

The Short Story in Twentieth Century American Culture

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Web Site

<http://blackvistas.com/index.html>

This course will focus on the reading and analysis of important works of twentieth century American fiction with an emphasis on the short story. The overall theme of the chosen works is “Views of America” from varying times, geographical locations, and through gender- and culture-based ways of thinking.

In addition to the required texts, during each class session additional works will be introduced and excerpts will be read and discussed. This course structure will give class members exposure to a wide array of literary works.

Participants are required to write two essays of no more than ten pages in length. The first essay will be due at mid semester and the second near the end of the term. Essay topics will be chosen from course readings and themes as discussed in class.

Required texts

The Long Valley. John Steinbeck. 1938.

Miss Lonelyhearts / Day of the Locust. Nathaniel West. 1933.

Men Without Women. Ernest Hemingway. 1927.

In Love & Trouble. Alice Walker. 1967.

All writing assignments must be typed. Please double-space the lines and use one-inch margins on all sides of the page.

Final grades will depend 60% on submitted written work and 40% on class participation.

More than two class absences result in automatic failure of the course. Recurring tardiness will be reflected in the final grade.

Plagiarism occurs when one writer copies the words of another writer without attributing the words to the source. Unattributed copying will result in course failure.

Course calendar (subject to change)

September 10th		Introduction
September 17th		American Wilderness
October 1st		Urban High Society
October 8th		Black Harlem Society
October 15th		Southern Fantasy
October 22nd	Essay Draft Due	American Potboiler
October 29th		African American Culture
November 5th	First Essay Due	Southern Satire
November 12th		Counter-Culture
November 19th		Black Daily Life
	Thanksgiving Break	
December 3rd		New York / China
December 10th	Second Essay Due	Caribbean-American Experience
December 17th		Native American Satire
December 24th		Asian Fantasy

Class Schedule (subject to change)

Introduction

American Wilderness

Reading excerpt from —

Call of the Wild. Jack London. 1903.

Urban High Society

Reading excerpt from —

Babylon Revisited and Other Stories. F. Scott Fitzgerald. 1920, 1937.

Black Harlem Society

Reading excerpt from —

The Blacker the Berry. Wallace Thurman. 1929.

Southern Fantasy

Reading excerpt from —

The Sound and the Fury. William Faulkner. 1929.

American Potboiler

Reading excerpt from —

Memoirs of Hecate County. Edmund Wilson. 1942.

African American Culture

Reading excerpt from —

Spunk. Zora Neale Hurston. 1942.

Southern Satire

Reading excerpt from —

Good Country People. Flannery O'Connor. 1955.

Counter-Culture

Reading excerpt from —

On the Road. Jack Kerouac. 1957.

Black Daily Life

Reading excerpt from —

The Best of Simple. Langston Hughes. 1961.

New York / China
Reading excerpt from —
Eat a Bowl of Tea. Louis Chu. 1961.

Caribbean-American Experience
Reading excerpt from —
Lucy. Jamaica Kincaid. 1990.

Native American Satire
Reading excerpt from —
The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fist Fight in Heaven. Sherman Alexie. 1993.

Asian Fantasy
Reading excerpt from —
The Holder of the World. Bharati Mukherjee. 1993.