



Survey of American Literature, 1865-Present: English 3361 W.03 Spring, 2018—3 Credit Hours CRN: 23697

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1-3 p.m. MW and by appointment at the Woodlands Center

Class Meets: 3:00-4:20 p.m., Monday/Wednesday in Room 231 the Woodlands Center

Texts: *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature*, Vol. 2—2nd edition
Daisy Miller, Henry James, Bedford edition
In Our Time, Ernest Hemingway
The Things They Carried, Tim O'Brien
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th ed., Gibaldi

Introductory Thoughts:

The University course catalogue describes this class as “a survey of authors, genres, and movements in American literature from 1865 to the present, including representative works of Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Post-Modernism.” By definition, a literature “survey course” is meant to be inclusive—a daunting task when one considers the number of publications in the United States since the end of the Civil War. This class will not succeed in climbing the mountain of inclusiveness, but it will demand that students read a large number of literary works. In other words, it will cover a lot of territory on that mountain, and it will encourage students to see and form connections—as well as question connections that others have claimed as “obvious.”

Course Description and Prerequisites

In short, it will be primarily a chronologically driven reading course—but one that requires students to connect their reading to the intellectual and material world that surrounded the production and reception of literary works. To help focus the process of connecting, the course will undertake to define the four major periods or styles or literary movements often used to describe American writing since 1865: Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism. These broad headings will be challenged and redefined as we consider not just the canonical texts that generally fit these terms but also texts by ethnic minorities, women, and others sometimes considered as less literary. By the end of the term, students should have a good grasp of these terms as well as be able to explain questions of their validity.

At the same time, since it is a “reading” course, it will also stress the need to be analytical of the reading process itself, asking questions such as: what happens when a person reads? why do some people find one meaning and some another? what is the effect of reading? how does a text encourage and discourage particular readings? To answer these questions, students will need a good critical vocabulary, and throughout the course, I will stress the need to use accurately terms such as “image,” “plot,” “symbol,” “novel,” “poem,” and “essay.” By the end of the term, students should have a good grasp of literary vocabulary—or at least know where to learn such terms.

In addition, this course will include a component designed to make students conscious of the discussion of literary works that goes on, largely unnoticed, all the time. This involves becoming aware of the theoretical and critical commentaries that exist concerning literature. By the end of the term, students should be able to read a literary work and know how to seek out the discussion that the work has generated.

To accomplish these things, the course will rely on these **methods**: lecture and discussion, exams, analytical writing, and bibliography projects. The specifics concerning exams, writing assignments and bibliography projects are discussed below.

Of course, the ability to do this successfully depends on students coming to the class prepared with some skills. These include the ability to write argumentative prose essays related to literature and knowledge of basic literary elements and terminology. Consequently, it is important that all students meet the **university’s prerequisites** for the course: successful completion of ENGL 1301, 1302, and either 2331 or 2342.

Course Objectives

In summary then, the course has four goals:

- **To broaden and deepen each student's knowledge of American literature and its major historical movements.**
- **To improve and hone the analysis skills of each student as they apply to literature.**
- **To enable students to access the academic conversation about literature.**
- **To engage students in debates about interpretations of specific works of American literature.**

Grading:

Of course, you're probably wondering, "How am I going to earn my grade for this class?" The best answer is by working hard, reading constantly, coming to class prepared, checking the *MLA Handbook*, and asking questions, questions, questions. However, the answer you are looking for is detailed below:

Exams

The course will have three exams. Two will occur during the semester at dates indicated on the daily schedule. The third exam will take place at the time scheduled for the final exam for this course. The first two exams will include: 1) a short answer section to test students' comprehension of assigned readings and of class lecture/discussion; 2) an essay question to test students' ability to write coherently and think creatively about the readings assigned for the course. Each exam focuses only on the material covered in a third of the class. All three exams are of equal value, and collectively, they will determine **one fourth (25%)** of the grade for this course.



Annotated bibliographic entries

Students are required to write successfully **one** annotated bibliographic entry for a scholarly article related to one of the three major works we are reading for the class. To reach success, students get three opportunities/assignments. Everyone must do the first annotation. Once a student earns a grade of "A" or "A-" on an assignment, he or she needs to do no further bibliographic assignments. In other words, earn a grade of "A" or "A-" on Assignment one, and you do only that one assignment. Earn any grader lower than an "A" or "A-" on Assignment one, and you must do Assignment two. If you earn a grade lower than an "A" or "A-" on Assignment two and you must do Assignment three. The list of essays to be annotated and instructions for doing so are in the complete assignment attached to this syllabus, but students should note that each annotated bibliography entry has a different due date. They should also note that these entries are graded more on correct MLA style for the bibliographic entries, grammatical correctness, and on following my directions than on content. However many bibliographic entries a student submits will be averaged to determine **one eighth (12.5%)** of the grade for this course.

Papers

Students will find, included in this syllabus, three possible paper assignments. They should select **one** of the assignments have two chances to succeed in writing a



successful paper. The first chance is due around midterm, and if a student earns a grade he or she is satisfied with and that grade is a “C” or higher, the student can pass on the second chance. However, if a student is unhappy with the grade earned on the first submission or earns a grade lower than a “C,” the student may meet with me and resubmit the paper for a second evaluation near the end of the term. The only block to this second submission is a failure to submit a viable paper on the first due date. The choice of assignments is detailed elsewhere in this syllabus. The grade for this paper will determine **one-half** (50%) of the student’s course grade. Please see the specifics of this assignment on the “Paper Assignment” pages included with the syllabus.

Quizzes and participation

Each student is required to take a quiz over the contents of this syllabus and some basic literary terms. The quiz may be done with the syllabus in hand. It will be posted on Blackboard. Other quizzes will be given throughout the course, and they will be based on readings for the day of the quiz. Also, students may, from time to time, accept “participation assignments” given out orally in class. These assignments and quizzes will be worth between 10 and 15 points each. At the end of the term, I will add up the points each student has earned on quizzes and participation assignments. The total number will determine a quiz/participation grade based on a 100 point-scale (92-100+ = A; 82-88 = B; etc.) The collective quiz/participation grade will determine **one eighth (12.5%)** of the grade for this course. Quizzes and participation submissions can only be done/submitted in class. No make-ups on either will be permitted. Rather, the course will offer ample opportunities for points to make up any quiz/participation project missed.

Attendance Policy

To help insure everyone gets a leg up on the exams, I offer a positive inducement for attendance. Everyday a student attends a **complete** class session, that student earns one extra credit point that is added to his or her next exam. At the same time, students should realize that failure to attend class will have negative results. Excessive absences will not be tolerated. They discourage other students and me. Anyone missing more than **four** days of class will see a lowering of their course grade by a minimum of one letter. Beginning with the fifth absence, the course grade will drop one letter for each absence. Students who are away due to University business (travel with a University sports team or arts group, for example) **MUST** give the instructor a written note from the group sponsor to avoid being penalized. Absences due to illness or family issues should be verified through the Dean of Student Life office (see below) to avoid being penalized.



Missed Exams / Late Paper Policy

Students who miss an exam for any reason should contact the instructor immediately. In cases involving illness or family crises, I will ask the student to have the reason for the absence verified by the Dean of Student Life Office before rescheduling an exam. In other cases—weather, car problems, stupidity, etc.—I will do my best to accommodate students, **but all such cases are matters of grace and mercy, not right.** No absence will be excused unless the Dean of Student Life office verifies the reason for your absence. Again, students are always welcome to discuss specific issues with me, but they need to realize I will refer all rulings on the validity of excuses to the Dean of Student Life office.

My general policy is **not to accept late papers** unless encouraged to do so by the Dean of Student Life office. However, I define late as any time after 5 p.m. on the day the paper is due, and students may e-mail me a Microsoft Word attachment of their paper before that deadline—with a hard copy given to me later if it is needed—in order to meet the deadline.

Please note: any student who has major problems fulfilling the requirements of the course (family crisis; unexpected health issues; severe emotional turmoil) should contact the office of John Yarabeck, Dean of Students. That office is located in Suite 215 of the Lowman Student Center. The phone number is 936-294-1785. Students may also check out their website, especially this page:

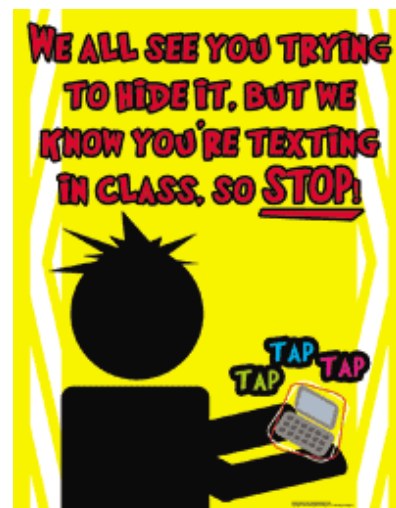
http://www.shsu.edu/~slo_www/absceance.html. This office will help you deal with all your instructors and makes it unnecessary for you to bring me documentation concerning such crises.

Classroom Manners / Deportment

It may seem strange to have a section on a syllabus about manners and classroom behavior, but my experience in the classroom suggests otherwise. Students need to remember that a class is a community, and a community requires recognition of the need for each of us to limit claims of “our rights” in order to make the best possible experience for everyone. In *Talk to the Hand*, Lynne Truss writes,

Manners are based on an idea of empathy, of imagining the impact of one’s own actions on others. They involve doing something for the sake of other people that is not obligatory and attracts no reward. In the current climate of unrestrained solipsistic and aggressive self-interest, you can equate good manners not only with virtue but with positive heroism. (14)

I don’t offer here a list a rules but a call to be heroic. Avoid such things as keeping your cell phone’s ringer on, neglecting to bathe for a week, or eating food while the rest of the class feels their stomachs rumbling. Conduct private conversations in a low tone of voice or save them for outside the classroom. Don’t put me or anyone else in the class on e-mail lists that send out cute pictures and jokes unless you are asked to do so. Be open to good-natured teasing but be willing to confront privately anyone—me or another student—if the line is crossed into insult. Most of all be respectful of others’ time. Here’s another piece of advice from Truss that is particularly relevant to this class: “The writer who neglects spelling and punctuation is quite arrogantly dumping a lot of avoidable work onto the reader, who deserves to be treated with more respect” (23).



Legal Matters the University Requires Me to Include:

These are policies that cover the University as a whole. For a more detailed discussion of the items below, go to this link: www.shsu.edu/syllabus. The University also has a written code for student conduct and discipline. It can be found in full at this link: <https://netreg.shsu.edu/mirror/codeofconduct.html>. Here is my understanding of the most important of these matters:

- **ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**

All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain 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. **Plagiarism** is an offense that arises far too often for students and Presidential appointees. It is defined as the use of another person's words or ideas without acknowledging with proper documentation the source of those words or ideas. Avoid it like the plague. For a complete listing of the university policy, see: [Dean of Student's Office](#)



- **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES POLICY:**

It is the policy of Sam Houston State University 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. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should register with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Lee Drain Annex (telephone 936-294-3512, TDD 936-294-3786, and e-mail disability@shsu.edu). They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

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, then I encourage you to register with the SHSU Services for Students with Disabilities and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: No accommodation can be made until you register with the Services for Students with Disabilities. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

<http://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/7ff819c3-39f3-491d-b688-db5a330ced92.pdf>

- **RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:**

Section 51.911(b) 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. Section 51.911 (a) (2) defines a religious holy day as: "a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20...." 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 861001 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. A student desiring to absent himself/herself from a scheduled class in order to observe (a) religious holy day(s) shall present to each instructor involved a written statement concerning the religious holy day(s). 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. For a complete listing of the university policy, see:

[/dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf](http://dept/academic-affairs/documents/aps/students/861001.pdf)

- **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. This policy is not intended to discourage the occasional visiting of classes by responsible persons. Obviously, however, the visiting of a particular class should be occasional and not regular, and it should in no way constitute interference with registered members of the class or the educational process.

- **INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS:**

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

- **CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT:**

The Code of Student Conduct and Discipline is found at the following link: <https://www.shsu.edu/students/guide/dean/codeofconduct.html>. I expect students to show respect for everyone in the classroom—the instructor, students, guests—through both words and actions. I ask students not to do other work during class, to place cell phones on silent mode, and to put away other distractions: social media devices, newspapers, a photo of your significant other in scanty clothes, etc. If something else needs your attention during class time, don't come to class.

- **STUDY TIPS:**

The best way to succeed in this course is to attend regularly having read the assigned work for that day. Ask questions—particularly about terminology and approaches that are unclear. Schedule a time to meet with the professor at some point in the term—preferably early in order to get a better sense of his personality. If you need help with reading, writing, or other study assistance, you should take advantage of the resources listed below:

The SAM Center

The Student Advising and Mentoring Center, also known as the SAM Center, offers a wide variety of services for the students of Sam Houston State University. We offer academic advisement and enrichment services to all undergraduate and graduate students. The SAM Center is a resource dedicated to helping students adjust to academic life at Sam Houston State University. Services available include career testing, aid with time management, and study skills. The center has grown rapidly since we've been open and with new programs being offered, our students are taking more advantage of our resources. With a great faculty and staff, all students are encouraged to look into any of the programs we have available. The SAM Center is located in Academic Building 4 (AB4) on the second floor, room 210. AB4 is located on the corner of Bowers Blvd. and Ave. I. For more information, go to http://www.shsu.edu/~sam_www/index.html. Or call one of the numbers listed below:



Toll Free: (866) 364-5211
Houston Area: (281) 657-6432

Phone: (936) 294-4444

Fax: (936) 294-1149

The Academic Success Center

You may know this better as either the SHSU Writing Center or the SHSU Reading Center, but these have been merged to form a comprehensive, one-stop source for aid. The Academic Success Center offers a variety of academic support including peer tutoring programs for writing, math/statistics, and reading skills. There is also an online writing lab and a supplemental instruction program. We are open 8 am to 7 pm, Monday-Thursday, 8 am to 3pm on Friday, and 2 to 7 pm on Sunday. Appointments are made by calling 936-294-3680. Further information is on our website, www.shsu.edu/asc..



“Let us go then,
you and I” – “The
Love Song of J.
Alfred Prufrock”

“She would have been a
good woman, if it had
been somebody there to
shoot her every minute of
her life.” – “A Good Man
Is Hard to Find”





Schedule of Assigned Readings:

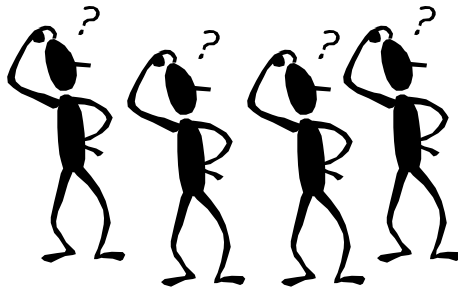
9

BELOW IS THE DAILY CALENDAR FOR READINGS AND WORK STUDENTS SHOULD PREPARE AND BRING TO CLASS. WITH A CLASS THAT MEETS ONLY ONCE A WEEK, THE ASSIGNMENTS FOR EACH WEEK ARE SIGNIFICANT. GETTING BEHIND IS A BAD OPTION!

Wednesday, 1/17	Welcome to Class; the Syllabus; The Work of Reading
Monday, 1/22	O'Connor, "The River" On Blackboard
Wednesday, 1/24	Clemens, "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" On Blackboard Clemens, "A True Story" Clemens, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog"
Monday, 1/29	James, excerpt from <i>The Art of Fiction</i> (pp.47-49 in Bedford) James, <i>Daisy Miller</i> , part I
Wednesday, 1/31	James, <i>Daisy Miller</i> , part II
Monday, 2/5	Chopin, "The Storm" Chopin, "Désirée's Baby" On Blackboard
Wednesday, 2/7	Jewett, "The Foreigner"
Monday, 2/12	Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask" Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine"
Wednesday, 2/14	Crane, "The Open Boat" Dreiser, "Butcher Rogaum's Door"
Friday, 2/16	First Annotation Due
Monday, 2/19	EXAM ONE
Wednesday, 2/21	Modernism Robinson, "Richard Cory" Robinson, "Miniver Cheevy" Robinson, "The Mill" Frost, "Mending Wall" Frost, "Home Burial" Frost, "'Out, Out—'"
Monday, 2/26	Pound, excerpt from "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" (pp. 530-32 in Bedford)

	Pound, "To Whistler, American" On Blackboard Pound, "The Rest" Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> (Section I)
Wednesday, 2/28	Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i> (entire poem) Eliot, "Journey of the Magi"
Monday, 3/5	Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar" Stevens, "The Death of a Soldier" Stevens, "The Snow Man" Stevens, "Evening Without Angels" On Blackboard Stevens, "Of Modern Poetry" Williams, "Tract" Williams, "Spring and All" Williams, "This is Just to Say"
Wednesday, 3/7	Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (pp. 546-49 in Bedford) Hughes, "Children and Poetry" On Blackboard Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" Hughes, "Negro" Hughes, "Mother to Son, Hughes, "Jazzonia" Hughes, "The Cat and the Saxophone (2 .m.)" On Blackboard Hughes, "The Weary Blues" Hughes, "I, Too" Hughes, "Christ in Alabama" Hughes, "Harlem"
Friday, 3/9	First Paper Due
Monday, 3/12	SPRING BREAK
Wednesday, 3/14	SPRING BREAK
Monday, 3/19	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i> (pp. 11-77)
Wednesday, 3/21	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i> (79-157) Hemingway, "On Writing" On Blackboard
Monday, 3/26	Fitzgerald, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair" On Blackboard Parker, "The Waltz" On Blackboard
Wednesday, 3/28	Faulkner, "Barn Burning"
Monday, 4/2	Wright, "Almos' a Man"
Wednesday, 4/4	EXAM TWO

Friday, 4/6	Second Annotation Due
Monday, 4/9	Postmodernism Welty, "The Petrified Man" On Blackboard Welty, "Lily Daw and the Three Ladies"
Wednesday, 4/11	O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" O'Connor, "Introduction to <i>A Memoir of Mary Ann</i> " On Blackboard
Monday, 4/16	Bishop, "The Fish" Bishop, "Filling Station" On Blackboard Bishop, "One Art"
Wednesday, 4/18	Barthelme, "Some of Us Have Been Threatening Our Friend Colby" (available at http://www.eskimo.com/~jessamyn/barth/colby.html) Morrison, "Recitatif"
Monday, 4/23	Cisneros, "My Wicked, Wicked Ways" On Blackboard Cisneros, "Loose Woman" On Blackboard Diaz, "Invierno"
Wednesday, 4/25	O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> (pp. Dedication page-84)
Friday, 4/27	Second Paper Due
Monday, 4/30	O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> (pp. 85-170)
Wednesday, 5/2	O'Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> (pp. 171-end)
Friday, 5/4	Third Annotation Due
Wednesday, 5/9	Final Exam at 5 p.m.



Annotated Bibliography Assignment

An annotated bibliography is simply a list of critical texts containing:

- a complete bibliographic entry for each critical/scholarly essay (students must use MLA style).
- a paragraph briefly summarizing the major arguments and ideas in the critical/scholarly essay.
- a paragraph that responds to and evaluates the arguments and ideas in the critical/scholarly essay in light of the reader's interpretation of the literary work discussed by the critical/scholarly essay.

All the components must be on double-spaced, typed pages, with the bibliographic entry at the top of the page.

The key here is that one entry **MUST** be correct, and students will have three chances to create one. Once a student succeeds in writing a correct annotation, he or she does not need to deal with the remaining chances to do one. In other words, do it right the first time—earning either an A or an A-, and you need do no more. But if you fail to do annotation one correctly, you must do annotation two, and if needed, annotation three.

Below are the articles that students must annotate in the order they should be done. These articles are discussions of literary works assigned for this class, and the annotations have different due dates appropriate to when the literary works are being read in the course. Here are the assigned articles:

- In connection with *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, use "'You Could Be Judas': *Pudd'nhead Wilson's* Black Slaveowner" by Heather Nelson. This submission is due on **Friday, February 16 by 5 p.m.** This article **must** be found using the MLA International Bibliography in the SHSU library database collection. Be aware that the database will give you a bibliographic citation that it SAYS is MLA style, but this claim is often false. Feel free to use the form available through the database, but check it against the *MLA Handbook*.
- In connection with *In Our Time*, use "The Unifying Consciousness of a Divided Conscience: Nick Adams as Author of *In Our Time*," by Debra A. Modellmog. This article **must** be found using the MLA International Bibliography in the SHSU library database collection. Be aware that the database will give you a bibliographic citation that it SAYS is MLA style, but this claim is often false. Feel free to use the form available through the database, but check it against the *MLA Handbook*. This entry is due **Friday, April 6 by 5 p.m.**
- In connection with *The Things They Carried*, use "'I feel Close to Myself': Solipsism and US Imperialism in Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*" by Michael Tavel Clarke. It **must** be found using the MLA International Bibliography in the SHSU library database collection. Be aware that the database will give you a bibliographic citation that it SAYS is MLA style, but this claim is

*analyzes Judge Driscoll and notes the same pattern of satire/praise seen in the case of Roxy--though it is less love than his adherence to his code that makes him sympathetic..

*notes that the Twins show how money leads to slavery in their presentation of their past.

**concludes the book is related to Twain's biographical financial problems and is definitely consistent, coherent and unified.

Step 3: Develop these main ideas into a coherent summary.

In the paragraph below, you will see how I formed the notes listed above into a coherent paragraph. By "coherent," I don't mean that I managed to put every note into the paragraph. Rather, I arranged the notes so that the overall sense of what the article was trying to communicate is made clear. **Also, you will notice that each time I mention something specifically mentioned in the article, I cite the article parenthetically.** I use citations when I quote as well as when I simply refer to ideas found in the article.

Spangler argues that despite criticism labeling *Pudd'nhead Wilson* as a flawed work focusing on the issues of either race or "environmental determinism" (28), the novel is in fact a highly unified and consistent work concerning "obsession with property" and "the moral and spiritual consequences of this obsession" (29). Spangler supports this assertion by noting how property issues (the theft of money and Tom being sold by creditors) frame the novel and by an analysis of the novel's major characters. He comments that "Tom makes sense only as a nearly allegorical figure of the obsession with property to the exclusion of all other human concerns" (31), and he shows that Wilson serves as Tom's "foil" (32) or negative image. In addition, he shows that Roxy and Judge Driscoll reflect both obsession and rejection of property, though each becomes sympathetic only when she/he opts to act by some motive other than financial gain: love in the case of Roxy and his aristocratic code in the case of the Judge (34-36). He even, quite briefly, notes that the Twins' story of their youth demonstrates "slavery to property, to economic motives . . . reduces one to property, to slavery" (37)--exactly the consequence Tom suffers.

Step 4: Evaluate the article's ideas in light of your own interpretation of the literary text. It helps to have finished reading the text before trying to do this.

In the paragraph below, you will find my "evaluation" of the article. While this begins with my initial response, I don't make my "feelings" the centerpiece of my evaluation. Rather, I try to confront or deal with the article's ideas. You may note that I make reference to another article I've read. You probably will not have that resource, but you can bring to bear the knowledge and insights that have been covered in lectures and discussions in class. The key to a successful evaluation is for you to show that you know **both** the primary text and the article extremely well. You want your knowledge of both these to shine, not the power of your thumb to point up or down.

On first reading, Spangler's argument struck me as convincing. Everything he says is well-supported and reasonable, leading to the conclusion that he is right to direct readers away from attempts to understand the novel only in terms of race or environmental determinism. However, subsequent readings and thought lead me to notice two things. First, there is great deal of the novel with Spangler ignores. In focusing on character and plot, he tends to ignore the novel's language and humor, and, as Marvin Fisher and Michael Elliott point out in their article, "*Pudd'nhead Wilson: Half a Dog Is Worse than None*," language and humor in the novel create an impression at least as strong as its plot and characters. Second, race and the role of environment in determining personality are not issues that can just be tossed aside for a focus on property. Both play key roles in the novel. And while they may not create or sustain the novel's unity, to ignore them would be about as useful as ignoring an elephant in a living room when one attempts to describe that room's decor. Even if Spangler is correct that a focus on property is what guided the writing of the novel, its use of race and environmental determinism inevitably draws readers' interest. While Spangler's arguments should not be ignored, I can't help wishing he had found ways to accommodate these two key issues in his analysis.

To help you, on page 16 of this syllabus is a second example of a biographic entry and annotation. The source is, as with the essays you will be assigned, an article in a scholarly journal. With the addition of



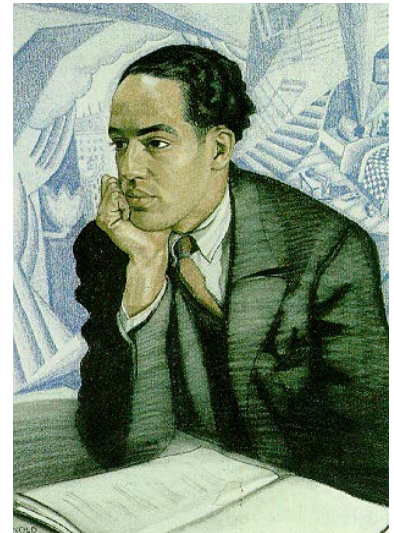
an MLA-style heading, it looks much as I expect your submissions to me to look. In other words, make the annotation you submit to me look like the one on page 16.

If you need additional help with this project, particularly with the bibliographic entry, you need only ask. I will be happy to assist you. However, it is also essential that you consult an 8th edition *MLA Handbook*. Guessing about MLA style will kill your grade!



**Never put off until
tomorrow what you can do
the day after tomorrow.
~Mark Twain**

**Looks like what drives me crazy
Don't have no effect on you--
But I'm gonna keep on at it
Till it drives you crazy, too.
~ Langston Hughes**



Joe Blow

Professor Donahoo

English 361w.02

25 August 2005

Dunleavy, Linda. "Sanctuary, Sexual Difference, and the Problem of Rape." *Studies in American Fiction*, vol. 24, no. 2, 1996, pp.171-191. *MLA International Bibliography*, doi:
<https://doi.org/10.1353/saf.1996.0010>.

Dunleavy analyzes Faulkner's novel *Sanctuary* from the perspective of gender to discover what the novel says about rape. Her discovery is that, while criticism has tended to view women in the novel as "inherently rapable" (171), the novel actually shows that rape is an act of violence resulting not from biological weakness in women but from social "configurations of power" (172). By this phrase, Dunleavy means that rape occurs as women are made to appear socially powerless. Thus Temple Drake does not cause or invite rape by being sexy but by being in a position of weakness. Moreover, Popeye does not rape Temple because he is attracted to her but to demonstrate or claim a power over her. Thus the famous physical rape in the novel mirrors other relationships of domination in the novel--particularly that of Horace and his wife and that of Temple and her father.

The attractiveness of this argument is that it de-sensationalizes the novel. It helps show that the rape is not used to shock or attract readers but to emphasize a social aspect of Southern life during the 1920s. It makes "rape" a metaphor for the avid use of power Faulkner displays in the novel. This argument, however, may intellectualize for some male readers an act that is reprehensible. In other words, this article, though powerful, does not totally convince me that Faulkner has made a good choice in using rape as a metaphor for power relationships. Moreover, Temple is not powerless. Her social status and family (Faulkner 54) confer a great deal of power, but she fails to recognize it or use it until after she is victimized.



Paper Assignments: Literary Periods

For this course, I want students to see how an awareness of the literary period in which a literary text is produced can serve as a guide to understanding the ideas that a literary work contains and plays with. In other words, I want students to see something I hope I demonstrate frequently in class: a sense that a work of literature is part of a dialogue with its era. Therefore, this assignment asks students to think about the literary works named in each assignment in connection to some specific topic of interest or importance in that time period.

Students will have two opportunities to earn the highest possible grade for this assignment. A version of the paper generated by each of the assignments is **due on Friday, March 9** no later than 10 p.m. Students who earn at least a “C” on this paper and who are satisfied with their grade will have completed this assignment. However, anyone who earns a grade lower than a “C” or who wishes to try to earn a higher grade than that received on the first submission may turn in a **second version of the paper on Friday, April 27** no later than 10 p.m. Anyone failing to turn in a paper on the first due date earns an automatic “F” for this assignment. The grade for this assignment will determine one half (50%) of a student’s course grade; therefore, it is to every student’s benefit to have as high a grade as possible. **Also, please note** that assignments are **NOT** due on a day we have class. Students may submit the paper on the due date as a **Microsoft Word attachment** to an e-mail sent to me; or they turn in a **hard copy of the paper to the English Department secretaries in Evans 458** or they turn the paper in prior to the due date during a class meeting. Read each assignment carefully, and ask questions if you have ANY doubt about what to do to succeed with that assignment.



ASSIGNMENT ONE: Realism and the Supernatural

For this assignment, students are required to work with Henry James’s short story, “The Jolly Corner” that may be found in the *Bedford Anthology of American Literature*. Like much of James’s late writing, this is a challenging—difficult—work, and it has an odd twist since it is a ghost story. So why is a writer noted for his Realism

writing about ghosts? That’s the question that this paper will attempt to answer by focusing on what the story suggests about ghosts, believing in ghosts, the meaning of ghosts. In seeking to find the answer, students who take on this assignment will need, of course, to read the story carefully and look for some critical commentary on the story using resources located on the library shelves or in the library’s electronic databases. However, they should also find two or three commentaries about ghosts in the late 19th century. These may be as simple as this website: <http://www.victorianweb.org/victorian/religion/spirit.html>. Or they may be much more in depth. That’s up to each student.

In any case, after carefully studying the story and completing research, students should devise a complex and argumentative thesis such as:

Though the late 19th century was a period where everyone believed ghosts were responsible for everything that happened, James's "The Jolly Corner" depicts ghosts as limp, ineffectual creatures that lived in toilets and wanted only to evolve into gaseous anomalies and therefore encourages ignoring of all such supernatural manifestations.

This is a silly thesis that fits neither research nor James's story, but it suggests the kind of specific complexity students need in their thesis statements.

Also, it is key that each student's paper follow the road map laid out the paper's thesis. I **STRONGLY** encourage students to outline their papers and to bring those outlines and thesis statements to a conference with me. An outline based on the thesis above might look like this:

- I. Introduction: late 19th century view of ghosts**
- II. "Jolly Corner"'s images of limpness for ghosts**
- III. "Jolly Corner"'s symbols ineffectualness tied to ghosts**
- IV. "Jolly Corner"'s plot of ghost evolution.**
- V. Conclusion: "Jolly Corner"'s encouragement of ignoring ghosts**

In contrast to a thesis that allows this kind of clear organization, students should avoid simple, vague thesis statements such as: "James's 'The Jolly Corner' shares many ideas with its time period about ghosts"; or "Ghosts appear throughout James's 'The Jolly Corner'" ; or "This paper will show the relationship between "The Jolly Corner" and 19th century ideas about ghosts." These thesis statements are all disasters waiting to appear on your paper.

In grading the paper, I will use the following criteria:

- Have the two works been placed into dialogue? How well?
- Does it have a clear thesis that states the insight gained by placing the two works into dialogue?
- Does the paper use a variety of types of evidence to support its claims about the two works? Does it avoid plot summary?
- Does the paper follow MLA paper format?
- Is the paper free of mechanical/grammatical errors?
- Does it avoid plot summary, an unnamed reader, and trying to cure world-wide insomnia? Being boring is a sin that students as well as professors are quite capable of. Repent of it.

Finally, as I said earlier, ask questions. Meet with me. Get my help. Doing so will insure you are on the way to a great paper grade!

THERE IS NOTHING TO WRITING. ALL YOU DO IS SIT DOWN AT A TYPEWRITER AND BLEED. —ERNEST HEMINGWAY



Ernest Hemingway
"Papa"



ASSIGNMENT TWO: Modernism and Women

For this assignment, students are required to work with William Faulkner's short story, "That Evening Sun" which can be found in the *Bedford Anthology of American Literature*. Students will be asked to look at this story in light of changes and non-changes in the roles and views of women in American society and culture between 1914-1945. In a period that brought to light the image of the modern woman first as flapper and then as Rosie the Riveter, what exactly was happening to the way women were viewed in this culture? More importantly, how does Faulkner's short story that shows at least two different generations of women reflect, deepen, or contradict these views? In order to understand this, students will need to do some research about women in this period—anything from a simple source such as the relevant passages on this website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_women_in_the_United_States. Hopefully, however, students may also elect to do some research on the library shelves and databases. Armed with this information, students should study Faulkner's story carefully and get some help from library research. The goal is to come up with a complex thesis that shows the ways Faulkner's story is clarified by understanding its relationship to views of women that circulated in its literary time period. Such a complex thesis might look like something like this:

As the sense of what it means to be female underwent many stresses and changes in the first half of the 20th century, Faulkner's short story "That Evening Sun" focuses on the changes in the clowning industry for women, enabling women to be praised for their overuse of make-up, small size, and general comic nature—ideas that were also being widely embraced in America at the time.

Such a thesis, though its ideas are utterly stupid, suggests the type of complexity students should aim for, and this should lead students to develop a clear outline for the paper based on this thesis—an outline that might look something like the following:

- I. **Introduction: key changes for American women from 1914-1945.**
- II. **The excessive make-up of Suzie in "That Evening Sun" stressed by images and word choice.**
- III. **Sally in "That Evening Sun" and her relationship with size.**
- IV. **Trixie in "That Evening Sun" as a comic character.**
- V. **Conclusion: Faulkner's women reflect general historical trends.**

One other piece of advice: be sure your thesis is clear but complex. Here is a bad thesis: "'That Evening Sun' by Faulkner has much to say about the changing roles of women." Here is another bad thesis: "I will prove that how Faulkner's 'That Evening Sun' both agrees with and differs from historical views of women in the Modernist era." Such vague thesis statements generally lead to a disaster on student papers. Avoid them!

In grading the paper, I will use the following criteria:

- Have the two works been placed into dialogue? How well?
- Does it have a clear thesis that states the insight gained by placing the two works into dialogue?
- Does the paper use a variety of types of evidence to support its claims about the two works? Does it avoid plot summary?
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One should either be sad or joyful. Contentment is a warm sty for eaters and sleepers. – Eugene O'Neill



ASSIGNMENT THREE: Postmodern Civil Rights



For this assignment, students are required to work with Ernest Gaines's short story, "The Sky is Gray," which can be found on Blackboard. This story told by a young African American boy will give students the opportunity to explore the relationship between the events and characters in Gaines's story and the ways that African American people in the Civil Rights era thought of themselves and the best ways to change their condition in an America that remained highly divided on issues of race. To do this, students will need to do some historical research into Black identity in this period, using both simple sources such as

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-changing-definition-of-african-american-4905887/>, but hopefully they will also spend time doing some research in the library shelves and databases.

Armed with this information, students should do a careful study of Gaines's story to determine its views of what is, what influences, and what needs to happen to African Americans' view of themselves in the era of emerging Civil Rights. The result will be a complex thesis such as this:

Though the surface of "The Sky Is Gray" suggests it is a story of sexual obsession, it is more accurately a commentary of the early days of the Civil Rights movement in the US, noting the movement's obsession with onions and its interest in extraterrestrials seen through its symbols, plot pattern, and allusions.

Such a thesis, though its ideas are utterly inane, suggests the type of complexity students should aim for in their thesis statements—a presentation of ideas that shape a clear outline for the paper's argument—an outline that might look like the following:

I. Introduction: the story's misleading surface.

- II. **Onion imagery in the story.**
- III. **The story's plot pattern of a space journey.**
- IV. **Allusions in the story to famous extraterrestrials.**
- V. **Conclusion: the diversity of the Civil Rights movement as a reflection of historical realities.**

In grading the paper, I will use the following criteria:

- Have the two works been placed into dialogue? How well?
- Does it have a clear thesis that states the insight gained by placing the two works into dialogue?
- Does the paper use a variety of types of evidence to support its claims about the two works? Does it avoid plot summary?
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