

ENGLISH 511: LATE-NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICAN FICTION

Fall 2011, TR 4:10-6pm, 33-289

Instructor: Dr. Sophia Forster

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Office hours: M 12:15-1:15pm, T 2-4pm, W 12:15-1:15pm, and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 7th ed., Volume C: 1865-1914

Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (Puffin Classics, 2009)

Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (Signet Classics, 2009)

William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (Penguin Classics, 2001)

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (Penguin Classics, 2003)

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*

Date	Readings Due	Presentation
INTRODUCTION		
Week 1: Sept. 19-23	Tues: Introduction to the period	
	Thurs: <i>Bedford</i> Introduction to period William Dean Howells, "Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading: An Impersonal Explanation"* Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"* and the 1907 Preface to <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> (pp. 41-46)	
REALISM		
Week 2: Sept. 26-30	Tues: William Dean Howells, <i>A Hazard of New Fortunes</i> (1889)	Michael Davitt Bell, <i>The Problem of American Realism</i> (1993)
	Thurs: Howells continued	William M. Morgan, <i>Questionable Charity</i> (2004)
Week 3: Oct. 3-7	Tues: Henry James, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> (1881)	Alfred Habegger, <i>Gender, Fantasy, and Realism in American Literature</i> (1982)
	Thurs: James continued	Kenneth Warren, <i>Black and White Strangers</i> (1993)
Week 4: Oct. 10-14	Tues: Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> (1885)*	Myra Jehlen, <i>Readings at the Edge of Literature</i> (2002)
	Thurs: Twain continued	Stacey Margolis, <i>The Public Life of Privacy in Nineteenth-Century</i>

		<i>American Literature</i> (2005)
REGIONALISM		
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)*	Richard Brodhead, <i>Cultures of Letters</i> (1993)
	Thurs: Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> (1896)	Stephanie Foote, <i>Regional Fictions</i> (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	Tom Lutz, <i>Cosmopolitan Vistas</i> (2004)
	Thurs: Abraham Cahan, <i>The Imported Bridegroom</i> (1898)*	Philip Joseph, <i>American Literary Regionalism in a Global Age</i> (2007)
NATURALISM		
Week 7: Oct. 31-Nov. 4	Tues: In-class exam	
	Thurs: Stephen Crane, <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> (1895)	Lee Clark Mitchell, <i>Determined Fictions</i> (1988)
Week 8: Nov. 7-11	Tues: Theodore Dreiser, "True Art Speaks Plainly" (1903)* and <i>Sister Carrie</i> (1900)	Walter Benn Michaels, <i>The Gold Standard and the Logic of Naturalism</i> (1987)
	Thurs: Dreiser continued	Jennifer Fleissner, <i>Women, Compulsion, Modernity</i> (2004)
Week 9: Nov. 14-18	Tues: Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> (1905)	Amy Kaplan, <i>The Social Construction of American Realism</i> (1988)
	Thurs: Wharton continued	Gavin Jones, <i>American Hungers</i> (2009)
Week 10: Nov. 21-25	Tues: Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> (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