: Apr 4--10**

Tues: Ezra Pound (p. 293) BEN
 Thurs: H. D (p. 330) + Marianne Moore (p. 337) CHRISTIAN

WEEK 13: Apr 11--17

Tues: T. S. Eliot (p. 352; you may skip “The Waste Land” though) MADISON HAYWORTH
 Thurs: Flowering Judas (p. 471) + Pale Horse, Pale Rider (p. 481) NATALIE

WEEK 14: Apr 18--24

Tues: E. E. Cummings (p. 607) ALAN
 Thurs: Winter Dreams (p. 629) + Babylon Revisited (p. 646) + A Clean, Well-Lighted Place • ERIN + KENDALL

WEEK 15: Apr 25—May 1

Tues: A Rose for Emily (p. 765) + Barn Burning (p. 771) + Hills Like White Elephants (p. 803) LAINE + REECE
 Thurs: The Lost Boy (p. 807) + The Chrysanthemums (p. 846) DANIELLE
*****ESSAY # 3 DUE: Sunday, 11:00 PM**

WEEK 16 May 2—8

Tues: TBA
 Thurs: Review & conclusion
EXAM # 2: TBA