

American

Literature II

LIT 313
Spring 2019

Course Information

Meets:
TTH 2-3:30, LA 627

Instructor:
Tom Nurmi
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Office Hours:
Wednesdays 2-5 PM, LA 425

Course Description

- The second of two American literature surveys at MSUB, this course explores how American writers responded to the experience of living in a modern, multicultural and globalized America, 1865 to the present.
- Our first goal is to trace the emergence of literary realism and modernism between the Civil War and World War II to more precisely define the significance and implications of these terms. The second goal of the course is to examine the form and legacy of the twentieth-century American novel, particularly its representations of regions and borderlands across cultural communities. This comparative approach frames a conversation in the third unit about the continuities and discontinuities of postmodern and contemporary American literature since 1980, including visual narratives like comic books, graphic novels, and films. Throughout the course, we will attend to a variety of African-American, Native American, Asian American, Latina and immigrant writers whose voices complement and contest prevailing narratives of American identity between 1865 and 2019.

Image: Nigel van Wiek, "Q-Train" (1990)

Booklist

William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* NY: Norton, 2009. [978-0393931389]
Cormac McCarthy, *No Country for Old Men*. New York: Vintage, 2006. [978-0375706677]
Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993. [978-0060976255]
Richard McGuire, *Here*. New York: Pantheon, 2014. [ISB#: 978-0375406508]
The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Eighth Edition (2012), Vol. 2 [978-0393918878]
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*. NY: Penguin, 2006. [978-0143104919]
Tracy K. Smith, *Wade in the Water: Poems*. Minneapolis: Greywolf Press, 2018 [978-1555978136]
Ocean Vuong, *Night Sky With Exit Wounds*. Port Townsend, WA: Copper Canyon Press, 2018 [978-1556594953]

Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate careful reading of American literature between 1865 and the present, with special attention to the relations between craft, context, and theme.
- Produce an essay on one major theme, movement, genre, or form of American literature since 1865 with specific authors and works to support all claims.
- Identify the major themes, movements, forms, and problems in modern and contemporary American literature, with specific authors and works to support all claims.

Assignments and Grading

<u>Quizzes</u> (10)	10%	<u>Essay 1</u>	20%
<u>Website</u> (10 Posts)	20%	<u>Essay 2</u>	20%
<u>Final Project</u>	30%		

* By enrolling in this class, you agree to all terms, assignments, and responsibilities. You agree to treat the course as professional work, including all email exchanges, and attendance is mandatory. You should not be late, and you should not miss classes. If you arrive more than 10 minutes late or leave more than 10 minutes early, you are counted absent.

* Missing any more than two classes will result in a two percent (2%) deduction from your final grade, per absence. If you have a legitimate conflict, please discuss it with me ahead of time. Any work missed as a result of tardiness or absence is your responsibility to make up. Quizzes are not made up, but if you give 24 hours' notice, you may take an alternate quiz.

* You should be familiar with the *MSUB Student Policies & Procedures Handbook* for information on appropriate behavior and academic integrity. I encourage everyone to stop by my office hours (W 2-5 PM in LA 425) for any reason throughout the semester (help on an essay, questions on the reading, or anything else). If you cannot make my office hours, let me know and we can arrange a time to meet.

* MSU Billings is committed to providing equal access. If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, please meet with me so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course. If you determine that disability-related accommodations are necessary, please contact Disability Support Services (657-2283; located in the College of Education, Room 135). We can then plan how best to coordinate your accommodations.

* Should you need help for health or counseling, there is a mental health counselor on campus at **Student Health Counseling Services**, 2nd floor Petro (657-2153). If you feel overwhelmed, angry, depressed, or need help or support, please contact **Student Health Service** in the SUB (657-2153) or after hours: **Billings Clinic Emergency Department** (657-4150), **Billings Clinic Hospital Emergency Room** (2800 10th Ave N), or **Community Crisis Center** (259-8800), 704 N 30th.

Daily Syllabus

* Assignments are subject to change. It is your responsibility to stay current. If you miss a day, check in via email for changes. Reading assignments not included in the required texts will be available on the D2L course website.

Unit 1 – Realisms & Modernisms

1/17 – Introductions & The War

Read for Class:

* “American Literature 1865-1914” (*Norton Anthology of American Literature 8th Ed.*, Vol. 2, pp. 3-16)

1/22 – Slavery, Race, Memory

* [Create course website and email to thomas.nurmi@msubillings.edu](#)

* Selected “Negro Spirituals” [D2L]

* Tracy K. Smith, *Wade In the Water* (2018), Parts I & II (pp. 1-38)

1/24 – Slavery, Race, Memory

* *Wade In the Water*, Parts III & IV (pp. 39-75)

* Charles Chesnutt, bio (*Norton* pp. 457-58) & “Po’ Sandy” (1888) [D2L]

1/29 – Realism and Naturalism [Post 1]

* “Realism and Naturalism” cluster (*Norton* pp. 548-65)

* Theodore Dreiser, bio & selections from *Sister Carrie* (1900) (*Norton* pp. 566-81)

1/31 – Coal Realism

* Stephen Crane, bio (*Norton* pp. 581-84) & “In the Depths of a Coal Mine” (1894) [D2L]

* Paul Laurence Dunbar, bio (*Norton* pp. 621-22) & “At Shaft 11” from *Folks From Dixie* (1898) [D2L]

2/5 – Becoming American in the Gilded Age [Post 2]

* “Becoming American in the Gilded Age” cluster from *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* [D2L]

* Zitkála-Šá, bio & selected writings (*Norton* pp. 639-51)

2/7 – Harlem Renaissance

* “American Literature 1914-1945” (*Norton* pp. 653-670)

* W.E.B. Dubois, bio & selections from “The Souls of Black Folk” (1903) (*Norton* pp. 531-47)

* “Blues Lyrics” from *The Heath Anthology of American Literature* [D2L]

* Langston Hughes, bio & selected poems (*Norton* pp. 1037-45)

2/12 – Harlem Renaissance [Post 3]

* Zora Neale Hurston, bio & “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” (*Norton* pp. 939-43), “Zombies” from *Tell My Horse* (1935) and “Hurricane” from *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) [D2L]

* Richard Wright, bio (*Norton*, pp. 1060-61) & “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow” (1938) [D2L]

2/14 – Modernist Poetry

* Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro” (*Norton* p. 790)

* H.D., “Oread” (*Norton* pp. 810-11)

* William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” (*Norton* p. 784)

* Marianne Moore, “To a Snail” (*Norton* p. 815)

* Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” (*Norton* pp. 773-75)

Unit 2 – Ceremonies

2/19 – Southern Gothic [Essay 1 Due]

* William Faulkner, bio (*Norton* pp. 994-96) & *As I Lay Dying* (1930), pp. 1-47

2/21 – Southern Gothic

* *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 48-97

2/26 – Southern Gothic [Post 4]

* *As I Lay Dying*, pp. 98-149

2/28 – No Class

3/5 – No Class, Spring Break

3/7 – No Class, Spring Break

3/12 – Native American Renaissance [Post 5]

* “American Literature Since 1945” (*Norton* pp. 1071-83)

* Leslie Marmon Silko, bio (*Norton* pp. 1543-44) & *Ceremony* (1977), pp. 1-186

3/14 – Native American Renaissance

* *Ceremony*, pp. 187-244

3/19 – Borderlands [Post 6]

* Cormac McCarthy, *No Country For Old Men* (2005), Ch. I-III (pp. 1-89)

3/21 – Borderlands

* *No Country*, Ch. IV & V (pp. 90-157)

3/26 – Borderlands [Post 7] [Walter Runsabove Visits About the Powwow]

* *No Country*, Ch. VI & VII (pp. 158-215)

3/28 – Borderlands

* *No Country*, Ch. VIII-XIII (pp. 216-309)

Unit 3 – Crossings

4/2 – La Frontera [Essay 2 Due]

* Watch: *The Counselor* (2013), dir. Ridley Scott [Library Reserves]

* Gloria Anzaldúa, bio & “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (1987) (*Norton* pp. 1520-29)

4/4 – Pacific Networks [MSUB Powwow: April 5 & 6]

* Maxine Hong Kingston, “No Name Woman” from *The Woman Warrior* (1976) (*Norton* pp. 1506-15)

* Ocean Vuong, *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* (2016), pp. 1-28

4/9 – Pacific Networks [Post 8: Powwow Post]

* Ocean Vuong, *Night Sky With Exit Wounds* (2016), pp. 29-85

4/11 – Postmodern America

* “Globalization and Post 9/11 American Culture” in *Heath Anthology of American Literature* [D2L]

4/16 – Visual Narrative [Post 9]

* Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics* (1993), Ch. 1-3 (pp. 1-93)

4/18 – No Class, Mini Break

4/23 – Visual Narrative [Post 10]

* *Understanding Comics*, Ch. 4-9 (pp. 94-215)

* Richard McGuire, *Here* (2014)

4/25 – Literature in the Age of Distraction

* Audre Lorde, bio (*Norton* pp. 1474-5) & “Poetry is Not a Luxury” (1984) [D2L]

* David Foster Wallace, “This Is Water” (2013) [D2L]

* James Bridle, “Chasm” from *New Dark Age: Technology and the End of the Future* (2018) [D2L]

4/30 – Final Project Presentations: 2 PM, LA 627 [Final Project Due]