

Dr. Julie Hall  
English 4384  
Spring 2018  
MWF: 11:00-11:50

Office: Evans 115  
Office phone: 294-1417; English office: 294-1403  
[Eng\\_jeh@shsu.edu](mailto:Eng_jeh@shsu.edu)

## Studies in the American Novel

### **Required Texts:**

*The Scarlet Letter*, Nathaniel Hawthorne. Norton Critical 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Ed. Leland Person.  
ISBN: 9780393264890  
*Beloved*, Toni Morrison. ISBN: 978-1400033416  
*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Samuel Clemens. Dover, ISBN; 9780486280615  
*Ellen Foster*, Kaye Gibbons. Algonquin Books, ISBN 978 1616203023  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston. New York: Harper Perennial  
978-0061120060  
*Go Down, Moses*, William Faulkner. New York: Vintage International. 0-679-73217-9  
*The Round House*, Louise Erdrich, Harper Perennial, ISBN 978-0-06-206525-4

### **Required Supplies:**

Proper textbook, paper, and writing utensil.

### **Course Description:**

This course studies American developments in the great genre of the novel. Appearing in the United States in the late 1700s some 40-50 years after its first emergence in Great Britain, and seizing readers' imagination and loyalty, the novel swiftly came into its own in the early to mid-nineteenth century as both female and male authors took up the form and began to innovate upon British models. It is now, of course, one of the most respected—one could almost say revered—genres in American literature; it is the aspiration of many a young author to write “the great American novel.”

As the tradition in the American novel is both vast and diverse, we will tackle the genre, in this class, in a unique way. We will read some of the so-called great masterpieces of the form in the U.S.—like *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, and *Beloved*. We will also read some novels that are less well known, but perhaps deserve to be, such as Gibbons' *Ellen Foster* and Erdrich's *The Round House*.

The first 4 novels will be discussed in pairs. Thus, we will look at *The Scarlet Letter* with *Beloved*, and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* with *Ellen Foster*. Each pair of novels shares striking similarities, but also divergences. The comparison will prompt us to ask certain questions about the novel in America, such as:

- 1) How does one writer influence another? Did *The Scarlet Letter*, for instance, really influence the one of the most prominent African-American woman writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and if so, how? address radically different concerns?
- 2) How does a writer work in a certain tradition, but make the novel unique to him or herself, especially if he/she is working across racial and gender lines?
- 3) How do gender and race impact composition, theme, and primary concerns in a novel? – or does it?
- 4) Do nineteenth-century novels differ from twentieth-century novels? If so, how? How are they alike?

### ***Course Objectives:***

This course aims

- **To increase your knowledge of the American novel and American literature.**
- **To develop specific skills needed by professionals in the field of English.**
- **To broaden your understanding of intellectual and cultural activity.**
- **To enhance your own language (reading, writing, and analyzing) skills**
- **To increase your research abilities**

### ***Course Policies and Requirements***

**1. Attendance.** Your regular attendance is expected in class, and I will take roll each class day. **You are allowed 4 absences in this class. They may be excused (illness or emergency) or unexcused.** More than 3 absences will lead to deductions from your final average. **With 8 or more absences you may fail the class.** Please talk to me if you have extenuating circumstances during the semester, such as an extended illness or emergency in the family. **With 0 or only 1 absence, two points will be added to your final average.**

**2. Technology.** Class time is unplugged, unless specifically stated by me. No laptops, pads, cell phones, or text messagers. **This policy is non-negotiable; failure to abide by this policy may result in your ejection from class.**

**APPRISE YOURSELF OF SHSU ACADEMIC POLICY STATEMENT 100728,** which states that (2.0) **“failure to comply with the instructor’s policy [on text messagers] could result in expulsion from the classroom or with multiple offenses, failure of the course.”**

And: (3.0): **“Any use of a telephone or text messenger or any device that performs these functions during a test period is prohibited. These devices should not be present during a test or should be stored securely in such a way they they cannot be seen or used. Even the visible presence of such a device during the test period will result in a zero for that test. Use of these devices during a test is considered de facto evidence of cheating and could result in a charge of academic dishonesty.”**

**Use or visible presence of a text messenger during exams in this class will result in a zero on the exam.**

**3. Exams.** You will have **3** exams in this class. Exams will be a combination of short answer and essay.

**4. Missed exams and make-up exams.** If you are absent on an exam day, you must present me with a signed excuse from a doctor, or other documentation of your excuse, in order to take the exam or the quiz without penalty. Please call or e-mail me as soon as you know that you will miss an exam. A standard deduction of 5 points will be taken on make-up exams unless documentation of the absence is provided.

**Exams must be made up within one week** of the date they are initially given, unless I have granted you specific permission. **After one week, I may decline** to allow you to make up the exam.

**5. Papers.** Papers for this class will be critical and analytical in nature. Any noting of sources must be done according to latest MLA guidelines. Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade (5 points) for each day they are late. Extensions may be granted if warranted by circumstances; please talk to me as far in advance as possible, if you anticipate needing an extension. **Unless an extension has been granted, a paper will not be accepted over one week late.**

**6. Quizzes.** I will give short reading quizzes periodically during class. They may be announced or unannounced. The average of your quizzes will count as one major test grade in your final average.

**7. Group presentation.** You will do one group presentation at the end of the semester. The group presentation will count as a major grade.

**8. Class demeanor and disruptive behavior.** University policy allows me to remove any student from the class whose behavior is interfering with the orderly conduct of class and the learning experience of other students. **This includes talking while class is in session, texting, coming to class late, leaving early, leaving and coming back in, and any other behavior that might distract me or other students while I am teaching.**

**9. Plagiarism** is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own. It can take many forms, such as turning in another person's work as your own, copying from someone else's test or paper, or lifting too exactly from sources when you are doing research. It is a particularly serious academic offense, because it amounts to **academic theft** and is, of course, dishonest. **Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment (grade of zero) and may result in failure of the course.** In addition, The University and its representatives may initiate **disciplinary proceedings** against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

Please **be particularly careful when using material from the internet.** If it is not documented and attributed properly, this, too, can constitute plagiarism.

**10. Final grade.** Your final grade will be composed of a straight average of major exams, paper grades, quiz average, and group presentation.

**10. Student evaluations.** Each student will be asked to evaluate the course at the end of the semester.

#### **University policies**

##### **Classroom Rules of Conduct**

Please observe University guidelines for conduct in classes; note especially university definitions of disturbances in class and disruption of the learning process.

##### **Academic Dishonesty**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

##### **Student Absences on Religious Holy Days**

Section 51.911b of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 86101 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. Students desiring to absent themselves from a scheduled class in order to observe a religious holy day shall present to each instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy day. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

“Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

##### **Americans with Disabilities Act.**

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, I encourage you to register with the “SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosure of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **Please note:** No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

##### **Visitors in the classroom.**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor’s discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

#### ***Daily Assignments***

##### **Week 1: Jan. 17-19**

**W: U closure: winter weather**

**F: Introduction to the course.**

Nathaniel Hawthorne

**Week 2: Jan. 22-26**

**M** Hawthorne/SL assignment.

**W** *The Scarlet Letter*

**F** *The Scarlet Letter*

**Week 3: Jan 29-Feb. 2**

**M** *The Scarlet Letter*

**W** *The Scarlet Letter*

**F** *The Scarlet Letter*

**Week 4: Feb. 5-9**

**M** *The Scarlet Letter*

**W** Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

**F** *Beloved*

**Week 5: Feb. 12-16**

**M** *Beloved*

**W** *Beloved*

**F** *Beloved*, Reading/research day

**Week 6: Feb 19-23**

**M** *Beloved*

**W** *Beloved*

**F** *Beloved*

**Week 7: Feb 26-Mar2**

**M** **Exam 1.**

**W** Samuel Clemens, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**F** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**Week 8: Mar 5-9**

**M** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**W** *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

**F** Kaye Gibbons, *Ellen Foster*

**Week 9: Mar 12-16**

**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 10: Mar 19-23**

**M** *Ellen Foster*

**W** *Ellen Foster*

**F** Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**Week 11: Mar 26-30**

**M** *Their Eyes*

**W** *Their Eyes*

**F Good Friday: HOLIDAY**

**Week 12: Apr 2-6**

**M** *Their Eyes*

**W Exam 2.**

**F** William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*

**Week 13: Apr 9-13**

**M** *Go Down, Moses*

**W** *Go Down, Moses*

**F** *Go Down, Moses*

**Week 14: Apr 16-20**

**M** *Go Down, Moses*

**W** Louise Erdrich, *The Roundhouse*

**F** Reading/research day

**Week 15: Apr 23-27**

**M** *The Roundhouse*

**W** *The Roundhouse*

**F** Louise Erdrich, *The Roundhouse*

**Week 16: Apr 30-May 4**

**M** *The Roundhouse*

**W** **Exam 3/Paper due.**

**F** **Review**

**Week 17: Final Exams**

**May 14: Grades due**