

COURSE OUTLINE

English 348 - Contemporary Literature
Dr. Lucas Carpenter
Fall 2009 Semester

I. Objectives of the Course

Through class participation, the close reading of assigned literary works, objective tests, two formal essays (1000 words), a midterm examination, and a final examination, the student will be graded on his/her ability:

- A. To identify and examine the major themes, styles and movements which define contemporary literature.
- B. To recognize and define the various literary-historical backgrounds against which contemporary literature appears.
- C. To establish and explore the timeless concerns of the literature to be read in the course and how those concerns speak directly to the contemporary reader.

II. Student Requirements for Completing the Course

- A. Brief quizzes which will precede the discussion of assigned literary works. There are no make-ups for missed quizzes.
- B. Several in-class writing assignments. There are no make-ups for these assignments.
- C. Two critical essays (1000 words each) to be assigned later. One letter grade will be deducted for each day a paper is late.
- D. Midterm examination composed of factual and essay questions devoted to the literature covered in the first half of the course.
- E. A comprehensive final examination composed of factual and essay questions.
- F. Satisfactory participation in class discussion, which can only be accomplished if the attendance policy is observed.

III. Attendance Policy

- A. Although attendance is not mandatory, it is to the student's distinct benefit to be present in class, and the student will be held responsible for any assignments made when he/she is absent. After three (3) absences, one point will be deducted from the final grade for each additional absence.
- B. Students who are late must assume personal responsibility to see that the record is altered at the end of class. This record will not be changed at a later date.

IV. **Grading Practices**

The grade will be determined by an evaluation of the entire semester's work, with special emphasis on fulfillment of course objectives. Grading will generally adhere to the following:

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|------------------------------|-----|
| Class participation | 5% |
| Quizzes and in-class writing | 20% |
| Two formal essays | 40% |
| Midterm exam | 15% |
| Final exam | 20% |

V. **Textbooks**

On the Road, by Jack Kerouac

Riddley Walker, by Thomas Hoban

The Crying of Lot 49, by Thomas Pynchon

Catch 22 by Joseph Heller

Mumbo Jumbo, by Ishmael Reed

Song of Solomon, by Toni Morrison

Blood Meridian, by Cormac McCarthy

The Things They Carried, by Tim O'Brien

White Noise, by Don De Lillo

VI. **Weekly Outline of Topics to be Covered**

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|-----------------|--|
| Aug. 26-28 | Background |
| Aug. 31-Sept. 4 | <u>On the Road</u> |
| Sept. 8-11 | <u>Crying of Lot 49</u> |
| Sept. 14-18 | <u>Riddley Walker</u> |
| Sept. 21-25 | <u>Riddley Walker</u> 1st Essay Due |
| Sept. 28-Oct. 2 | <u>Mumbo Jumbo</u> |
| Oct. 5-9 | <u>Mumbo Jumbo</u> Midterm Exam |
| Oct. 12-13 | Fall Break |

VI. Weekly Outline of Topics to be Covered (continued)

| | |
|----------------|---|
| Oct. 14-16 | <u>Song of Solomon</u> |
| Oct. 19-23 | <u>Song of Solomon / Blood Meridian</u> |
| Oct. 26-30 | <u>Blood Meridian / Catch 22</u> |
| Nov. 2-6 | <u>Catch 22</u> |
| Nov. 9-13 | <u>The Things They Carried</u> |
| Nov. 16-20 | <u>The Things They Carried</u> 2nd essay due |
| Nov. 25-27 | Thanksgiving Recess |
| Nov. 30-Dec. 4 | <u>White Noise</u> |
| Dec. 7 | Last Class |
| Dec. 10 | 2-5 p.m. FINAL EXAM |

VII. Office Hours

My office is located in Humanities Hall, Room 105, and my office hours are the following:

Monday - Friday 2:00-3:00 p.m.

If these hours are ever inconvenient, appointments can be arranged. Please do not hesitate to see me about anything that is of concern to you.

VIII. Honor Code

I assume that you are familiar with the Honor Code and that you know what plagiarism is.