

SYLLABUS

San José State University Department of English and Comparative Literature ENGL 168: American Novel, Fall 2010

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Office Hours:	T-Th: 8:00-8:30, 4:30-5:30
Class Days/Time:	T-Th 3:00-4:15
Classroom:	SH 229
Class Web Page:	www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/168

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and so on, may be found on the class web page at www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/168. You will also need to access your account at Desire2Learn (sjsu.desire2learn.com), in order to turn in your essays, which will be submitted and returned online. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU for any messages that may be sent pertaining to this class.

Course Description

This class is, to a great extent, a study of form as content. Unlike England, where the novel became the dominant form of longer fiction in the early eighteenth century, the United States was home to the prose romance until the end of the nineteenth century. The reasons for this American preference for the romance can be found, in part, in the themes expressed in a work such as *The House of the Seven Gables*—just as the reasons for the twentieth-century turn toward greater realism in the American novel are reflected in the themes of more contemporary works. We will follow the course of American fiction from romance to realism to modernism and beyond, watching the development of the novel as a genre, as well as changes in the preoccupations expressed within it.

Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives

First, to train students in reading, discussing, analyzing, and writing about literature, with emphasis as much on form as on content. Second, to expose students to a variety of narrative strategies employed in American fiction. Third, to provide students with an introduction to recent literature in general, and the American novel in particular, which will aid them in exploring the style and themes of other novels, once the class is over.

Required Texts/Readings

Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening and Selected Stories*. Signet Classics. ISBN: 9780451524485.
Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. Vintage. ISBN: 9780679732761.
Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. Scribner. ISBN: 9780743273565.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The House of the Seven Gables*. Simon & Schuster. ISBN: 9781416534778.
Robinson, Marilynne. *Gilead*. Picador. ISBN: 9780312424404.
Roth, Philip. *The Counterlife*. Vintage. ISBN: 9780679749042.
Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*. Dial Press. ISBN: 9780385333849.

Other Texts

In addition to the required texts, students should have access to a dictionary, thesaurus, and composition handbook (from English 1A or 100W, for example). That dictionary, incidentally, should not be reserved for essays alone. Students are expected to look up any unfamiliar words encountered in the texts that are not explained in the notes, and to be able to define them when called upon to do so in class. **Please note: While it will probably be easier to follow the discussion in class using the editions listed above, you are not required to use those editions.**

Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, toby.matoush@sjsu.edu, 808-2096

Classroom Protocol

Preparation and Participation: Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small-group or full-class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

Quizzes: The best way to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain (at least for a day or so) is with short quizzes at the beginning of the class period. The quizzes will only cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or any other manner other than personally experiencing the text yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of doing poorly on these quizzes should be taken as an indication that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to be successful as an English major and devotee of literature.

Resource Person: Novels from Africa may present a particular challenge to readers because of their specialized vocabulary, unfamiliar plants, animals, geography, and names (for people, places, and things), as well as their cultural differences, historical references, and other allusions and usages. Several times during the semester, each student will be designated one of two or three "resource persons" for the day's reading assignment; and will be on call that day to explain to the class any problematic terms or references in the text.

Written Work: There will be two essays, both about 1500 words and counting 25% of the final mark each, and a final examination counting 25%. There will also be frequent quizzes, which will help determine the remaining 25%, along with participation in class discussions, the timely completion of readings and written work, and your contributions as a "resource person." The second essay may require research beyond the class texts themselves. Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For

the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

Submission of written work: The two essays must be double-spaced (and without a cover page), follow standard MLA format, and be submitted online only, through the course Desire2Learn page (at sjsu.desire2learn.com), by the beginning of class on the days they are due. Essays sent via Desire2Learn are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com, as well, to check for plagiarism. Late work will only be accepted by prior arrangement. Do not email or leave at my office any work for this class, unless I specifically ask you to do so. Corrected papers will be returned online (in your Desire2Learn account) in pdf format. Please keep a copy of all work submitted on disk, and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should save the graded copies of their essays in all department classes, since these will be required for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of late work. Please note that many people find it harder to proofread work on a computer screen than in printed form and, if that is true in your case, you may want to print out your final draft and make corrections to that, before submitting the finished file online. Finally, remember that I will also be keeping a copy of your marked work during the semester so that, when you submit your second essay, I will begin by reviewing the technical mistakes you made in the first one, and looking to see if you have made any progress in those areas on the second. You, too, should take the time to review those errors, and improve your writing—you know I will be checking.

Classroom conduct: Please do not read non-course-related materials during class, and refrain from conversations or inappropriate comments while the instructor or your classmates are speaking. Turn off cell phones, music, and other likely distractions while in class. Laptops may be used only for note-taking in class; otherwise they must be turned off.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about adding and dropping classes, including deadlines and penalties. Deadlines for adding and dropping are listed on the course calendar, below. Other information about academic policies is available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/soc-fall/soc-fall.html>. Information about the late drop policy is available at <http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dngen/narr/soc-fall/rec-333.html>. Exceptions to these policies must be granted by administrators, not instructors. **This semester, the last day to drop courses without an entry on your permanent record is September 7th. The last day to add courses or register late is September 14th.**

Assignments and Grading Policy

1. Class participation (including as a resource person), quizzes, annotations, and timely completion of work: 25%
2. First essay (1500 words): 25%
3. Second essay (1500 words): 25%
4. Final exam: 25%

Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The “A” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences

distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “**A**” essay. The chief difference is that the “**B**” essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “**B**” essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.

University Policies

Academic Integrity

Students should know that the University’s Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf. Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of all instructors involved.

To discourage plagiarism and contribute to the student’s awareness of this issue, both essays for this class will be automatically checked for plagiarism by Turnitin.com when they are submitted online at Desire2Learn.com. More information about this will be contained in the essay assignments.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

Learning Assistance Resource Center

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. The LARC website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/>.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. The Writing Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/>.

Peer Mentor Center

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the first floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop-in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>.

ENGL 123B: African Literature, Spring 2009

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes to the greensheet on the class web page at www.sjsu.edu/depts/jwss/mesher/engl/123b. The first essay will be due on October 12th, and the second essay on November 18th.

26 Aug.		Thurs	Introduction
31 Aug.		Tues	<i>House of Seven Gables</i> , Preface-Ch. 3
2 Sept.		Thurs	<i>House of Seven Gables</i> , Chs. 4-8
7 Sept.		Tues	<i>House of Seven Gables</i> , Chs. 9-13
9 Sept.		Thurs	No class -- <i>House of Seven Gables</i> , Chs. 14-17
14 Sept.		Tues	<i>House of Seven Gables</i> , Chs. 18-21
16 Sept.		Thurs	<i>Awakening</i> , chs. 1-12 (pp. 1-38)
21 Sept.		Tues	<i>Awakening</i> , chs. 13-24 (pp. 38-79)
23 Sept.		Thurs	<i>Awakening</i> , chs. 25-39 (pp. 79-125)
28 Sept.		Tues	<i>Great Gatsby</i> , Ch. 1-3 (pp. 1-60)
30 Sept.		Thurs	<i>Great Gatsby</i> , Chs. 4-6 (pp. 61-112)
5 Oct.		Tues	<i>Great Gatsby</i> , Chs. 7-9 (pp. 113-182)
7 Oct.		Thurs	<i>Invisible Man</i> , Prologue-Ch. 3
12 Oct.		Tues	<i>Invisible Man</i> , Ch. 4-9
14 Oct.		Thurs	<i>Invisible Man</i> , Ch. 10-13
19 Oct.		Tues	<i>Invisible Man</i> , Ch. 14-18
21 Oct.		Thurs	No class -- <i>Invisible Man</i> , Ch. 19-22
26 Oct.		Tues	<i>Invisible Man</i> , Ch. 23-Epilogue
28 Oct.		Thurs	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chs. 1-3
2 Nov.		Tues	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chs. 4-6
4 Nov.		Thurs	<i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i> , chs. 7-10
9 Nov.		Tues	<i>Counterlife</i> , chs. 1-2 (pp. 1-94)
11 Nov.		Thurs	Veterans Day - No class
16 Nov.		Tues	<i>Counterlife</i> , chs. 2-3 (pp. 94-181)
18 Nov.		Thurs	<i>Counterlife</i> , ch. 4 (pp. 182-255)
23 Nov.		Tues	<i>Counterlife</i> , ch. 5 (pp. 255-324)
25 Nov.		Thurs	Thanksgiving - No class
30 Nov.		Tues	<i>Gilead</i> , pp. 1-66
2 Dec.		Thurs	<i>Gilead</i> , pp. 66-125
7 Dec.		Tues	<i>Gilead</i> , pp. 126-188
9 Dec.		Thurs	<i>Gilead</i> , pp. 189-247
13 Dec.		Mon	Final Exam, 12:15 - 2:30pm