JEFFERSON COLLEGE

COURSE SYLLABUS

ENG229

AMERICAN LITERATURE AFTER 1865

3 Credit Hours

Prepared by:
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Revised Date: February 2010
by John Pleimann

Arts & Science Education
Dr. Mindy Selsor, Dean
I. CATALOGUE DESCRIPTION

A. Prerequisite: none

B. 3 semester credit hours

C. American Literature After 1865 examines American writing from the post-Civil War era to the present. Students will study the historical, philosophical, and cultural influences on American writers from Whitman and Dickinson to post-World War II moderns. American Literature 229 will partially fulfill the humanities requirement for the associate degree.

II. EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES/ASSESSMENT MEASURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students will analyze a focused aspect of a literary work.</th>
<th>Essay</th>
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<td>Students will evaluate and defend the quality of a literary work.</td>
<td>Debates</td>
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<td>Students will identify the historical, philosophical, social and political influences which shaped American literature.</td>
<td>Tests</td>
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<td>Oral presentations</td>
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<td>Students will compare and contrast ideas, writers and styles to better understand the overall pattern of literary thought from the Realism era to the Contemporary era.</td>
<td>Tests</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Journal responses</td>
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<td>Students will develop a vocabulary for discussing literary works.</td>
<td>Multiple-choice quizzes</td>
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<td>Students will distinguish between summary and analysis of literary work.</td>
<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Analytical essay</td>
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<td>Students will develop an appreciation of the nature, limits and possibilities of literary expression.</td>
<td>Journal responses</td>
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<td>Three thoughtful questions</td>
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III. OUTLINE OF TOPICS

A. Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson: Two Poetic Rebels

1. become familiar with Whitman's themes: democracy, the amplitude of America, the construction of his self and its reverberation through the selves of others, the power of the poet as prophet.
2. examine the questions Whitman poses in his writing and his provisional answers.
3. examine how Whitman supports and/or critiques the great nation-building of his time and how his views change over time.
4. analyze Whitman's rhetoric of freedom in terms of women's rights and attitudes toward slavery.
5. discuss Whitman and Romanticism; Whitman and transcendentalism.
6. become familiar with themes of Emily Dickinson: religion, death, love, pain, nature, beauty.
7. examine how Dickinson finds universal statements in very small things.
8. observe the contrasting moods of Dickinson: melancholy to exuberance, grief to joy, etc.
9. compare and contrast Whitman and Dickinson: style, themes, metaphors, imagery, etc.

B. Local Color Writers in American Literature: Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Sarah Orne Jewett, and Bret Harte
1. become familiar with local color writers of the literary world (1865-1890).
2. examine the works of local color writers in terms of some of the changes that took place between 1865 and 1890 in New England.
3. analyze animal imagery and symbolism in local colorists.
4. discuss the character types, customs, settings and speech of New England during this time period.
5. compare/contrast local colorists as recorders in fiction of New England life.

C. The Development of Realism in American Literature: Mark Twain, Willliam Dean Howells, Henry James, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Kate Chopin.
1. define realism and examine its relationship to local color writing.
2. examine the controversies among authors' definitions of realism as evidenced in the works of several writers of realism.
3. discuss and demonstrate various approaches to literary criticism: formalist, sociological, psychoanalytical.
4. read past and current critical views of writers of realism.
5. examine the embodiment of theme in character development, dialogue and interactions.
6. examine the works of realistic writers in historical context.
7. analyze literary devices in realism: imagery, symbolism, understatement, irony, humor, etc.

1. define naturalism in terms of the assigned reading.
2. examine the questions posed by writers of naturalism.
3. become aware that these writers do not establish certainty about characters or resolutions of thematic issues, but instead encourage the reader to enrich and re-evaluate ideas about action and thought.
4. examine naturalism in historical context as Americans pursue the American dream during a period of severe economic depression.
1. become familiar with twentieth century short stories, novels, and plays and examine the influence of previous writers on twentieth century writers.
2. examine the impact of World War I and World War II in early twentieth century prose.
3. discuss and analyze the impact of modern art and psychology on modernism in American literature.
4. become familiar with some of the themes of post World War II writers: violence, war, misfits, anti-heroes, the irrational and disordered.
5. become familiar with the Harlem Literary Renaissance of the 1920s and the second black literary renaissance in the last half of the twentieth century.
6. become familiar with the experimental techniques of later twentieth century prose writers (1960s-present).
7. become familiar with and analyze the works of some notable dramatists whose works range from familiar realism to obscure psychological surrealism.

1. develop an awareness of the change in the traditional relationship between the poets and their audiences.
2. become familiar with the twentieth century poets and examine the influence of previous writers.
3. examine the impact of World War I and II on early twentieth century poets.
4. discuss and analyze the impact of modern art and psychology on modernism in American literature.
5. become familiar with the themes of post-World War II poets: skepticism, observer/participant of visible calamities, the absurd and the grotesque.
6. become familiar with the poetry of the Harlem Literary Renaissance of the 1920s and the second black literary renaissance in the last half of the twentieth century.
IV. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

A. Lecture/Discussion
B. Reading of Text and Outside Readings
C. Assigned Writing Responses
D. Small Group Discussions/Analyses
E. Student Presentations

V. REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (with publication information)


VI. REQUIRED MATERIALS

Textbook

VII. SUPPLEMENTAL REFERENCES

Library's collection of American literature
Library's collection of American literary criticism
Periodicals and journals
American literature websites
Videos
Audio Cassettes

VIII. METHODS OF EVALUATION

A. Quizzes and tests
B. Class Participation
C. Assigned Reading Responses
D. Essay
E. Final Exam
F. The grading scale is as follows:
   90-100 = A
   80-89  = B
   70-79  = C
   60-69  = D
   Below 60 = F

IX. ADA STATEMENT

Any statement requiring special accommodations should inform the instructor and the Coordinator of Disability Support Services (Library; phone 636-797-3000, ext. 169).

X. ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT

All students are responsible for complying with campus policies as stated in the Student Handbook (see College website).