

## The Novel in Twentieth Century American Culture

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Web Site

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

The following readings and weekly topics will introduce class members to major currents in twentieth century American fiction. Analysis and critique of the texts will help students develop ideas about the dual themes of this course, (1) the artist's place in society, and (2) the American identity of these works.

Required reading will consist of four complete works and short weekly excerpts that will be used for writing assignments. As a result of this course, students will learn new ways of reading a text, increase their critical skills and improve writing technique.

### Required texts

Winesburg, Ohio Sherwood Anderson (1919)

The Great Gatsby F. Scott Fitzgerald (1925)

The Crying of Lot 49 Thomas Pynchon (1965)

Jazz Toni Morrison (1992)

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

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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)

**The week of —**

September 10th		Introduction
September 17th		“Timecapsule” fiction
October 1st		Nationalist novel
October 8th		Urban tales
October 15th		Fiction of alienation
October 22nd	Essay Draft Due	Expatriate works
October 29th		Southern American fiction
November 5th	First Essay Due	Folklore-based fiction
November 12th		Works about the “common man”
November 19th		Racial/political satire
	Thanksgiving Break	
December 3rd		Technological satire
December 10th	Second Essay Due	Experimental forms
December 17th		Writing ethnicity
December 24th		Novels of the “self”

**Class Schedule** (subject to change)

**Introduction**

**“Timecapsule” fiction**

Reading excerpt from —

The Sun Also Rises. Ernest Hemingway. 1926.

**Nationalist novels**

Reading excerpt from —

Cane. Jean Toomer. 1923.

**Urban tales**

Reading excerpt from —

Manhattan Transfer. John dos Passos. 1925.

**Fiction of alienation**

Reading excerpt from —

Miss Lonelyhearts. Nathanael West. 1933.

**Expatriate works**

Reading excerpt from —

The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. Gertrude Stein. 1933.

**Southern American fiction**

Reading excerpt from —

A Good Man is Hard to Find. Flannery O’Connor. 1953.

**Folklore-based fiction**

Reading excerpt from —

Mules and Men. Zora Neale Hurston. 1935.

**Works about the “common man”**

Reading excerpt from —

Grapes of Wrath. John Steinbeck. 1939.

**Racial/Political satire**

Reading excerpt from —

Invisible Man. Ralph Ellison. 1947.

**Technological satire**

Reading excerpt from —

Neuromancer. William Gibson. 1984.

**Experimental forms**

Final draft of second essay due

Reading excerpt from —

The Sound and the Fury. William Faulkner. 1984.

**Writing ethnicity**

Reading excerpt from —

Eat a Bowl of Tea. Louis Chu. 1961.

**Novels of the “self”**

Reading excerpt from —

Praisesong for the Widow. Paule Marshall. 1983.