

ENGLISH 253 4-UNIT GRADUATE SEMINAR IN THE LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN NOVEL PAGE 1
TUESDAY 16:00-18:45 BBC 221 FALL 2017
FO 228 John.Engell@sjsu.edu 924-4499 JOHN ENGELL
OFFICE HOUR SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS SEMINAR: 15:00-16:00 TUESDAY

TEXTS:

[Note: preferred texts for all six novels are the NORTON CRITICAL EDITIONS.]
FIRST PAIR: LOOKING SOUTH: RACE IN LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICA
Mark Twain. ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN.
Charles Chesnutt. THE MARROW OF TRADITION.
SECOND PAIR: LOOKING EAST: AMERICANS AND EUROPE IN LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICA.
Henry James. THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY.
Edith Wharton. THE AGE OF INNOCENCE.
THIRD PAIR: LOOKING WEST: EXPERIENCES OF THE WEST IN LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICA.
Frank Norris. MCTEAGUE.
Willa Cather. MY ANTONIA.
SEVERAL CRITICAL ESSAYS AS ASSIGNED THROUGHOUT THE SEMESTER.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Because graduate seminars in the department are now four rather than three units, this seminar will include more work—reading and writing—than assigned in my previous graduate seminars. The six required novels alone constitute nearly 1,700 pages of reading, and I will also assign several short critical readings during the course of the semester. In addition, students will write not only the traditional long seminar essay but also four shorter essays. Each of these shorter essays will be related to an oral presentation, a presentation that will also require a detailed outline to be distributed to members of the seminar. In this four-unit graduate seminar, readings will total over 2,000 pages; writing will include four oral presentation outlines, four short essays related to oral presentations, and one long seminar paper. Reading and writing assignments are therefore in keeping with a four-unit class.

Reading, writing, and classroom discussion will focus on both literary and social issues. The six novelists we will read and discuss include two of our nation's greatest women authors and the first major African-American author. The subject matter of the six novels covers a huge range and variety of our national experience in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Details regarding all oral presentations and written assignments will be distributed and discussed over the course of the entire semester.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES FOR LITERATURE COURSE IN
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH GRADUATE PROGRAMS

Students will demonstrate:

1. an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. a command of written academic English including the abilities to organize and present material in a cogent fashion; formulate and defend original arguments; employ effectively the language of their discipline; write under time constraints.

UNIVERSITY LEARNING OUTCOMES/OBJECTIVES FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS FALL
UNDER THE FOLLOWING CATEGORIES:

1. specialized knowledge as defined by their program Learning Outcomes.
2. broad integrative knowledge in the discipline.
3. intellectual skills in the theories, tools, and technology of the discipline and a commitment to life-long learning through “critical and creative thinking, effective communication, conscientious information gathering and processing . . . and the ability to engage effectively in collaborative activities.”
4. applied knowledge in the chosen field of study.
5. an appreciation of social and global responsibilities.

All reading and writing assignments and all class presentations and discussions will address every Student Learning Outcome/Objective for Graduate Students in the Department of English and Comparative Literature graduate programs. And all course assignments will also address University Learning Outcomes/Objectives for graduate students.

GRADING:

4 oral presentations/4 handouts/4 related short essays	15% each	60% total
Long seminar essay		40% total

COURSE SCHEDULE [NOTE: ALL SEMINAR MEETINGS ARE ON TUESDAYS FROM
16:00 TO 18:45.]

AUGUST

- 29 Introduction; discussion of the syllabus and of reading, oral presentation, and writing assignments. Distribution of topics for the first set of oral presentations and short essays (focused on either ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN or THE MARROW OF TRADITION]

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Mark Twain. ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Finish the novel. Four oral presentations (with handouts) on Twain’s novel.

- 12 Twain. ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on Twain's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN are due.
- 19 Charles Chesnutt. THE MARROW OF TRADITION. Finish the novel. Four oral presentations (with handouts) on Chesnutt's novel.
- 26 Chesnutt. THE MARROW OF TRADITION. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on Chesnutt's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on THE MARROW OF TRADITION are due.

OCTOBER

- 3 Henry James. THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY. Finish the novel (Warning: this is the longest novel assigned.) Four oral presentations (with handouts) on James's novel.
- 10 James. THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on James's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY are due.
- 17 Edith Wharton. THE AGE OF INNOCENCE. Finish the novel. Four oral presentations (with handouts) on Wharton's novel.
- 24 Wharton. THE AGE OF INNOCENCE. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on Wharton's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on THE AGE OF INNOCENCE are due.
- 31 Frank Norris. MCTEAGUE. Finish the novel. Four oral presentations (with handouts) on Norris's novel.

NOVEMBER

- 7 Norris. MCTEAGUE. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on Norris's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on MCTEAGUE are due.
- 14 Willa Cather. MY ANTONIA. Finish the novel. Four oral presentations (with handouts) on Cather's novel.
- 21 Cather. MY ANTONIA. Four more oral presentations (with handouts) on Cather's novel.
All short essays related to oral presentations on MY ANTONIA are due.
- 28 Oral presentations and handouts related to long seminar papers due on 5 December

DECEMBER

- 5 Additional oral presentations and handouts related to long seminar papers.
All brief essays related to oral presentations due.
Long seminar papers due.
Final discussion and celebration.

NOTE: Throughout the semester I will provide handouts and other information regarding the following:

- 1) occasional required critical readings related to each of the six novels assigned in the seminar;
- 2) topics for oral presentations and accompanying outlines;
- 3) suggestions for how to transform each oral presentation into a focused and successful short critical essay;
- 4) approaches to determining a subject and argument for the long critical/research essay.