

## ENGLISH 168—THE AMERICAN NOVEL

Fall 2012

San Jose State University

Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00-10:15, Sweeney Hall 413

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Paul Douglass

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Hours: M 8:00-9:00

(and by appointment)

**Course Code:** 42987

**Course Website:** <https://sites.google.com/a/sjsu.edu/english-168/>

**Format:** Lecture, discussion, presentations, book clubs.

### Course Description:

This course follows the development of the American novel from romance through realism and naturalism to modernism and post-modernism, challenging you to develop further your understanding of what the American novel is—or might be—and to whom. Its themes will include race, religion, gender, and warfare between nations and classes.

### Required Texts:

Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*.

Egan, *The Keep*.

Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*.

Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*.

Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*.

Morrison, *Song of Solomon*.

Nabokov, *Pale Fire*.

Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*.

Wharton, *House of Mirth*.

Wright, *Native Son*.

### Grading and Written Work:

|   |      |
|---|------|
| Oral Presentation and Handout           | 15%  |
| Novel Club & Paper                      | 10%  |
| Reading Responses & Quizzes             | 20%  |
| Participation                           | 15%  |
| Midterm Examination                     | 15%  |
| Research Paper Proposal and Final Draft | 25%  |
| Total                                   | 100% |

When you have a schedule problem, please let me know so I can work with you.  
The grades of late work may be lowered at the instructor's discretion.

## Description of Assignments:

1. **Oral Presentation and Handout:** An oral presentation of ten minutes or less, accompanied by a two-page handout presenting an interpretation of one of the works assigned, **drawn from an article or chapter by a scholar**, and including a brief chronology of the author's life. To be presented on one of the dates the work is discussed. Sign up for a date to present.
2. **Short Story Club & Short Paper:** Select a collection of linked short stories from the list attached to this syllabus and persuade at least two other class members to read it with you (or allow yourself to be persuaded to read a novel preferred by at least two other class members). You will meet three times in class to discuss it. You will also write a two-to-three page paper on one of the stories, focusing on plot, setting, or character, and present this paper to the club member(s) at the third and final meeting, then turn it in to the instructor in electronic form.
3. **Reading Responses & Quizzes:** You will be asked to take some short in-class quizzes and to write informal, thoughtful responses to the reading, including any pertinent questions or confusions with which you are struggling. These responses should be at least 200 words (approximately one typewritten standard page in 12 point font with regular margins). They should be submitted in handwritten or printed hardcopy in class, because they will sometimes be used as conversation-starters in small group discussions. The reading responses are due on the dates indicated in the calendar below.
- 4 **Participation:** Lectures will provide background, but this course will also rely on small and large-group discussions. Come to class having read the day's assignment, and find time to look up helpful information about the book and its author, or to answer a question raised in the text by an unfamiliar word, situation, or place. In class, find opportunities to contribute to the discussion and demonstrate engagement with the text.
5. **Midterm Examination:** Essay and short answer format. Date of the midterm is indicated on the calendar.
6. **Research Paper:** A 6-8 page paper on a topic of your choosing. You must submit a proposal with a brief description (a paragraph or so) and short bibliography of secondary sources (five or more citations), annotated if possible. See calendar for dates the proposal and paper are due.

## Short Story Club Choices:

Anderson, *Winesburg, Ohio*.  
 Barth, *Lost in the Funhouse*.  
 Fitzgerald, *Babylon Revisited and Other Stories*.  
 Hemingway, *The Snows of Kilimanjaro and Other Stories*.  
 James, *The Jolly Corner and Other Tales*.  
 Jewett, *The Country of the Pointed Firs*.  
 Stein, *Three Lives*.  
 Steinbeck, *Pastures of Heaven*.

**Department Student Learning Goals (linked to assignments):**

Students will demonstrate the ability to

- read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric. (Assignments 2, 3, 6)
- show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature. (Assignments 1, 5, 6)
- write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject. (Assignments 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)
- develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively. (Assignment 6)
- articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts. (Assignments 3, 4, 6)

**POLICIES AND OTHER INFORMATION:****English Department Grading Policies**

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.

**Academic Integrity**

The Academic Integrity Policy is outlined at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/integrity.html>, which also covers Student Conduct and Ethical Development. 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 Judicial Affairs. 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.

### **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 discuss this with your instructor as soon as possible. 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. The DRC's web site is [www.drc.sjsu.edu](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu).

### **Adding and Dropping Classes**

The last day to drop a class without a W grade is Tuesday, September 4. The last day for adding classes without a late fee, for registering late, or for requesting grade options is Tuesday, September 11. Information regarding the university policy on late drops can be found on the Academic Advising website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/>.

### **Estimation of Per-Unit Student Workload**

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

### **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/>.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC)**

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/>.

### **Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1st 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: [http://www.sjsu.edu/eop/mentor\\_program/](http://www.sjsu.edu/eop/mentor_program/).

### **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.

**CALENDAR OF READINGS AND WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS: ENGLISH 168, SPRING 2012**

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Aug. 22:  | Introduction to the course.   |
| Aug. 27:  | Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> . ✕                           |
| Aug. 29:  | Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> .                             |
| Sept. 3:  | Labor Day: No Class Meeting   |
| Sept. 5:  | Crane, <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> . ✕                               |
| Sept. 10: | Wharton, <i>House of Mirth</i> . <b>Research Paper Proposal Due.</b>          |
| Sept. 12: | Wharton, <i>House of Mirth</i> . ✕  |
| Sept. 17: | Wharton, <i>House of Mirth</i> .  |
| Sept. 19: | <b>Short Story Club Meeting #1.</b>   |
| Sept. 24: | <b>Short Story Club Meeting #2.</b>   |
| Sept. 26: | <b>Short Story Club Meeting #3. Short Paper Due.</b>                          |
| Oct. 1:   | Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> .                                     |
| Oct. 3:   | Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> . ✕                                   |
| Oct. 8:   | Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i> .                                     |
| Oct. 10:  | Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> . ✕                                      |
| Oct. 15:  | Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> .  |
| Oct. 17:  | Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i> . <b>Review for Midterm Examination.</b> |
| Oct. 22:  | <b>Midterm Examination.</b>   |
| Oct. 24:  | Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> .                                       |
| Oct. 29:  | Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> . ✕                                     |
| Oct. 31:  | Steinbeck, <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> .                                       |
| Nov. 5:   | Wright, <i>Native Son</i> . ✕   |
| Nov. 7:   | Wright, <i>Native Son</i> .   |
| Nov. 12:  | Veteran's Day: No Class Meeting   |
| Nov. 14:  | Nabokov, <i>Pale Fire</i> . ✕   |
| Nov. 19:  | Nabokov, <i>Pale Fire</i> .   |
| Nov. 21:  | Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> . ✕  |
| Nov. 26:  | Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> .  |
| Nov. 28:  | Morrison, <i>Song of Solomon</i> .  |
| Dec. 3:   | Egan, <i>The Keep</i> . ✕   |
| Dec. 5:   | Egan, <i>The Keep</i> .   |
| Dec. 10:  | Last Class Session: Research Paper Workshop and Wrap-up.                      |
| Dec. 14:  | <b>Research Paper Due.</b>  |

✕ = Reading Response Due.