

San José State University
English Department
English 68B, Survey of American Literature. Spring 2014

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Office Hours: Tues: 3-4:30; Thurs: 1-4
Class Days/Time: Tues/Th: 9:00-10:15
Classroom: Sweeney Hall 413

[http://www.sjsu.edu/
english](http://www.sjsu.edu/english)

Course Description/goals

The surveys of British and American literature are meant to acquaint students with significant issues and texts of the past centuries. Specifically, English 68B covers texts from the mid-19th Century to the present—a large swath of territory to cover. Of necessity, readings are selective and representative. But the goal of this course is to give students a clearer idea of central ideas and texts of the past century and a half.

Earnest Hemingway said, famously, that all American literature began with Mark Twain, of late a controversial figure, particularly *Huckleberry Finn*. So we will begin with that book.

Student Learning Objectives [SLO]

In the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. 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, and/or rhetoric;

2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American and World Literature;
3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend 4-5 hours per week preparing for a 3-unit course.

Required Texts/Readings

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol 2
The Sound and the Fury

Texts for group work, 5-6 in each group (copies from Amazon or Powells Books, Portland). Groups determined by January 30.

Chad Harbach, *The Art of Fielding*
Art Spiegelman, *Maus*
Louise Erdrich, *The Round House*
Philip Roth, *American Pastoral*
Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina*
Donna Tartt, *The Goldfinch* (777 pp!)
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
Robert Penn Warren, *All the Kings Men*

Classroom Protocol

Please come to each class prepared and on time; please read the assignment for each day carefully and, each Thursday, have your reading response ready to turn in at the beginning of class. Please hand in hard copies of all reading responses and essays, typed double space. I do not accept online submissions unless I give a student specific permission to hand in an assignment online. Late essays (1,2, 3 below) will receive lower grades; failure to attend class will result in lower participation grades as well, since you will miss quizzes

and in-class work. Please do not use computers or cellphones in class (unless you are consulting online texts for the class)—this is a seminar, and attentive participation is expected of all.

Dropping and Adding

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester's [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the [current academic calendar](http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/) web page located at http://www.sjsu.edu/academic_programs/calendars/academic_calendar/. The [Late Drop Policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/>. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the [Advising Hub](http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/>.

Assignments and grading policy

- I. Two comparative essays, 3-4 pp: 20%**
- II. Bookgroup essay, 3-4 pp: 10%**

9-10: A superior piece of writing. The writing is clearly focused, the language is sharp, and the writing is free of grammatical errors (please proofread for its/it's; for use of semicolons; for spelling errors; for incomplete sentences...). The essay reflects original ideas.

7-8: A good piece of writing, solid and clear. This essay may lack the innovation and sharpness of the top category. The point is clear but could be supported with additional details. There may be minor spelling, typographic, and/or grammatical errors. But it is interesting enough to hold a reader's attention.

5-6: This is an average response. This essay meets the requirements of the assignment, but it does not go beyond. The point may be too broad or unsupported. Examples may be general rather than specific. There may be grammatical errors. The central idea may not be fresh. The writing may be wordy or vague.

3-4: These essays are short, general, and lacking in examples.
There may be serious grammatical errors.

1-2: Unacceptable work. Lacks insight and clarity.

III. Bookgroup participation and questions: 10%

IV. Midterm and Final Exams: 40%

V. Quizzes and participation: 20%

This is an important part of your grade, and I will determine the final piece in the following way, on a 7-point scale:

6-7 points: Someone who has been a reliable and constant positive force in class, who has not missed classes, and who turns in a carefully revised resume and writes a careful and thoughtful and specific exam.

5-6 points: Someone who has been a reliable and constant positive force in class but may have missed one or two classes. Resume is good, exam is good but could be more specific and thoughtful.

3-4 points: A mostly positive force in class but sometimes unprepared. Someone who has missed a few classes. Resume needs more work and exam is brief and/or vague.

1-2 points: Someone who has not contributed because of poor attendance and poor participation and poor preparedness. Resume may be weak, and exam is very general.

Grading: The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official 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. In this course, as in all English Department courses, I will comment on and grade the quality of writing (grammar, organization, clarity, specificity, etc.) as well as the quality of the ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

University Policies

Academic integrity

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The [University's Academic Integrity policy](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm), located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires 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 [Student Conduct and Ethical Development website](http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/) is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

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 your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

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 [Disability Resource Center](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/) (DRC) at <http://www.drc.sjsu.edu/> to establish a record of their disability.

Schedule

PART I: The Humanities: Reading/Writing/Grammar

January 23: Introduction: Twain, "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County"

January 28: Realism: Twain, 98-105; *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 105-153 [SLG 1,2,3].

January 30: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 153-200; **Bookgroup meeting to organize, determine reading schedule: 10:00-10:15.**

February 4: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, complete + 283-296.

February 6: James, 324-327. "Daisy Miller," "Realism," 549-556.

February 11: Jewett, "A White Heron," 412-419; Chopin, 420-437.

February 13: Washington and Chestnutt, 447-473; **Bookgroup #1, 9-9:30.**

February 18: Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-paper," 484-497; Sui Sin Far, 521-530; [SLG 1,5].

February 20: Naturalism: Norris, 559-561; Crane, 581-600. "The Open Boat" **Essay #1 due.** [SLG 1,5].

February 25: London, 563-565; "To Build a Fire, 627-639; Zitkala Sa, 639-651. [SLG 1,4, 5]. **Bookgroup #2, 9-9:30.**

February 27: Cather, 677-708; 802-804. [SLG 1,4,5]

March 4: Glaspell, "Trifles," 742-752; **Midterm exam** [SLG 1,5]

March 6: Modernism: Frost, 727-742

March 11: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, Section I. [SLG 1,5]

March 13: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, Section II. [SLG 1,5]

March 18: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, Section III.

March 20: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, Section IV; 653-672.

March 24-28: Spring break

April 1: Stevens, 766-777; **Bookgroup #3, 9-9:30**

April 3: Williams, 777-786; 804-806

April 8: Eliot, 819-830 “Prufrock” and “The Waste Land” (1/2); **Bookgroup #4, 9-9:30.**

April 10: Eliot, 830-838 “The Waste Land”; O’Neill, 846-866, *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, Act I. **Essay #2 due.**

April 15: O’Neill, 866-925, *Long Day’s Journey Into Night*, complete.

April 17: McKay, 925-929; Hurston, 939-951; Hughes, 1037-1045.

April 22: Post 1945, 1071-1087; Welty, 1092-1103; **Bookgroup #5, 9-9:30**

April 24: Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (film+ text); 1113-1177.

April 29: Williams, *Streetcar* (complete film); Cheever, 1177-1186, “The Swimmer”

May 1: Ellison, 1209-1221; O’Connor, 1339-1353. [SLG 1,2,5].

May 6: Rich, 1379-1393; Plath, 1416-1424; Sexton, 1373-1379.

May 8: Ginsberg, 1354-1365; Anzaldua, 1520-1529; **Bookgroup #6, 9-9:30.**

May 13: Morrison, 1401-1416; Didion, 1639-1642; Danticat, 1642-1645.

Bookgroup essay due.

