ENGLISH 511: LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN FICTION
Fall 2011, TR 4:10-6pm, 33-289

Instructor: Dr. Sophia Forster
Contact: forster@calpoly.edu / 756-2294
Office: 47-35M
Office hours: M 12:15-1:15pm, T 2-4pm, W 12:15-1:15pm, and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS
Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (Signet Classics, 2009)
William Dean Howells, A Hazard of New Fortunes (Penguin Classics, 2001)
Sarah Orne Jewett, The Country of the Pointed Firs (Signet Classics, 2009)
Edith Wharton, The House of Mirth (Penguin Classics, 1993)

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
This course will survey developments in American fiction written between the end of the Civil War and opening years of the twentieth century. We will examine the three dominant genres of the period, realism, regionalism, and naturalism, in relevant historical contexts, including: the rapid development of industrial capitalism and urbanization; the failure of Reconstruction in the South; the massive increase in immigration; the rise of the “new woman”; and significant changes to the literary marketplace.

This course aims to teach you to:
1) think critically and creatively about late-nineteenth-century American fiction.
2) be familiar with significant writers and genres in this period of American fiction, and with the connections between them.
3) be able to conduct original research in this period of American fiction and integrate criticism (secondary sources) effectively into your own analyses.
4) speak coherently in a seminar format on both the texts and secondary material related to them.

ASSIGNMENTS
Engagement 20%
Oral Presentation 15%
Short Paper 15%
In-Class Exam 15%
Research Paper 35%

The success of this seminar depends largely on your contributions. Thus, both regular attendance and regular participation are essential, and your fulfillment of both requirements will be measured in your engagement grade.

Each person will also give a 10-15 minute oral presentation on a critical book relevant to this period of American literature. You will follow this up with a 5-7 page short paper, due a week after your presentation. See handout for information on the presentation and paper.

You will write a 90-minute in-class exam. Following the format of the M.A. exam, this one will give you a choice between three questions on late-nineteenth-century American fiction.

The final 10-12 page research paper will make an original argument about one or more of the literary texts we’ve read this quarter; it may further develop work you’ve done in the short paper, or it may address an entirely different text or texts. This paper should show a broad awareness of the most significant critical work on the text(s) under consideration, and engage directly with that criticism which is specifically relevant to your topic/argument. It should be formatted according to MLA guidelines.
**Grading Standards**

Engagement will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- regular and punctual attendance
- regular participation which shows that you’ve read the texts carefully and thoughtfully
- respectful attention to the contributions of other class members

Oral presentations will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- responds to the assignment
- presenter speaks clearly and confidently from notes rather than reading a paper, making eye contact and maintaining an appropriate pace

Papers will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- development of a clear, appropriately complex, and insightful argument about the text(s) under consideration
- contextualization of the argument with regards to the relevant criticism
- writing style shows appropriate level of sophistication

The in-class exam will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria

- responds to the prompt
- presents a clearly formulated argument backed up by strong supporting evidence

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

~ This schedule is subject to change

~ Texts marked with an asterisk are included in The Norton Anthology ~

~ Texts followed by “BB” will be available on Blackboard, under the “Course Materials” menu heading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings Due</th>
<th>Presentation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<td>Week 1: Sept. 19-23</td>
<td>Tues: Introduction to the period</td>
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<td>Thurs: <em>Bedford</em> Introduction to period</td>
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<td></td>
<td>William Dean Howells, “Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading: An Impersonal Explanation”*</td>
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<td>Henry James, “The Art of Fiction”* and the 1907 Preface to <em>The Portrait of a Lady</em> (pp. 41-46)</td>
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<td><strong>Realism</strong></td>
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<td>Thurs: Twain continued</td>
<td>Stacey Margolis, <em>The Public Life of Privacy in Nineteenth-Century</em></td>
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<td>REGIONALISM</td>
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| **Week 5: Oct. 17-21** | **Tues: Joel Chandler Harris, “The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story” and “How Mr. Rabbit Was Too Sharp for Mr. Fox” (1881)*; “Free Joe and the Rest of the World” (1886) BB**  
Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine” (1887) and “The Passing of Grandison” (1901)*  
**Thurs: Sarah Orne Jewett, The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896)**  
**Richard Brodhead, Cultures of Letters (1993)**  
**Stephanie Foote, Regional Fictions (2001)** |
| **Week 6: Oct. 24-28** | **Tues: Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun” and “The Revolt of ‘Mother’” (1891)*  
Hamlin Garland, “Under the Lion’s Paw” (1889)* and “Up the Coule” (1891) BB  
**Thurs: Abraham Cahan, The Imported Bridegroom (1898)***  
**Tom Lutz, Cosmopolitan Vistas (2004)**  
**Philip Joseph, American Literary Regionalism in a Global Age (2007)** |
| **NATURALISM** |  |
| **Week 7: Oct. 31-Nov. 4** | **Tues: In-class exam**  
**Thurs: Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage (1895)**  
**Lee Clark Mitchell, Determined Fictions (1988)** |
| **Week 8: Nov. 7-11** | **Tues: Theodore Dreiser, “True Art Speaks Plainly”’ (1903)*  
and Sister Carrie (1900)**  
**Thurs: Dreiser continued**  
**Jennifer Fleissner, Women, Compulsion, Modernity (2004)** |
| **Week 9: Nov. 14-18** | **Tues: Edith Wharton, The House of Mirth (1905)**  
**Thurs: Wharton continued**  
**Gavin Jones, American Hungers (2009)** |
| **Week 10: Nov. 21-25** | **Tues: Kate Chopin, The Awakening (1899)***  
**Thurs: Thanksgiving Break** |
| **Week 11: Nov. 28-Dec. 2** | **Tues: Research paper presentations**  
**Thurs: Research paper presentations** |
| **Exam week: Dec. 5-9** | **Research papers due Dec. 5 by 4pm** |