English 343
American Literature 1860-1910
Tues/Thurs 1:00-2:30 AL 211
Course Syllabus, Winter 2005

Prof. V. Lamont
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Office Hours: Tues, Wed, Thurs 2:30-4:00 or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND GOALS

Through lectures, class discussion, and student presentations, this course will explore late-nineteenth century American literature in its cultural and historical context. After the end of the Civil War in 1865 and into the early 20th-century, American culture and society transformed drastically: recently emancipated African Americans struggled for a new place in society, the economy industrialized at a furious pace, immigration increased exponentially, Native Americans resisted pressure to assimilate, women agitated for the vote—the list of profound changes in American society goes on and on. All of these developments provided American writers with rich subject matter to work with as they struggled to make sense of a society that older generations found unrecognizable. In addition to familiar voices from this period such as those of Mark Twain and Louisa May Alcott, we will explore emergent, marginal literatures by African, Native, and immigrant American authors. American society and literature during this period was highly race-conscious; hence, issues of race are a significant focus of this course. Students not interested in this topic may wish to consider another course.

Because of the focus on social and cultural history in this course, students sometimes lose sight of the fact that this is a Literature course. Remember, your essays and presentations must pay particular attention to the text’s structure and language. This course assumes some background in literary criticism and theory as supplied in English 251A and 251B.

TEXTS

Required (Available in Bookstore)
Norton Anthology of American Literature Volume C, 1865-1914
The Portable Louisa May Alcott (Penguin)
Theodore Dreiser, Sister Carrie (Penguin)

Important: Sister Carrie is a long (but hopefully rewarding to read) novel—start reading early!!

Highly Recommended

(Note: all royalties earned from the sale of The Little, Brown Compact Handbook will go to the Department of English Scholarship Fund.)

ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION
In the interest of fairness, all students will be evaluated on the basis of the following assignments. There will be no exceptions (i.e. substitute assignments, second exam sittings, etc.) without supporting documentation (usually medical) which convincingly justifies the request for special treatment.
Assignments | Due Date | Value
--- | --- | ---
Reading Quizzes | Random | 10%
Group Research Project | Sign Up | 20%
Essay | March 22 | 30%
Final Exam | TBA | 40%

1. Group Seminar Presentation
This assignment will give you the opportunity to meet each other and work as a team. The goal of your seminar is to facilitate class discussion about the primary text, using the content of your seminar as a launching-point. The seminar questions ask you to focus on various topics in American cultural history that will serve as interpretive frameworks for the primary texts. 45-60 minutes of class time will be set aside for your seminar, including class participation and discussion. Facilitation of audience participation is a central requirement of this seminar. Students will sign up for seminar topics (listed in the schedule of classes, below) during the first week of class. It is not required that every member of the group present the material to the class, but everyone must be present on the day of the presentation.

A sign-up sheet will be posted on my office door during the first week of classes. Students who do not sign up for a seminar group before Jan 14 will receive a grade of zero for this assignment.

Creativity is encouraged. Try to break with the traditional seminar format. Make your seminar an event your peers will remember!

This assignment requires research. Start your research early to allow time for interlibrary loans and recalls. Your research resources should reflect the most recent scholarship available, and should be peer-reviewed (i.e. published in scholarly journals and books).

Presenters must clearly indicate when they are borrowing someone else’s words. Failure to do so is a form of plagiarism and will be dealt with accordingly.

Everyone in the group will receive the same mark, and it is the group’s collective responsibility to ensure that everyone contributes his or her fair share; however, the instructor reserves the right to reduce the grade of individual students who have clearly not made an adequate contribution to the project. If you experience problems with group dynamics, it is important that you bring them to my attention as soon as they arise.

Research Requirement
Minimum 6 scholarly secondary sources, no more than 2 of which are web-sites, plus at least one archival source. (An archive is a document produced during the period in which your primary text was written; a secondary source is a contemporary scholarly work written about your primary text or the period you are studying). Below are some guidelines for choosing appropriate research materials. If you unsure about whether or not a particular source is appropriate, please consult with me.

Appropriate secondary scholarship includes
1. Articles in peer reviewed journals (including online journals), accessed via databases
   subscribed to by the UW library (see the library homepage for more information).
2. Web-sites authorized by universities or academic libraries (excluding student-made web-sites).
3. Books published by academic presses (most books in our library are from academic presses).

Appropriate archival sources include
1. archival material in UW’s Rare Books library, located in the basement of the Porter library.
2. contemporary reprints of archival materials
3. electronic facsimiles of archival materials available on the web

Additional requirements:

1. **Explanation of Division of Labour.** Indicate in writing exactly how each member of the team contributed to the research and dissemination of findings. Every member should participate equally in the intellectual labour of the project. Not everyone needs to be involved in giving the presentation but the entire group is required to attend class on the day of the presentation.

2. **List of Works Cited supplemented by detailed in-text and oral acknowledgement of sources.** Every time you borrow an idea from a secondary source, indicate exactly which idea you borrowed, where it came from (including page number of source) and where you used it in your document or presentation. You are expected to correctly follow MLA rules for in-text citations or footnotes, and your document must be accompanied by a correctly formatted “Works Cited.” For more information about citing sources correctly, consult the *Little Brown* handbook (see list of recommended texts, above). For oral presentations, explain to the class which ideas are borrowed and who you borrowed them from. Failure to follow these requirements constitutes plagiarism. The minimum penalty will be 0 on the assignment and the offending student or students will be reported to the Dean, who may choose to implement further penalties.

3. **Class Handout.** About two-pages in length. It should summarize your findings in enough detail to serve as study notes for the exam.

**Evaluation**
1. Thoroughness and relevance of research
2. Synthesis of research data into general conclusions
3. Oral presentation: ability to highlight key findings and explain them clearly within the time allowed.
4. Creativity
5. Facilitation of discussion
6. Handout: coherence, interest, thoroughness, mechanics
7. Teamwork: integration of individual contributions into unified product
8. Correct citation of sources

2. **Essay:**
2000-2500 words (about 8-10 pages), presented according to these specifications:

- typed or word processed, single-sided, on 8 1/2” x 11” white paper;
- double-spaced, with three lines of type per inch—no more and no less;
• body text in a 12 pt font or 10 characters per inch;
• all margins set at 1”—no more and no less; do not use right justification;
• number all pages 1/2” down from the upper-right hand corner with your last name before the number;
• on the first text page, provide your name, the date, and course number one inch down from upper-left corner. Double-space between this identification and the essay title, center the title, and double-space between title and first line of text.

Topics: You are responsible for devising your own essay topic, which should be intellectually ambitious and clearly situated in the context of this course. If you need help thinking of a topic, please do not hesitate to approach me. Once you have developed a topic, make an appointment to discuss it with me in person (not via email). I will not accept essays on topics that have not been discussed with and approved by me.

The instructor reserves the right to run all essays through a plagiarism screening service. To this end, you will be required to submit both an electronic and a hard copy of your essay.

Evaluation
Essays will be evaluated according to the following components: originality, interest, and level of intellectual challenge of the thesis; coherence and persuasiveness of the argument; analysis and integration of supporting evidence; and mechanics (organization, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, correct use of MLA citation format). First-class (80-100%) marks will be awarded only to essays that excel in every category. Note that, because the composition and content of an essay are interdependent, problems with the composition of an essay are likely to impede the clear expression of the content.

3. Exam
The final exam, to take place during the exam period, will consist of sight passages, short-answer, and essay questions and will cover the entire course, including all assigned readings as well as material from lectures and student presentations.

4. Reading Quizzes
Reading quizzes will be given on a random basis throughout the term. Each student is allowed to miss the equivalent of two quizzes without penalty. Quizzes on novels count as two quizzes.

If you are having difficulty with any aspect of these assignments, it is important that you consult with me early on in the process.

Note on avoidance of academic offenses: All students registered in the courses of the Faculty of Arts are expected to know what constitutes an academic offense, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their academic actions. When the commission of an offense is established, disciplinary penalties will be imposed in accord with Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline). For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students are directed to consult the summary of Policy #71 (Student Academic Discipline), which is supplied in the Undergraduate Calendar (p. 1:11). If you need help in learning how to avoid offenses such as plagiarism, cheating, and double submission, or if you need clarification of
aspects of the discipline policy, ask your course instructor for guidance. Other resources regarding the discipline policy are your academic advisor and the Undergraduate Associate Dean.

If you use secondary sources in your essays, you must use correct citation and documentation. If you are uncertain of how to use secondary sources, consult *The Little, Brown Handbook*. If you are still uncertain, consult with me. Incorrect citation and documentation is a form of plagiarism, a serious academic offense, and could result in academic penalty.

**LATE POLICY**

In order to ensure that all students receive fair and equal treatment with respect to lateness or absence, the policy for this course regarding late or missed assignments is as follows:

**General Expectations:** All students are expected to make their education a top priority. Requests for special treatment will be considered only if circumstances which are **totally** beyond the student's control make it impossible for the student to meet his or her academic obligations without special dispensation.

**Documentation:** All requests for special consideration must be accompanied by documentation from a qualified medical or mental health professional, whichever is appropriate.

**Exams:** Exams will not be rescheduled except in the case of documented emergencies. If a student misses a mid-term or final exam, that student will receive a grade of zero for that assignment, except in the case of documented emergencies.

**Essays:** Unless specified otherwise, all assignments are due in the English department drop-box (2nd floor, Hagey Hall) by 4:30 p.m. on or before the designated deadline date. Extensions will be considered provided the student consults with me before the deadline. The penalty for late assignments is a deduction of 3% per day or part thereof, including weekends. Unless you submit your essay directly to me you should have it stamped by the department secretary. Always back up your work on disk, and save hard copies of all assignments you submit. I accept no responsibility for lost assignments.

*Emergencies (usually medical) will be fairly dealt with, provided you contact me (by phone, email, or in person) within three working days of the assignment due-date, and are able to provide documentation to explain and justify the missed/late assignment. Documentation requirements for medical emergencies are outlined in the University of Waterloo calendar (p. 1:10). Students are also expected to know University and Faculty regulations regarding exams and assignments (University Calendar p. 1:9-1:11 and 9:8). Non-medical emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, and must be accompanied with appropriate documentation. While I sympathize with students who encounter computer/printer malfunctions, I do not consider these to be emergencies.

I will not accept any essays at all after the last class of the term.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES & READINGS**

Please bring your texts to class.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture/Discussion Topics</th>
<th>Readings (Norton pages numbers indicated when applicable)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>week 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 4</td>
<td>introduction to course group project sign up</td>
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<td>Jan. 6</td>
<td>The legacy of the American Civil War.</td>
<td>“American Literature 1865-1914” (3-16)</td>
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<td>Whitman, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d” (116-121)</td>
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<td><strong>week 2</strong></td>
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<td>Jan 13</td>
<td>Women writers: how to write like a “lady.”</td>
<td>Alcott, selections from <em>Little Women</em> (in <em>the Portable Alcott</em>, 454-75); <em>Behind a Mask</em></td>
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<td><strong>week 3</strong></td>
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<td>Jan. 18</td>
<td>Women writers and popular culture.</td>
<td>Alcott, <em>Behind a Mask</em> (359-53)</td>
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<td>Jan. 20</td>
<td>The “disappearing” West.</td>
<td>Crane, “The Bride Comes from Yellow Sky” (920-26)</td>
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<td><strong>Seminar: How was the American West represented in American popular culture? What does Crane do with these popular conventions?</strong></td>
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<td>week 4</td>
<td>Jan. 25</td>
<td>The emergence of Native American writing.</td>
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<td>Jan. 27</td>
<td>Native American oral practice.</td>
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<td>week 5</td>
<td>Feb. 1</td>
<td>Naturalism</td>
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<td>Feb. 3</td>
<td>“Oral” writing; literary deadpan.</td>
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<td>Feb. 8</td>
<td>Literary regionalism</td>
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<td>Feb. 10</td>
<td>The naturalist novel.</td>
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<td>week 7</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
<td>The rise of consumption in American culture.</td>
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<td>Feb. 17</td>
<td>TBA</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feb 21-25</td>
<td>Reading Week</td>
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<td>week 8</td>
<td>Mar. 1</td>
<td>Race in American culture</td>
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|        | Mar. 3  | Issues in African American              | Washington, selections from *Up from*
| literature: assimilation | Slavery (744-80) |
Seminar: What was the significance of the Blues (what DuBois calls “sorrow songs”) in African-American culture at the turn of the last century? |
|---------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Mar. 10 | The “New Woman” writers | Chopin, *The Awakening*  
Seminar: What were the most common arguments of the woman suffrage movement? How does Chopin’s feminism compare to this more popular brand of feminism?  
Scheduled reading quiz, worth two regular quizzes. |
| week 10 | Mar 15 | *The Awakening*  |
| Mar. 17 | Essay Consultations, No Class | I will be available in my office to help you with any aspect of your essay. |
| week 11 | Mar. 22 | Essays Due, No Class  
Essays should be submitted to the English Department drop box (HH, 2nd floor), by 4:30 PM. |
| Mar. 24 | Writing by new Americans | Sui Sin Far, “Mrs. Spring Fragrance” (866-75)  
Research Project: How did American popular culture represent Chinese Americans, and what textual and rhetorical strategies does Sui Sin Far use in response to these images? |
| week 12 | Mar. 29 | Psychological realism.  
Edith Wharton, “Souls Belated” (845-65)  |
| Mar. 31 | TBA |