

# AMERICAN LITERATURE II (1865-PRESENT)

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English 2132, Fall 2021

M/W/F 1:00-1:50 and 2:00-2:50, Dunlap 313

Instructor: Dr. Ian Afflerbach

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Office Hours: MW 3-5:00 and by appointment, Dunlap 206D

Course Prerequisites: ENGL 1101/1102

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course surveys major movements, authors, and ideas in American literature from the Civil War to the present. We begin by exploring how regional writers sought to repair the deep wounds of war, and unify our diverse nation's forms of difference, into one shared "American" literature. Studying concepts like realism and naturalism, we will examine how writers responded to changing ideas about race, gender, immigration, and capitalism. Our next unit, on modernism, takes on some of the most dazzling and experimental works of the twentieth century; we will consider the institutional and social forces—from the "little magazines" to the Harlem Renaissance—that made this dramatic revolt in artistic standards possible. After World War II, we will look at the way American economic life shifted focus from production to consumption; we'll consider the ongoing struggle for racial recognition and social justice in America; and finally, we will also take some time to step back and reflect on just what "literature" means today, considering a few popular writers—and musicians—that are usually left outside of survey courses like this one. As we work through all these eras, we will consistently emphasize the need to situate literature within historical contexts, intellectual trends, and political debates. In so doing, we will learn to expand our understanding of aesthetic education, of the effects that literature can have upon its readers.

## REQUIRED MATERIALS

These two books must be purchased either at the [bookstore](#) or online. They must be print copies, not digital copies or ebooks, and they must be the correct edition (use ISBN numbers to make sure):

- Nella Larsen *Passing* [ISBN: 9780142437278]
- Don DeLillo *White Noise* [ISBN: 9780143105985]

All other readings available on D2L (Content/modules/readings).

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Exams 1, 2, 3** (20% each)

**Final "TED Talk" Essay** (20%)

**Participation** (20%) Attending and actively participating will be vital for succeeding in this class.

All students start with a default grade of 75, which can climb or fall as follows:

- A: Always prepared. Consistently responds to texts with insightful comments or relevant questions. Dialogues with instructor and peers.
- B: Always prepared. Listens actively in class and comments occasionally.
- C: Usually prepared, but sometimes late or tardy. Disengages, uses phone or laptop for purposes not related to class.
- D: Frequently tardy, absent, or unprepared. Appears consistently checked-out.
- F: Doesn't attend class often, or is disruptive when present.

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

**Literary History:** You will gain familiarity with major works in the American literary tradition since the Civil War and with the historical events and social movements to which they were responding.

**Reading:** You will develop more sophisticated habits for interpreting fiction and poetry, leaning to unpack connotations in language, grapple with ambiguity, and form judgments about meaning.

**Speaking:** During our discussions, you will be able to work on (a) building comfort in fluid group conversation, (b) preparing questions to contribute (c) eliminating verbal fillers.

**Writing:** Through our assignments, you can expect to work on (a) clear, concise expression of your ideas in prose, (b) detail-driven argument (c) readerly engagement, and (d) citation practices.

## HOW TO APPROACH THIS COURSE

**Active Participation:** Because our course will be driven by discussions, it is vital that you show up ready to be actively involved. This means volunteering your ideas and questions, commenting on and challenging our readings, and drawing upon your individual interpretations and experiences.

**Active Reading:** You must print, annotate, and bring to calls all our reading. Annotating a text, or “marking it up,” means taking notes, creating questions, and just recording places that interest, confused, amuse, or otherwise move you.

**Professionalism:** The classroom is a professional space and demands the same forms of etiquette as you would bring to a workplace. Your participation grade will decrease—or I may mark you absent—if you cannot (a) be on time each day, (b) come prepared each day with readings and notes, (c) respect your peers by refraining from any background chatter.

**Technology in the Classroom:** We will conduct discussions without laptops or cell phones. At all times, these devices should be kept out of sight (and silent); failure to do so will lead to lowered participation grade, or even an absence for the day.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance:** Students can miss **three** classes over the course of the semester, for any reason, without penalty. Each of the next three additional unexcused absences will deduct half a letter grade from the student’s final grade. Missing **seven** classes results in automatic failure. Absences can only be exempted by documentation from official sources (e.g., participation in official athletics, religious observance, medical note, or other campus activities). Students who have not done the pre-writing required or who sleep during class or who arrive late may be counted absent.

**Late Work:** If you anticipate a situation that will prevent you from finishing a project, you need to e-mail me *before* your due date, explain the situation, and propose a new deadline.

**Plagiarism:** Whether you intend to do so or not, passing off the words or ideas of others as your own is a serious academic offense. Pleading ignorance is no defense. If you are the least bit unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, please ask me and/or check [this website](#). Please also consult UNG’s [Student Code of Conduct](#).

## FINDING SUPPORT

**Instructor Contact:** Please try to visit office hours. If you have a scheduling conflict, let me know and we can find another time. Even one meeting per unit can have an enormous impact on your purpose and goals going forward. Email is the best way to reach me for any simple questions; I try to respond within 24 hours. But please double-check if the syllabus answers your question first!

**Outside Help:** Students should have a basic understanding of English grammar and a familiarity with the rules of standard English. If you are concerned about your basic grammar and mechanics, or would simply like [additional support](#) for your writing, please contact the [Writing Center](#) or Gainesville’s Academic Computing Tutoring and Testing Center ([ACIT Center](#)). I also wholeheartedly recommend the grammar, citation, and style guide offered by the [Owl at Purdue](#).

**Disability Services:** University of North Georgia is committed to equal access to its programs, services, and activities. Students who require accommodations must register with Disability Services and submit supporting documentation. Disability Services provides accommodation memos for eligible students to give to their instructors. Students are responsible for making arrangements with instructors, and must give reasonable prior notice of the need for accommodation

**Feeling Overwhelmed:** College can be a stressful time; don’t hesitate to ask for help if you’re feeling overly anxious, stressed, or depressed. UNG has two main ways to seek support: through the [Office of the Dean of Students](#) and through the counseling services offered by the [Student Center](#).

Please consult [UNG’s Supplemental Syllabus](#) for campus-wide regulations.

## COURSE CALENDAR

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Aug 23</b>	<b>Introduce Course</b>
	<b>Aug 25</b>	Emily Dickinson, poems from <i>Final Harvest</i> (1860s/1890s)
	<b>Aug 27</b>	Walt Whitman “Pioneers, O Pioneers!” (1865) and “America” (1888)
<b>TO BIND UP A NATION’S WOUNDS: DIFFERENCE AND PROGRESS</b>		
<b>2</b>	<b>Aug 31</b>	Mark Twain “Old Times on the Mississippi” I-III (1876)
	<b>Sep 1</b>	Brett Harte “The Luck of Roaring Camp” (1869)
	<b>Sep 3</b>	Sarah Orne Jewett “Deephaven Cronies” (1875)
<b>3</b>	<b>Sep 6</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
	<b>Sep 8</b>	Charles Chestnut “The Goophered Grapevine” (1887)
	<b>Sep 10</b>	Zitkala-Sa from <i>American Indian Stories</i> (1900)

4	Sep 13	W.E.B. Du Bois “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” (1903) and “The Comet” (1920)
	Sep 15	Sui Sin Far “Her Chinese Husband” (1910) and “Mrs. Spring Fragrance” (1912)
	Sep 17	Charlotte Perkins Gilman “The Yellow Wallpaper” and “Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)
5	Sep 20	Willa Cather “Paul’s Case” (1905)
	Sep 22	Frank Norris “A Caged Lion” (1894) and “Reversion to Type” (1897)
	Sep 24	<b>Exam 1</b>
<b>AFTER THE WAR: “MODERN” CULTURAL DIVISIONS</b>		
6	Sep 27	Ernest Hemingway “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place” (1933)
	Sep 29	T. S. Eliot <i>The Waste Land</i> [ <i>Dial</i> 1922 Version]
	Oct 1	T. S. Eliot <i>The Waste Land</i> [Annotated Version]
7	Oct 4	Muriel Rukeyser, from “The Book of the Dead” (1938)
	Oct 6	H.P. Lovecraft “Herbert West—Reanimator” (1922)
	Oct 8	C.L. Moore “Shambleau” (1934)
8	Oct 11	Claude McKay “America,” “Harlem Shadows,” “On Broadway” Langston Hughes “Harlem”
	Oct 13	Nella Larsen <i>Passing</i> Part I (1929)
	Oct 15	Nella Larsen <i>Passing</i> Part II
9	Oct 18	Nella Larsen <i>Passing</i> Part III
	Oct 20	Jean Toomer (1923) “Reapers,” “Portrait in Georgia,” and “Karintha”
	Oct 22	<b>Exam 2</b>
<b>CAMPUSES AND CONSUMERS: AMERICA SINCE WWII</b>		
10	Oct 25	Don DeLillo <i>White Noise</i> (1984) 1-60
	Oct 27	<i>White Noise</i> 60-100
	Oct 29	<i>White Noise</i> 100-150
11	Nov 1	Final Paper Discussion (and a reading catch-up day)
	Nov 3	<i>White Noise</i> 150-250
	Nov 5	<b>No Class</b>

12	Nov 8	<i>White Noise</i> 250-End
	Nov 10	Gwendolyn Brooks <i>A Street in Bronzeville</i> (1945) selections: “kitchenette building,” “a song in the front yard,” “the vacant lot”
	Nov 12	Gwendolyn Brooks (1960) "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi..." and “Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till”
13	Nov 15	Toni Morrison “Recitatif” (1983)
	Nov 17	Helena Maria Viramontes “The Moths” (1985)
	Nov 19	Junot Díaz, “The Sun, the Moon, the Stars” (1998)
14	Nov 22	<b>Fall Break</b>
	Nov 24	<b>Fall Break</b>
	Nov 26	<b>Fall Break</b>
15	Nov 29	Maria Kuznetsova “Cornucopia” (2017)
	Dec 1	<i>Student-Selected Writer!</i>
	Dec 3	<b>Exam 3</b>
<b>BEYOND “LITERATURE”?</b>		
16	Dec 6	Bob Dylan “Subterranean Homesick Blues,” “Masters of War,” “The Times They Are a Changin’” and “Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech” (1965-2016)
	Dec 8	Kendrick Lamar, “ <a href="#">DNA</a> ” (2017) and “ <a href="#">Alright</a> ” (2015) “ <a href="#">Street Kid to Pulitzer Winner: Why Kendrick Lamar Deserves the Prize</a> ”
	Dec 10	<b>Final Essay Workshop and Wrap-Up</b>

**FINAL ESSAY DUE – Hard Copy in Dunlap 206D  
by Tuesday December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:00PM**