

**ENGLISH 225/AMERICAN STUDIES 275AK:
American Literature and Culture (1900-1970)
Fall Semester 2020**

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Course Description

In this course we will examine various novels, films, plays and stories written and created by American authors in the 20th century. We will begin with two canonical novels from the first third of the century, *A Farewell to Arms*, by Hemingway, and *The Great Gatsby*, by Fitzgerald. We will view scenes of a film version, directed by Martin Scorsese, of Edith Wharton's novel *Age of Innocence*, which was written in 1920 but set in the late 19th century. We will also read an excerpt of the novel. We will read Steinbeck's Depression-era classic *Of Mice and Men*; Richard Wright's explication of racial and political divides in 1930s Chicago, *Native Son*; and *As I Lay Dying*, by Faulkner, about the rural American South in the early 20th century. We will view a film version, with Halle Berry, of Zora Neale Hurston's novel about a black town in Florida, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, and the film *Patton*, written by Francis Ford Coppola, and read Tennessee Williams' play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. We will also read poetic texts by T. S. Eliot and Langston Hughes and essays and stories by Salinger, Baldwin, Ellison, O'Connor and others. In addition to analyzing the various genres, forms and idioms that American writers and artists used between 1900 and 1970, we will also focus on the ways in which literature and culture provide a window into specific historical moments—e.g. World War I, the Jazz Age, the Depression, etc.—and significant issues in American culture—e.g. urbanization, structural racial discrimination, disparities in wealth, gender relations, etc.

Learning Outcomes

1. Students will learn to analyze complex literary, cinematic and dramatic texts.
2. Students will learn narrative techniques such as point-of-view, methods of presenting dialogue and the use of a variety of rhetorical devices in descriptive language. They will also learn cinematic and dramatic language.
3. Students will learn figures of speech such as metaphor, simile, symbol, oxymoron, paradox and various of their functions in narrative writing. They will also analyze how these figures of speech are utilized in dramatic writing.
4. Students will substantially enhance their writing skills in English by improving their punctuation, spelling, syntax and construction of paragraphs.

5. Students will improve their ability to clearly articulate complex ideas about novels and other literary texts, dramatic texts and films.
6. Students will learn to write interpretive analyses of literary texts and to construct a comparative essay.
7. Students will learn about the culture of the U.S. in the first half of the 20th-century through the study of a number of the most significant canonical American novels, films and other texts of the period.

Requirements

Assigned readings must be completed before class, and you must have the text we are reading when the class meets. (THIS IS AN ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT OF THE COURSE). For some texts, you will have a written assignment, generally a critical analysis of the text we will read or view, which will be 300-350 words long. You must send the version to me BEFORE class meets and have a copy available of your assignment when we meet. All critical analyses must be typed, double-spaced, and at the top you must type your name, the date the entry was written and the pages and title of the text you are writing about. **YOU MUST GIVE YOUR ANALYSIS A TITLE, AND THE TITLE MUST INDICATE HOW THE FORM OF THE TEXT WE ARE READING MANIFESTS PARTICULAR SUBJECT MATTER.** Late critical analyses (ones that I do not receive before class on the date due) will receive half credit. Your entries should not be general, impressionistic responses (i.e. "I liked this novel. I thought it was good."). You should choose one passage or scene (NO MORE THAN 5 PAGES, OR 5 MINUTES OF FILM) in the reading, citing specific lines in the text, analyze the formal techniques employed in detail and write about how these formal elements manifest particular themes and subject matter. You should also mention how these forms and the thematic elements they express relate to the entire novel, film, story or text and to the other novels and texts we have read and films we have viewed. ****DO NOT TURN IN PLOT SUMMARIES, CHARACTER ANALYSIS OR OTHER MATERIAL CULLED FROM WEBSITES AS YOUR CRITICAL ANALYSIS.** IF YOU DO, YOU WILL RECEIVE A ZERO FOR THAT ASSIGNMENT.** Not only does such copying undermine one of the main aspects of the course, plagiarism is a very serious violation and will be dealt with according to university regulations. ONE FOCUS IN THIS CLASS IS ON CLOSE READINGS OF SPECIFIC PASSAGES, FORMAL ELEMENTS OF WRITING, THEATER AND FILM—E.G. FIGURES OF SPEECH, SENTENCE STRUCTURE, DIALOGUE, IDIOM ETC.—AND HOW THEY RELATE TO THE THEMATIC MATERIAL: GENDER, RACE, CLASS, WAR, ECONOMIC DEPRESSION, HISTORICAL EVENTS IN AMERICAN HISTORY, ETC. You should write your analyses in formal English (avoid colloquial terms and incorrect constructions such as "mom and dad," "really weird," "stresses on this part," etc.) You will be graded for spelling and punctuation, so be certain that your work is properly punctuated, and all words are properly spelled (do not confuse, for example, "its" and "it's," or "their," "there," and "they're"). You will have a mid-term exam, group presentations and an individual final essay on one of the short stories provided. Class attendance is required, and you must be focused exclusively on this class during our class sessions. **DO NOT TEXT, CHECK SOCIAL MEDIA, MULTI-TASK OR ENGAGE IN OTHER ACTIVITIES DURING OUR CLASS MEETINGS.** You are allowed two absences total, for any reason you choose. No excuse is required or desired. If you miss class more than two times, your grade will be lowered each time you miss the class unless there is an emergency.

If there is an emergency, write a note to my e-mail explaining the nature of the emergency. **ALL ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TURNED IN ON TIME.** Your grade will derive from the following formula: class attendance and participation (15%), group presentations (25%), critical analyses (20%), mid-term (20%), final essay (20%).

Academic Integrity

<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf>, in particular section 1.1, which concerns academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Please be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that **credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.**

Accessibility

AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me immediately so that we can privately discuss options. In order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

Non-Discrimination

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Trudi Hodges at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb. An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FOLLOWING READING AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE:

September 8	Introduction to the Class. "Harlem," "I, Too," "Theme for English B," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," by Langston Hughes
September 10	"The Hollow Men," by T. S. Eliot <i>Farewell to Arms</i> , by Hemingway (Chapters I-III)
September 15	<i>Farewell to Arms</i> , by Hemingway (Chapters IV-XII)
September 17	<i>Farewell to Arms</i> (Chapters XIII-XXXII)

(Books Two and Three)
(ANALYSIS DUE)

September 22 *Farewell to Arms* (Chapters XXXIII-XLI)
(Books Four and Five)

September 24 *Great Gatsby*, by Fitzgerald (Chapters 1-3)
(ANALYSIS DUE)

September 29 *Great Gatsby* (Chapters 4-6)

October 1 *Great Gatsby* (Chapters 7-9)

October 6 *The Age of Innocence* (Film)

October 8 *The Age of Innocence* (Film and Prose Excerpts)

October 13 *Of Mice and Men*, by Steinbeck (1-32) **(ANALYSIS DUE)**

October 15 *Of Mice and Men* (33-53)

October 20 **MIDTERM EXAM**

October 22 *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Film)

October 27 *As I Lay Dying*, by Faulkner (3-59)

October 29 **NO CLASS**

November 3 *As I Lay Dying* (60-158)

November 5 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Act 1) **(ANALYSIS DUE)**

November 10 *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (Acts 2-3)

November 12 *Native Son*, by Wright (Intro & Book One)

November 17 *Native Son* (Book Two)

November 19 *Native Son* (Book Three) **(ANALYSIS DUE)**

November 24 *Patton*(film) **(AT HOME VIEWING)**

November 24 Short story/essay presentations
"Everything that Rises Must Converge," O'Connor;
"King of the Bingo Game," Ellison; "For Esmé—With
Love and Squalor," Salinger;
Baldwin "Notes of a Native Son."

November 26 Short story presentations

December 1 Short story presentations
(FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 8. NO EXTENSIONS)

All texts available on Moodle.