

English 2623: Survey of American Literature 2 (1865-Present)
Fall 2021(Online)

Professor Todd Giles

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Office Hours: MW 10:00-11:00 & 12:00-1:00 / F 10:00-11:00 / Zoom by appointment

“The things taught in colleges and schools are not an education, but the means of education.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

“It is only when we forget our learning that we begin to know.”

Henry David Thoreau

Required Texts

- *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Shorter 7th Edition) vol. 2. (9780393930559)
- Sandra Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*. Vintage, 1992. (0679738568)

Course Description

In this section of 2623 we will read representative works of late 19th, 20th, and early 21st century American literature, including many marginalized contemporary ethnic voices. We will also examine the cross-fertilization of the arts and culture by listening to some music and exploring the visual arts. To cover this immensely rich period in our literary history at all adequately in one semester is literally impossible and means leaving out much that is undeniably important; it also means reading a lot. Although I have made a point of keeping our reading load relatively light, we will be covering a fair amount of material in each class session, some of which we might not actually address depending on where our discussions lead us. What we do not cover in discussion will often be covered in your daily in-class writings.

My courses are organized around the Academic Seminar model pioneered in German universities in the 19th century, in which faculty and students work together to strive for new knowledge based on five pillars: interdisciplinarity; academic freedom; critical thinking; seeking knowledge as an end in itself; and integrating new knowledge while at the same time preserving and interpreting the past.

My pedagogy is founded on the intrinsic value of questioning and reflection, including the questioning of my own assumptions. As a student in my class you will develop your higher-order thinking skills through active learning—clarifying and challenging your own perspectives and those of others through the critical analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of theoretical and literary texts. We will examine and discuss challenging questions and complex realities, learn to think for ourselves, and connect to the world in rich, subtle ways.

Course Requirements

Assignments	Grade Percent
Weekly Homework & Discussion	40%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Final Exam	20%

Grading Policy

In this class, the following numerical equivalents for final grades are used: A = 100-90%; B = 89-80%; C = 79-70%; D = 69-60%; F = 59-0%.

Weekly Writing Activities

Our primary sources of weekly writing will include, on alternating weeks, discussion posts and/or individual writing responses based on that week's readings. These writing activities will be graded on a plus/check/minus scale: a plus for doing a thorough job (100%), a check for completing the work in an acceptable fashion (70%), and a minus for not completing the work or for obvious lack of effort (0%). Some assignments, depending on length and difficulty, will count for more than one daily grade. You cannot make up weekly writings if you miss the due date. **This portion of your course work can easily make or break your overall grade, so be sure to keep up.**

Class Preparation and Participation

To succeed on your weekly responses you must show that you've closely read, have at least a cursory understanding of the material, and address, to the best of your ability, the writing prompts. **Specific examples from the work always help get the point across.** It is also good to try to tie in any relevant terminology or critical concepts from class discussions. **Read the assigned material by the date listed on the schedule of readings. As you read, take notes and underline/highlight what you believe are key passages in the text (a climactic scene, crucial lines for understanding the work, a summary of the argument, etc.), or things you have trouble understanding.**

Plagiarism Policy

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical citation at the end and a listing in "Works Cited")—whether you use that material in a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. It is a theft of intellectual property and will not be tolerated, whether intentional or not. I have a zero tolerance for any type of plagiarism. **All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized (the paper will receive an automatic F), reported, and kept on file. The second incident of plagiarism in class by the same student will result in the student receiving an F for the course.**

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Disability Support Services in Room 168 of the Clark Student Center, 397-4140.

Safe Zone Statement

I consider this classroom a place where you will be treated with respect as a human being – regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is my expectation that ALL students consider the classroom a safe environment.

Grade Appeals

I will be happy to try to explain the rationale behind any grade; however, I absolutely do not negotiate, haggle, or argue about grades. Part of my job is to evaluate your work and to assign a written grade to it. I do that to the best of my ability the first time. The bottom line is that you have to take responsibility for your own education.

Tutoring Support

Tutoring and Academic Support Programs (TASP) provides free drop-in tutoring for MSU students. Located on the first floor of Moffett Library, TASP's Learning center provides tutoring support in a number of core courses and subject areas. Please see our schedule for more information about times and offerings. Remember that you don't need an appointment to utilize these services. Some departments also provide tutoring. Check the "Tutoring at MSU" tab in the portal for more information about all campus tutoring opportunities. For Distance Education students, TASP has partnered with Thinkingstorm, an online tutoring company that provides you with high-quality, 24/7 tutoring support. Located at the top of your D2L course page, select the Distance Education Tutoring course to book an appointment with a tutor. If you are a distance education student (i.e. you live more than 50 miles from MSU and are in all online courses), but you do not see this course pop up under your courses, please contact Ashley Hurst.

Writing Proficiency Requirement

All students seeking a Bachelor's degree from Midwestern State University must satisfy a writing proficiency requirement once they have 1) completed 6 hours of Communication Core and 2) earned 60 hours. Students may meet this requirement by passing the Writing Proficiency Exam, passing two Writing Intensive courses, or passing English 2113. If you have any questions about the exam, visit the Writing Proficiency Office website or call 397-4131.

Reading Schedule

This schedule is tentative; I reserve the right to amend it with oral notice in class. If you anticipate a problem with due dates please speak with me well in advance.

Week 1 (8/23—8/27)

Introduction
Walt Whitman (D2L)

Week 2 (8/30—9/3)

“American Literature 1865-1914” (1-16)
Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” #s 1-15 (17-32) and #s 48-52 (62-64)

Week 3 (9/7—9/10)

Whitman, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” (71-77)
Emily Dickinson (77-93)

Week 4 (9/13—9/17)

Kate Chopin, “Desiree’s Baby” (439-443)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wall-paper” (506-519)

Week 5 (9/20—9/24)

Robert Frost (775-790)

Exam 1 (Due Friday at Noon)

Week 6 (9/27—10/1)

Modernism Slide Show (D2L)
“American Literature 1914-1945” (705-720)
Carl Sandburg (811-814)
William Carlos Williams (831-841)
H.D. (849-854)

Week 7 (10/4—10/8)

Sherwood Anderson, “Hands” (801-806)
William Faulkner, “A Rose for Emily” (1040-1048)
Ernest Hemingway “The Snows of Kilimanjaro” (1065-1083)

Week 8 (10/11—10/15)

Langston Hughes (1087-1095)
Ralph Ellison, “from *Invisible Man*” (1253-1264)

Week 9 (10/18—10/22)

“American Literature since 1945” (1129-1142)
Allen Ginsberg (1414-1425); “Sun Flower Sutra” (D2L)
Postmodernism slideshow (D2L)

Week 10 (10/25—10/29)

Exam 2 (Due Wednesday)

Amiri Baraka (1519-1526)

Week 11 (11/1—11/5)

Gloria Anzaldua (1586-1595)
Alice Walker, “Everyday Use” (1595-1602)

Week 12 (11/8—11/12)

Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek*
“My Friend Lucy . . .” – “Woman Hollering Creek” (3-56)

Week 13 (11/15—11/19)

Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek*
“The Marlboro Man” – “Eyes of Zapata” (57-113)

Week 14 (11/22—11/23 Thanksgiving Break)

Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek*
“Anguian . . .” – “*Bien Pretty*” (114-165)

Week 15 (11/29—12/3)

Leslie Marmon Silko, “Lullaby” (1608-1615)
Joy Harjo (1629-1633)
Louise Erdrich (1652-1664)

Final Exams are due at official Final Exam time. TBA.