

# SOUTHERN POLYTECHNIC STATE UNIVERSITY

## Course Syllabus For

### ENGL 2132

# American Literature II

## Southern Literature Emphasis

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#### Instructor

Nancy Reichert, Ph.D.

#### Office

D103

#### Office Hours

MW: 8 – 9:30 a.m. and 1 – 2:00 p.m.

TTH: 10:30 – Noon and 1 – 3:30 p.m.

Please make appointments when possible—it will ensure we have plenty of time to meet.

#### Phone

Work: 678-915-3928

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#### Class Location and Time

Fall 2009, ENGL 2132/001

Bldg. J, Room 132, 11 – 12:15, MW

#### Course Description

A survey of American literature from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The course deals with a variety of literary forms such as poetry, drama, nonfiction, short stories, and novels.

#### Prerequisites

ENGL 1102

#### Credits

3 hours

#### Purpose

Socrates claimed a long time ago that the unexamined life is not worth living. Literature helps us to examine our lives and our world so that we may more fully understand the human condition: who are we, why are

we here, and how do we live a worthy life? In the literature of the American South, we see people attempting to understand and come to terms with the loss of a war, the loss of an economic system (plantation system) and the coming to terms with conflicting social and individual values related to these things and their intersection with cultural issues such as race.

The purpose of this course is to examine the literature of the American South in order to understand the culturally diverse world in which we live. The course will also help us to develop language and theories that give us the means to discuss the literature of this country.

#### Course Outcomes

After completing ENGL 2132, American Literature II, the students should be able to:

- Demonstrate the ability to compare and contrast diverse literary texts, authors, and/or genres within American literature.
- Analyze themes and ideas pertinent to American literature from the 1860's to the present;
- Comprehend how historical time and literary movements shape our understanding of literature.

#### Required Materials

- Raimes, Ann. *The Open Handbook*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2007.
- Norton Critical Packet: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*, Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself*, William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
- Carter, Forrest. *The Education of Little Tree*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico Press, 2004.
- Williams, Tennessee. *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. New York: New Directions Publishing, 2004.
- A pocket folder for journal portfolio materials

## Important Web Addresses

My Homepage: <http://www.spsu.edu/htc/reichert/index.htm>

Library: <http://www.spsu.edu/library/library.html>

Hornet Connect: <https://connect.spsu.edu/>

This site will allow you to connect to important resources off-campus. "Library Resources" is your first option. It will connect you to numerous databases associated with the Library. One of my favorites is NetLibrary. It will afford you a wonderful opportunity to search for important print materials such as books and journal articles.

Galileo: <http://www.galileo.usg.edu/>

Regent's Exam: <http://www.gsu.edu/rtp>

The Information Technology Workshop: <http://www.spsu.edu/infotech/labs/workshop.html>

## Disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the ATTIC at 678-915-7244 or at 678-915-7361 as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

## Attendance Expectations

- As this course emphasizes the development of discussion skills, the ability to work responsibly in a group, and the honing of critical thinking skills, participation in the class discussions and activities is crucial.
- **Excellent or perfect attendance/participation will be rewarded. For more information see the Portfolio Evaluation section of this syllabus.**
- The professor reserves the right to fail students on their **sixth** absence.

## Late Work

**Late work will be penalized in this class.** I expect you to come prepared with journal entries and other assignments when they are due. There are at least two good reasons for this policy.

- This class operates under the assumption that knowledge making is a social, communal act. Therefore, we will share our written work and we will build knowledge as a community of learners.
- It's unfair to students who consistently turn work in on time to extend deadlines for other students. In many ways we could all benefit from extended time to complete work; however, courses are inherently limited by time since we only have a semester in which to work. Therefore, it's necessary to hold students to the established deadlines.

**If you can't make class because of illness, but work is due, I expect you to e-mail it to me in time for class.**

Exceptional problems will be considered when I take up journal portfolios. Exceptional problems should be accompanied by doctor notes that indicate problems large enough to make it impossible to get the work to class on time. **Address your problems in your letters of reflection/self-evaluation.**

Computer problems will rarely work as an excuse for late work. Therefore, save frequently when you are working on your writing. Use the "save as" command and make sure you are saving to your disk when using the computers at school. Don't wait to print before class. Computers and printers do not always work. I understand that problems do occur, but my understanding gets tested when work is continually late.

**No research papers will be accepted after the due date. I may give clearance for exceptional cases, but don't count on it.**

**You must take quizzes on the dates and times set in the schedule.**

### **Plagiarism**

All work you do in this class needs to be your own work although you are encouraged to share ideas with your fellow classmates. Save all your drafts to show your writing progress and to avoid worries about plagiarism. If you are concerned about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult me. Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional representation of someone else's ideas or materials (a book, an article, an essay, your classmate's paper, a paper written for you by a good friend, material from the Internet) or the use of work you have already written for another class without citing the source or the use of that work. Students should consult the *Undergraduate Catalog* under "Academic Regulations" for a fuller explanation of this violation of Academic Honesty. The penalty for plagiarism may be failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

Risking failure for a course or dismissal from the university is especially troubling for a **plagiarized journal entry**, which is graded only on completeness.

### **THE ATTIC Writing Tutoring Services**

The ATTIC tutoring services provide opportunities for individualized assistance to all Southern Polytechnic students. Academic assistants help students through the processes of invention, organization, writing, revising, and editing of essays and research papers. The ATTIC also offers Regents' Test preparation instruction. Those of you who are interested in getting another reader for your papers may want to drop by the ATTIC. Those of you who really enjoy getting audience feedback on your work will find the ATTIC to be a unique opportunity for such feedback. **The ATTIC tutoring services are now located in the basement of the Howell Dormitory.**

### **IT User Services Lab (The Workshop)**

The IT User Services Lab in H242 is available for students who need access to computers. Call 678-915-7493 for more information.

### **Evaluation**

#### **3 Quizzes (30%)**

Quiz One: 10%

Quiz Two: 10%

Quiz Three: 10%

### **Writings**

#### **Reader-Response Journals (40%)**

Your journal portfolio will consist of two different parts. In the portfolio you will turn in the following items:

1. Individual Journal Entries
2. Reflection Paper

The journal portfolio will be graded based on the criteria I will hand out in a separate contract.

#### **1. Individual Entries**

On most **Mondays** a one-page, double-spaced, typed response to the literature for the week will be due. Students need to respond to **all** of the readings for the week.

**Example:** Say you are supposed to read a short story for Monday and that you are supposed to read two poems for Wednesday.

Your entry would have a section for the short story—three quotes and responses to each quote. Finally your entry would have one complete thought/sentence of importance for each poem with response and a short summary for each poem.

A reader-response journal is a **personal** response to the literature we read. Your aim is to attempt to understand the readings for yourself; do not worry about whether you are in agreement with your peers, literary critics, or myself. See if you can connect the literature to pertinent issues or themes we discuss in class or to other pieces of literature we read during the semester. See if you can connect the literature to your own life experiences.

The following format may get a bit redundant over the course of the semester, but it should help you to come to a personal understanding of the text.

### **Format for Individual Entries--see handout of sample entries for an example of the various types of entries.**

For responses to pieces of **fiction, nonfiction, and drama**, I would like you to select at least **three** quotes that you see as important to your understanding of the text itself. One of these quotes should be near the **beginning** of the text, another from the **middle**, and the last one from **the end** of the text.

Write each quote down in your journal. Place quotation marks around the quote and place the page number in parentheses after the quote.

Respond to the quote. Why did you pick it? What makes it interesting? What information does it bring to the text? How does it impact your understanding of the text? Can you relate it to important issues or themes that arise in the text? Can you relate it to another text we have read? Can you relate it to your own experience? You will want to write at least one thoughtful response to each quote.

For responses to **poems** select one complete thought/sentence of importance for each poem and respond to it. Then write a short summary for each poem.

You may want to consider if the lines of poetry are acting in a symbolic manner or what type of image they create. Again, don't worry if this agrees with my reading of the poem--simply attempt to get at the meaning. Do you still see some of these images and symbols being used in writings and songs today? Do you see them in other literature we have discussed?

Don't forget to write a **summary** of the poem--what does it mean to you in its entirety? What message is it sending?

I will select at **random** excerpts from student journals to be shared with the rest of the class on Wednesday. Again, note that these excerpts are being selected at random and not because I think the authors have come up with better responses than everybody else. **Be prepared to have your writings shared with the rest of the class.**

When I return your journal entries to you, you will want to place them in a pocket folder to be turned in at the end of the semester for a Journal Portfolio grade.

## **2. Reflection Paper**

Use MLA format for this reflection paper. There is no set page length. Do **title** your paper in a **creative** way that fits the content of your paper. In other words, I don't want "Reflection Paper" as your title. It's too general and could be anyone's title. I will be looking to see that you answer the following questions thoughtfully and completely (you probably cannot do this in one or two pages).

1) What strengths and weaknesses can I observe in my journal entries? What did I do well? What could I have developed more? Do note these entries aren't graded for spelling and punctuation so you should answer these questions in terms of content issues. How thoughtful were your responses?

2) When I reread my journal entries, what do I learn about myself from reading them? Are there certain issues that I seem drawn to? When I reread my journal entries, what do I learn about the literature we studied? What does it tell me about the American South?

3) What connections can I make between pieces of literature? What writers seem to have similar ideas? What writers see things very differently? Why? This is an important question--take some time and answer it well.

4) Which journal entry is my best? Why?

5) Using the criteria set up in the contract, what grade should I get for my journal portfolio? Why?

### **Participation**

You can address participation, but it is not a part of the portfolio grade. Participation is a bonus in this class. If you meet the following conditions, you may argue that your journal portfolio grade be raised a half letter grade.

- You have no more than three absences for the semester;
- You have been late no more than four times for the semester;
- You have been prepared for class. You have journal entries and papers completed before class and you have read your materials ahead of time for class;
- You participate well in classroom activities such as small-group and full-class discussions. Participating well means entering the dialogue among students and professor. Good participants listen well and add their ideas to the dialogue.

### **Research Paper (30%)**

If the purpose of reading literature is to help us examine our lives and our world so that we may better understand our own values and the values of others, then it is important to make connections with a piece of literature and to understand what it tells us about ourselves and about the world in which we live.

Pick a piece of fiction, nonfiction, or drama from the list I handout on the day of Quiz 1. Make sure it's a piece that speaks to you in some way. Analyze the reasons why it speaks to you. What does it seem to be saying that you relate to or find challenging? Why are the issues it addresses still important to people today?

Analyze the text in order to understand what it says about culture. What are the issues raised in the text? Remember, cultural issues often determine what we value and why, whether it be of a religious nature, an economic/class nature, or an ethnic/racial nature. It may even determine gender roles. Are any of these issues central to the text you read? How so and how do you respond to them?

After you analyze the cultural issues, in what ways do you see these issues in today's Southern culture(s)? How might this impact how you responded to the text?

Once you have a strong sense of your own reading of the text, research it. See what literary critics, historians, the author (in other texts), and other readers have said. You can pull in ideas from the critics that agree or disagree with your own views. Simply discuss their views and then explain how and why your views are similar or different.

You do not have to organize the paper in the order that the questions above appear. Do ensure that you cover the main issues listed above in your paper. Do make sure you follow the guidelines listed below:

- A five-page, double-space minimum for the paper. The works cited page is a sixth page.
- MLA style should be used for margins, headers, spacing, and citing research.
- You will want to find important quotes from the text you are analyzing and incorporate them in your paper. Your chosen text is considered the primary source and it's important to quote from it and list it on your Works Cited page.
- You will want to cite from at least **four** secondary sources for the paper and ensure that all **four** sources are listed on your Works Cited page. If you are using a text like the Norton Critical Editions we used for class, **Two of your citations must come from texts not included in your critical edition. Only one** source should be an Internet source. Your other sources must come from journal articles, books, and reference materials that

can be found in libraries or through databases. Print sources such as these are more critically evaluated than any sources found at .COM's and even .EDU's on the web.

- Sources such as Twentieth Century Criticism may be used. Twentieth Century Criticism is a reference source that can be found in the reference section of our library. Like the Norton Critical Editions, these sources are a good place to start because they often have excerpts from numerous critics cited within them. Each critic is considered a new source.
- **Carefully** evaluate web resources before using them.

## **PROPOSED CALENDAR**

### **Week One, August 24 - 28 (August 27—the last day to drop/add)**

**Monday:** We will discuss the following: Literature and its usefulness, culture vs. nature, the culture of the American South and collective memory. I'll hand out the syllabus.

*Homework: Read the syllabus and Richard H. King's "The Southern Family Romance," pp. 249 – 255 in the Norton Critical Edition for Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury.*

**Wednesday:** Quiz over the syllabus. I will hand out the contract for the journal portfolio as well as a handout giving examples of the various types of entries. We will then spend time discussing "the Southern Family Romance."

*Homework: Read Frederick Douglass's Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself, Chapter I – Chapter V for Monday and Chapter VI – X for Wednesday. For each section checkmark or highlight at least three quotes you find significant. We will use these sections for discussion.*

### **Week Two, August 31 – September 4**

**Monday:** Discuss FD's Narrative, Chapters I – V.

**Wednesday:** Discuss FD's Narrative, Chapters VI – X.

*Homework: For Wednesday read Chapters XI – the Appendix. Read A.C.C Thompson's Letter from a Former Slaveholder and Douglass's Response, pp. 88 – 96.*

**Write Journal 1:** Three total quotes and responses for the Chapters – the Appendix. Three more quotes and responses for the Letter from a Former Slaveholder and Douglass's Response.

### **Week Three, September 7 – 11 (no school Monday—Labor Day)**

**Monday: No Class.**

**Wednesday: Turn In Journal 1.** Finish discussing FD's Narrative.

*Homework: Read "An Etiquette/Advice Book Sampler" in the Norton Critical edition of Kate Chopin's The Awakening, pp. 122 – 136, and The Awakening, chapters I – X.*

**Write Journal 2:** Three quotes and responses for the "Sampler," three quotes and responses for chapters I – V, and three quotes and responses for chapters VI – X.

### **Week Four, September 14 - 18**

**Monday: Turn in Journal 2.** We will discuss "Local Color" as a movement, the rise of women writers in this movement, the "Sampler," Kate Chopin, and the first five chapters of The Awakening.

**Wednesday:** We will discuss KC's Awakening, Chapters VI - X

*Homework: Read Kate Chopin's The Awakening, Chapters X – XXVIII.*

**Write Journal 3:** Three quotes and responses for Chapters X – XXI and three quotes and responses for Chapters XXII – XXVIII.

### **Week Five, September 21 - 25**

**Monday: Turn in Journal 3.** We will discuss KC's Awakening Chapters X – XXI.

**Wednesday:** We will discuss KC's Awakening, Chapters XXII – XXVIII.

*Homework: Finish Kate Chopin's The Awakening and study for the quiz. No Journal entry.*

### **Week Six, September 28 – October 2**

**Monday: No Journal Entry is Due.** Discuss KC's Awakening, Chapters XXIX – the end.

**Wednesday: Hand out List of Choices for Research Paper.** Take Quiz One over Douglass and Chopin.

*Homework: Read the Introduction: A Statement of Principles for I'll Take My Stand:*

<http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ma01/White/anthology/agrarian.html>, Read Allen Tate's "Ode to the Confederate Dead": <http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/15303>, Read John Crowe Ransom's "Janet Waking." [http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m\\_r/ransom/fugitive.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/m_r/ransom/fugitive.htm) for Monday. Read the Appendix for William Faulkner's The Sound and The Fury, pp. 203 – 217.

**Write Journal 4** on these readings. Three quotes and responses for I'll Take My Stand; One quote, one response, and a summary for both "Ode to the Confederate Dead" and to "Janet Waking." Three quotes and responses for the Appendix for William Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, pp. 203 – 217. For Faulkner, try to home in on characteristics of the younger two generations that you believe might be important to the story.

### **Week Seven, October 5 - 9**

**Monday: Journal 4 is due.** We will talk about the "New South," the Modern Era, the Southern Agrarians, I'll Take My Stand, and the two poems.

**Wednesday:** If need be, we will finish with the Southern Agrarians. We will discuss Faulkner, the characters for The Sound and The Fury, and the organization for the book using the information from the Appendix.

*Homework: Read the Chapter "April Seventh, 1928," and pp. 48 – 58 of "June Second, 1910."*

**Write Journal 5.** Three quotes and responses for "April Seventh, 1928" and three quotes and responses for "June Second, 1910."

### **Week Eight, October 12 - 16 (October 13-- last day to withdraw with a W)**

**Monday: Journal 5 is due.** Discuss WF's Sound and Fury, "April 7<sup>th</sup>" chapter.

**Wednesday:** Discuss WF's Sound and Fury, "April 7<sup>th</sup>" chapter in comparison with the beginning of the "June 2<sup>nd</sup>" Chapter.

*Homework: Finish reading Faulkner's "June Second, 1910" chapter of The Sound and The Fury and read the chapter entitled "April Sixth, 1928."*

**Write Journal 6.** Three quotes and responses for the June 2<sup>nd</sup> section and three quotes and responses for the April 6<sup>th</sup> section.

### **Week Nine, October 19 - 23**

**Monday: Journal 6 is due.** Finish discussing WF's Sound and Fury, "June 2<sup>nd</sup>" chapter and begin discussing the "April 6<sup>th</sup>" chapter.

**Wednesday: Research Topics are due--have author and text title ready.** Finish discussing WF's Sound and Fury, "April 6<sup>th</sup>" chapter.

*Homework: Finish reading Faulkner's The Sound and the Fury, by reading the final chapter "April Eighth, 1928." Begin Forrest Carter's The Education of Little Tree. This book was not published until 1976, but it concerns Cherokee life in the 1930's. Read Chapters 1 – 6.*

**Write Journal 7.** Three quotes and responses on the final chapter of The Sound and The Fury. Three quotes and responses on chapters 1 – 6 of The Education of Little Tree.

### **Week Ten, October 26 – 30 (NCHC Conference)**

**Monday: Journal 7 is due.** Discuss WF's Sound and Fury, "April Eighth, 1928."

**Wednesday:** We will discuss FC's Little Tree, chapters 1 – 6.

*Homework: Read from Carter's The Education of Little Tree, Chapters 7 – 16.*

**Write Journal 8** Three quotes and responses for Chapters 7 – 12 and three quotes and responses for Chapters 13 – 16.

### **Week Eleven, November 2 - 6**

**Monday: Journal 8 is due.** We will discuss FC's Little Tree, Chapters 7 – 12.

**Wednesday:** We will discuss FC's Little Tree, Chapters 13 - 16.

*Homework: Finish reading Carter's The Education of Little Tree. No Journal for next week.*

**Week Twelve, November 9 – 13**

**Monday: No journal due.** Finish FC's Little Tree. Use the end of class for a trip to the library.

**Wednesday:** Quiz on Agrarians – Forrest Carter.

*Homework: Complete Your Paper. Read Act I of Tennessee Williams's Cat On a Hot Tin Roof. No journal for next week.*

**Week Thirteen, November 16 - 20**

**Monday: No Journal Due.** Discuss the Contemporary South. Begin discussion of Tennessee Williams and ACT I of Cat.

**Wednesday: Turn in Research Paper, Research Notes and Research Drafts.** Finish discussing Act I of TW's Cat.

*Homework: Read Act II of Tennessee Williams's Cat on a Hot Tin Room.*

**Write journal 9.** Three quotes and responses from Act II of Cat.

**Week Fourteen, November 23 – 27 (No classes Wednesday - Friday, Thanksgiving Break)**

**Monday: Journal 9 is due.** Discuss TW's Cat, Act II. View clips from the film as well as clips from Lillian Hellman's Little Foxes.

**Wednesday: NO CLASS.**

*Homework: Read the final act of Cat for Monday and read Eudora Welty's "Why I live at the P.O." for Wednesday. <http://members.lycos.co.uk/shortstories/weltyliveatpo.html>.*

**Write Journal 10.** Three quotes and responses for Cat, Act III and three quotes and responses for Welty's short story.

**Week Fifteen, November 30 – December 4**

**Monday: Journal 10 is due.** We will finish discussing TW's Cat.

**Wednesday:** We will discuss EW's "P.O."

*Homework: Finish the journal portfolio for Wednesday. Read "Good Country People" by Flannery O'Connor for Monday <http://members.lycos.co.uk/shortstories/oconnorgoodcountry.html> and read "Turtles" by Ernest Gaines (handout) for Wednesday.*

**Week Sixteen, December 7 – 10 (the 10<sup>th</sup> is the last day of class.)**

**Monday:** Discuss Flannery O'Connor's short story.

**Wednesday: Journal Portfolio Due.** Discuss Ernest Gaines's short story.

*Homework: Study for the quiz over Tennessee Williams – Ernest Gaines.*

**Week Seventeen, December 11 – 16**

**Final Exam Quiz.** Date to be announced.

We may not stick with this calendar exactly if we find that we need time to discuss or explore issues and ideas that come up in more detail.

**Final Statement**

I know that I am asking you to do a lot of reading and writing; therefore, I want to let you know that not only do most of my students pass this course, but with a bit of effort, they actually do quite well in it. If you put the time and effort into being prepared for class, I will try to ensure that the class is interesting and worth your time. Good luck.