

English 2132/002-003 (American Literature II)

Fall 2009

Tu-Th 9:30-10:45 a.m. (002)

11:00 – 12:15 (003)

Classroom J-132

Instructor: Ann Parker

Office: J-343

Dept. Phone: 678-915-7202

Office Phone: 678-915-7208

Office Hours: M-W 11:15 - noon

Tu-Th 9:00 – 9:30 a.m. & 12:30 – 1:30 p.m.

E-mail: aparker@spsu.edu

Friday: by appointment

Texts: (required)

Baym, Nina, ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vols C, D, and E. 7th edition.* New York: W. W. Norton, 2007.

Related web site: www.wwnorton.com/naal --You should keep the address handy to use at home if needed.

Dubus III, Andre. *House of Sand and Fog.* New York: Vintage, 1999.

Course Materials: (required)

3 Paper binders for literature response letters/journals

1 pack of 3x5 note cards

Course Objectives:

- Explore the connections between reading, writing, speaking and thinking.
- Explore ways that we might interpret and understand American literature from the mid-nineteenth century to the present.
- Work to understand that literary interpretation might take many forms; often there is more than one way to look at a piece of literature.
- Learn how American history and literature are reflective of each other.
- Read some really good pieces of writing!
- Have fun in a literature class!

Course Learning Outcomes

ENGL 2132, American Literature II

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

- ✓ Demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast diverse literary texts, authors, and/or genres within the particular class.
- ✓ Analyze themes and ideas pertinent to particular literature class.

- ✓ Come to comprehend how historical time or literary movements shape our understanding of literature.

Course Requirements:

In this class, we will be using literary responding methods that will include many different types of writing. You will be asked to first write **in your textbook**, making notes, questions, and comments as you cover the assigned readings. Your careful examination of our assigned readings is a must in order for the class to move forward. You will also respond to the literature through daily questions and comments, literary response letters to me, and through research and longer exploratory pieces of writing.

We will also spend a good part of our of class time in small group workshops/discussions on the assigned readings. I also will expect to hear from each of you when we are having full class discussions about what we have read; therefore, your wise use of time and your willingness to be prepared for each and every class are essential to your success in this class. If you come to class without having done your reading and writing for that day, you will not only find yourself quickly falling behind, but you will also be ineffective in any class or small group discussions that we have planned for that day. Although I may be the “teacher,” I do not plan on doing most of the talking. Your classmates and I want to hear your ideas and comments. Only then, by full participation of **everyone** in the class, will this class be the most effective in helping you and me accomplish our goals this semester.

Not only is your participation important in the day-to-day workings of the class, it is also important for the grade that you receive at the end of the semester. By becoming an active learner, you make the choices that will affect and direct what you learn. You will be asked in this class to stretch your imaginations and your abilities to their fullest, but if you make the choice to be prepared, to participate, and to become truly involved in your reading, writing and in the class, then you will have made the choice to receive a grade comparable to your effort.

Readings and Annotation:

YOU SHOULD PLAN TO BRING YOUR NORTON ANTHOLOGY TEXT TO EVERY CLASS MEETING! The great part of using 3 separate volumes is that you will only have to bring the volume currently being studied to each class. All the readings will be viewed as voices in our ongoing conversation about literary interpretation and critical thinking. You will be assigned a reading selection each class period. Along with each reading assignment, you are expected to read the section on the author. Understanding the author and his/her background and perspectives will add much to your understanding of the assigned text. Every time you read for this class, read with a pen or pencil in hand. With each reading assignment, you will be expected to ANNOTATE the selections by actively engaging in a written conversation with the author by marking off sections of text and responding in the margins. It is from these responses that our writings and class discussions will grow. It is your responsibility to have your annotations and responses ready in time for the start of each class day. We may not like every reading selection, but it will still be our responsibility to find productive ways to discuss it. (Thanks to Kim Haimes-Korn)

Note Cards: For each piece that we read (not including volume introductions or author backgrounds), you will be responsible for completing a note card response. I will take these up at the BEGINNING of each class period, so be sure that you have written your notes down on a separate page in your journal as well. You will need these in order for us to have good discussion. (See separate handout for instructions on note cards).

Novel: *House of Sand and Fog*—This semester I am adding an additional component to our class. We will read the novel *House of Sand and Fog* by Andre Dubus III. We will discuss this novel near the end of the semester, and you will receive separate instructions on how to respond closer to that date. The review calls this book a “riveting novel of almost unbearable suspense,” and I completely agree with that assessment. It will be a quick read for you (365 pages), but keep in mind that you will have lots of other work due for all of your classes in December, so manage your time wisely when it comes to making sure you have read the novel by the due date.

Literary Response Letters:

Along with the readings and the note cards, you will be assigned periodic exploratory response letters to me as preparation for class discussions and your quizzes. As a class, we will pay particular attention to your efforts to use writing as a way to better understand the literature you read and study. I take these writings seriously, and you would do well to remember that I expect you to say something in your writings, to share your discoveries, and to teach us, as a group, more about the way you perceive and understand the literature we discuss. The letter might address if you liked the reading or not, questions you have, aspects you found really good or really bad, words that you liked, personal connections you made, etc. You will be asked to interact with the texts we read and to open up a dialogue in writing with those texts. You will be expected to write out your thoughts more or less as they come to you, with only moderate revision (**proofreading EXPECTED**), on issues or questions you see in the works we read for class discussion. The format for these exploratory writings will be in letter format (i.e. Dear Ann...Cya, George). On your assignment sheet, you will notice I have provided the dates when your letters are due to me. We will discuss these letters as we get closer to the first due date. Keep these in a journal designated as your **Literary Response Journal**. We will use these letters, along with the note cards, to open up discussion about our readings for each class.

The purpose of these writings is not to reach closure or a consensus; instead we will look for ways to complicate and enrich our discussions. You are encouraged in these writings to test your ideas and think them through and create new ones. Instead of closing down your writings at the end, feel free to pose questions that you would like to expand upon. You will be expected to say something that is worth saying, something that reflects your thinking and your views on the subject, something that you believe to have relevance and interest to all of us. These writings do not have a length requirement, but obviously they need to be thoughtfully constructed. I find that at least one typed page (double-spaced) should be a good start on your explorations of the subject. (Thanks to Kim Haimes-Korn)

Group Project/Presentations:

Once during the semester you will work with a group of your classmates to introduce the class to an author from the unit we are currently studying but whom we are not covering together as a class. This project will consist of a 20-minute PowerPoint presentation along with an annotated bibliography and an extended exploratory paper from each person in the group. More information will be handed out separately on this project.

Attendance:

Since this class will so greatly depend upon your attendance and, therefore, your participation, it is in your best interest to be at every class. I do allow six (6) absences before assuming that you will no longer be attending class. It is your responsibility to drop yourself from this class. If you do decide to drop the class, please let me know so that I can remove you from my roll. If you miss a class, you are the one responsible for fulfilling the assignment for the next class and to see if any changes have been made to the schedule. You will receive a list of assignments due for the entire semester. However, I also suggest that you get the names, phone numbers, and emails of at least two others in the class to make sure that you get all of the information you need.

Even more than absences, I do not approve of late arrivals. This class is only 75 minutes long, and we will take advantage of every minute. Please do let me know ahead of time if you know that you will be tardy or absent for a class so that I will not automatically count you as such. Three (3) tardies are equal to one absence.

Late Work:

As a rule, I do NOT accept late work unless prior arrangement has been made with me. If your literature response letter journal is late, the final grade will be dropped by one letter for each class period that it is late. The journal will also include all of the note cards and any other notes that you have made for that unit as well as reflection essays. I will not accept a late journal after two class periods.

I will not accept late note cards, either. These are due on the day of the assigned readings, with no exceptions. If you have late note cards, you will put them in your literary response folders and designate them as **late** on your folder checklist that you will receive from me.

Quizzes:

We will have several pop quizzes over the course of the semester. These will be unannounced and will cover materials previously read in the unit as well as reading due for that particular class day. There will be no make-up of pop quizzes.

We will also have three major quizzes covering the three periods of literature that we will be studying. If you miss a major quiz without making prior arrangements with me, your make-up quiz will follow the same guidelines as late work (i.e. one letter grade dropped for every class late).

Plagiarism:

According to the general class syllabus, plagiarism is “the intentional or unintentional representation of another person’s ideas or writings as one’s own. This includes sources taken off the Internet.” In a literature class, it is very easy to plagiarize when you are looking for information about a particular author, piece of literature, or literary time period, and it is equally easy for me to figure out that you have, indeed, plagiarized. Don’t even think about trying it! Otherwise, you will be setting yourself up for potential failure of the assignment or the course. A plagiarized note card, journal, essay, or project will result in a grade of 0 for the assignment and potential expulsion from the course. If you have any questions about citing your sources, ASK ME! The librarian can also be a great reference for you. Better safe than sorry!

Grammar:

I expect all students to have a general proficiency in command and usage of the English language. I assume that all students will work to avoid grammatical mistakes in their writing. This does not mean that I’m looking for “perfect” pieces of writing or that you should stress over grammar vs. content and thoughtfulness in your writing. However, continual grammatical mistakes in a paper make it hard to read, comprehend, and respond to. Please be considerate of the fact that others are reading what you write and prefer not to fight their way through a grammatical nightmare. If you and/or I find that you are having continual trouble with the basics of English grammar, I will refer you to the SPSU Tutoring Center for extra help in this area.

ATTIC and SPSU Tutoring Center:

You may be required to do some additional work in the SPSU Tutoring Center if you are having continual trouble in one or more areas of writing. If you already know that you may need help with grammar, you may want to initiate visits to the tutoring center on your own. You don’t have to wait for my referral. The tutoring center is located in the basement of Howell Dorm, and offers free tutoring in basic English, math, and science courses. You may visit the Tutoring Center for the fall 2009 tutoring hours.

Disabilities Statement: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to discuss them with the teacher or contact the counselor working with disabilities at 678-915-7361. Please do this as soon as possible to better insure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

Course Grades:

3 Major quizzes over literary periods	30% (10% each)
Pop quizzes	5%
Note cards	10%
Literature response letter journals	30% (10% each)
Group project	15%
Participation	10%
--preparedness for class	
--work completed on time	
--participation in whole class & small group discussions	

Complete response journals that include all required components and that show sincere, critical thinking and honest reflection constitute a large part of your grade. Your full participation in group and class discussions and activities and your ability to stay prepared will also play a large part in your final grade.

Email Correspondence

Email is a good way to communicate with the class, the professor, and your group members for certain projects. Each student is required to register his/her email address with the SPSU registrar. It is your responsibility to check your email regularly for this class. We will use it to communicate changes in the schedule and to post some assignments. I may also need to communicate with you personally. Please make sure your address is up-to-date with the registrar. However, do not use email as a substitute for timely preparedness in the event that your mail does not reach its intended recipient.

IMPORTANT DATES: (subject to change)

Tuesday, Sept. 22	3 group presentations on Volume C
Thursday, Sept. 24	Quiz #1 on Vol. C; Literary Response journals due
Tuesday, Sept. 29	Group presentation journals due for Vol. C
Tuesday, October 13	Last day to withdraw with a grade of "W"
Thursday, October 22	3 group presentations on Volume D
Tuesday, October 27	Quiz #2 on Vol. D; Literary Response journals due
Thursday, October 29	NO CLASS! I'm at a conference
Tuesday, November 5	Group presentation journals due for Vol. D
Thursday, November 26	NO CLASS! HAPPY THANKSGIVING!!
Thursday, December 3	3 group presentations on Volume E
Tuesday, December 8	Quiz #3 on Vol. E
Thursday, December 10	Last class! Literary Response journals due; Group presentation journals due for Vol. E

*The fall 2009 **Regents' exam** will be administered campus-wide in October. You will receive an SPSU email notification of the dates and times; the dates and times are also currently posted on the Banner web. If you will take the test this spring, you **MUST** register for a testing session. If you fail to show up for the session for which you have registered, you will automatically fail the test. Remember, you must pass this state-mandated exam in order to graduate from any university in the university system of Georgia, and this must be completed before you reach 45 hours. As of fall 2007, all incoming freshmen are required to take the exam during their freshman year as well. There are exemptions from taking the test. Find out more at www.gsu.edu/rtp or on the SPSU website.

CELL PHONES:

Please turn off all cell phones and pagers prior to entering the classroom. Under no

circumstances should a ringing phone disrupt our class. If your phone rings during the semester, your final grade will automatically be dropped by one letter. Also, do not send or receive text messages during class. This is disruptive to your learning and very disrespectful to your classmates and your teacher.