Course description:
This is not a survey of American fiction. But students should glean some sense of a set of distinctive American concerns starting with the early classic, *The Scarlet Letter*. Novels by Edith Wharton and Willa Cather together mark a shift from 19th century to modern preoccupations and forms of narration. Kerouac, Delillo, and Morrison exemplify some tendencies in postmodern fiction. Our approach to the novels will be eclectic in that we will range from close reading of words, sentences, and paragraphs; to reflection on narrative technique and narrative theory (point of view, genre, etc.); to considerations of contextual matters like culture, social history, and politics.

What I want you to get from the course:
An enriched sense of what the novel is as a material and social phenomenon.
The ability to respond with increased understanding to the formal and rhetorical dimensions of fiction.
Increased ability to identify areas of interest and ambiguity in fiction and to pose clarifying questions.
Knowledge of the basic tendencies and themes of American fiction.
Enhanced appreciation for relations between literary form and social history.
The ability to write more effectively and imaginatively about literature in general.

What I want you to do in the course:
Read every page of the works assigned.
Write about and discuss fiction frequently; formally, in tests, an essay, and a presentation.
Ask questions in class; participate; listen to and engage with your peers.
Read out loud.
Take notes and make sure you grasp the major concerns of the course, as well as the distinctive work of each novel or writer; write tests demonstrating this grasp.
Write an essay based on careful reflection, analysis, and revision.

Texts:
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Dover
Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, Vintage
Edith Wharton, *The Age of Innocence*, Dover
Willa Cather, *The Professor's House*, Vintage
Don Delillo, *White Noise*, []
Brief readings in theory - online
Schedule:

ALWAYS BRING YOUR TEXT TO CLASS!

May 1, 3  introductions, *The Scarlet Letter* chs. 1 to 3 (we will not read “The Custom-House”)
May 8, 10  *The Scarlet Letter*
May 15, 17  *The Scarlet Letter, Beloved*
May 24*  *Beloved*
May 29, 31  *Beloved* TEST Wednesday
June 5, 7  *The Age of Innocence*
June 12, 14  *The Age of Innocence, The Professor’s House*
June 19, 21  *The Professor’s House*
June 26, 28  TEST Monday *On the Road*
July 5  *On the Road*
July 10, 12  *On the Road, White Noise*
July 17, 19  *White Noise*
July 24  TEST

ESSAY  Due Monday, July 31st

*In the Arts Faculty, Tuesday, May 23 will follow a Monday schedule to make up for Victoria Day. Since I have a regular Tuesday meeting that I cannot miss, we will not meet on the 23rd.*

Assignments and Values:

1. **Three tests: 15% each.** Each test will consist of two essay questions. Over the three tests, you will have to write about every novel in the course.

2. **Outline and introductory paragraph for essay: 5%.** Details to follow.

3. **Essay (1800-2000 words): 35%.** A discussion of thematic, stylistic, and/or contextual matters. Topics will be assigned. Details to follow. Due Monday, July 31st.

4. **In-class work: 15%.** In-class work includes i) attendance and evident preparedness; ii) participation; and iii) a brief presentation.

   i) You are expected to attend every class, to keep up with the reading, and always to have your text in front of you in class.

   ii) Participation means, in addition to regular attendance and preparedness, comments and questions. *This includes responding to your classmates’ presentations.* The primary mode of the class will be lecture/discussion. I will use Learn only for sending messages to the class concerning test preparation, schedule updates, and so on. The class is small enough for everyone to participate to some extent. I will frequently ask you for your views. I will invite questions about any aspect of the fiction we’re studying. I may from time to time ask you to write in class.

   iii) Everyone will give a presentation, with a partner or solo. Sign up on Wednesday, May 3rd. The presentation should be **5 to 10 minutes (10 minutes maximum!) in length.** You should choose a *word* (or pair of words) or *phrase*, an *object*, or a *brief passage* — from the novel under discussion — that *interests* you and explain to the class what is interesting about the word, object, or passage. Draw our attention to the relevant page, read the passage out loud if it’s helpful, and highlight what is arresting, edifying, stylistically striking, etc. **End your presentation with a question** for the class. Note that expressive appreciation is not enough: you must explain your interest *analytically.* Although your presentation will not be marked separately (it will be considered holistically as part of your in-class mark), I will give you a written response taking into account Delivery, Argument, and Insight. **Please let me know what you plan to do ahead of time (after class or by email).**
**Business:**
Contact: I would rather see you during office hours or after class than hear from you by email. Please feel free to see me to discuss anything related to the course. My office hours are for you.

Late papers: An extension of a day or two can be negotiated in conversation with me ahead of the due date. A request for an extension longer than a few days will have to be supported by appropriate documentation.

Plagiarism: Outside the university, plagiarism is “actionable.” That is, you can be sued for it. Educate yourself about plagiarism and don’t commit plagiarism. It is a serious offence, ethically and legally. See UW Policy 71 and the Notes below.

Devices: This will be a device-free classroom. Phones and laptops must be put away during the class.

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**Notes from the Faculty of Arts**

**Academic Integrity:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. See the UW Waterlool Academic Integrity webpage and the Arts Academic Integrity webpage for more information.

**Discipline:** A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offences, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under Policy 71 – Student Discipline. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4. When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or Policy 71 - Student Discipline may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 - Student Appeals.

**Note for students with disabilities:** The AccessAbility Services office, located on the first floor of the Needles Hall extension (1401), collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the AS office at the beginning of each academic term.

The aim of Mental Health Services is to provide holistic programming and services to help you lead a healthy and balanced life. We strive to provide a secure, supportive environment for students of all orientations and backgrounds.

Students suffering from problems with anxiety, depression, problems with sleep, attention, obsessions or compulsions, relationship difficulties, severe winter blues, etc., may make an appointment by phone or in person. Appointments are usually available within two days of initial contact with one of our medical doctors. All contacts are completely confidential.

We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land promised to the Six Nations that includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.