

EMINENT SCHOLAR/TEACHERS: MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE
ENGL J423 SYLLABUS
SUMMER 2008

CONTACT ME

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Please mail all course assignment with appropriate cover sheets to USC, Distance Education, PO Box 2346, Columbia, SC 29202-2346.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Modern American Literature is a survey of the major American writers of fiction and poetry of roughly the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, the course attempts to place these writers and their works within the context of the most important literary movements of the time. This is an upper-level English course. Students should have completed one sophomore literature course (ENGL 282-289) before taking any upper-level course.

COURSE MATERIALS

Students should immediately order course materials from Distance Education and the Russell House Bookstore upon enrollment. Do not wait to order your materials.

The materials list, order form, and other course information are available online at www.sc.edu/de/enqli423/.

DVDs

The course is structured around the lectures of several of the most noted scholars and teachers of modern American literature on DVDs as part of the Eminent Scholar/Teachers series. The assigned readings (as listed below) supplement these lectures.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Theodore Dreiser,	<i>Sister Carrie</i>
Edith Wharton,	<i>The House of Mirth</i>
F. Scott Fitzgerald,	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Ernest Hemingway,	<i>A Farewell to Arms</i>
William Faulkner,	<i>As I Lay Dying</i>
John Steinbeck,	<i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>
Richard Wright,	<i>Native Son</i>
T. S. Eliot,	<i>The Waste Land and Other Poems</i>
Robert Frost,	<i>Selected Poems*</i>
	<i>Modern American Literature Student Course Companion*</i>

* ORDER THESE TWO TEXTS FROM DISTANCE EDUCATION

VIDEOS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS

Due: June 2 - 6, 2008

1. LESSON #1: Realism and Naturalism in American Literature

LESSON #2: An Introduction to Theodore Dreiser's Fiction

LESSON #3: Reading Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*

READ: *Sister Carrie*

Due: June 9 - 13, 2008

2. LESSON #4: An Introduction to Edith Wharton's Fiction

LESSON #5: Reading Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*

READ: *The House of Mirth*

Due: June 16 - 20, 2008

3. LESSON #6: Modern American Poetry

LESSON #7: An Introduction to Robert Frost's Poetry

READ: From *Selected Poems*: "Home Burial," "Mending Wall," "The Road Not Taken," "Design," "The Gift Outright," "The Oven Bird"

LESSON #8: An Introduction to T. S. Eliot's Poetry

LESSON #9: Reading T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*

READ: From *The Waste Land and Other Poems*: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *The Waste Land*

LESSON #10: The Modern American Novel

LESSON #11: American Literature of the Twenties

Due: June 23 - 27, 2008

4. LESSON #12: An Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald's Fiction

LESSON #13: Reading F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

READ: *The Great Gatsby*

Due: June 30 – July 4, 2008

5. LESSON #14: An Introduction to Ernest Hemingway's Fiction

LESSON #15: Reading Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

READ: *A Farewell to Arms*

Due: July 7 - 11, 2008

6. LESSON #16: An Introduction to William Faulkner's Fiction
LESSON #17: Reading William Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*
READ: *As I Lay Dying*
LESSON #18: The Southern Literary Renaissance
LESSON #19: American Literature of the Thirties
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Due: July 14 – 18, 2008

7. LESSON #20: An Introduction to John Steinbeck's Fiction
LESSON #21: Reading John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*
READ: *The Grapes of Wrath*
LESSON #22: American Literature and Policies
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Due: July 21 - 25, 2008

8. LESSON #23: Black American Literature
LESSON #24: An Introduction to Richard Wright's Fiction
READ: *Native Son*
LESSON #25: American Literature of World War II
LESSON #26: The Profession of Authorship in America
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Due: Monday July 28, 2008

Final exam due in mail.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I. Papers

A. Students will write three papers, each approximately 750-900 words in length (three full double-spaced pages). All assignments must be typed. Papers must be mailed so that they will be postmarked by the due date. Papers submitted after the due date are penalized 10 points per day.

B. My normal turn around time for grading the essays is one week after I receive them. Consequently, if you have not gotten your previous assignment before the next one is due to be mailed, you must call me about the essay. Students who fail to contact me when their papers are late will receive an "F".

C. No previous essays will be accepted after the exam period begins and will receive an "F" grade.

D. Topics: First Paper must be postmarked by Monday, June 16, 2008

Discuss the theme of the individual's relationship to society in either *Sister Carrie* or *The House of Mirth*. Analyze the success or failure of either Carrie Meeber or George Hurstwood in *Sister Carrie* or Lily Bart, Lawrence Selden, or Simon Rosedale in *The House of Mirth*. Choose only one character/work for discussion. You must consider elements of Realism or Naturalism in the work you choose to analyze.

Second Paper must be postmarked by Monday, July 7, 2008

Discuss why either Jay Gatsby or Frederick Henry idealizes romance in either *The Great Gatsby* or *A Farewell to Arms*. That is, define specifically what love/romance means to the protagonist, how it affects him, and what he learns (if anything). Choose only one work for discussion.

Third Paper must be postmarked by Monday, July 21, 2008

To what extent is John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* a novel of social protest? What is the protest? Does this aspect of the work detract from or enhance the quality of the fiction?

A list of guidelines is included to help you understand what is expected in these assignments.

II. Resubmissions

- A. Do NOT simply resubmit an essay for a better grade. It will be returned unmarked.
- B. On the rare occasions, I allow a student to rewrite an essay. I will initiate the process in my comments on the original essay.
- C. Any resubmissions must also include the original essay and my comments on it before I will regrade the paper.
- D. Resubmissions must be received before the beginning of the final exam period.

III. Graduating Students

- A. It is imperative that students who are expecting to graduate at the end of the semester submit all their assignments on time.
- B. Let me know in a note at the end of your first essay that you are planning to graduate so I can pay particular attention to your special situation.
- C. If you do not get any of your essays back before the next one is due, contact me immediately. Do not wait until the end of the semester.
- D. Final Exams/Essays must be submitted early enough for the postal service, Distance Education and me to process and grade them so I can get the Final Grade turned in on time for you to graduate.
- E. Call me to verify that I have received your Final Exam/Essay.
- F. Failure to follow these procedures could prevent your graduating on time.

IV. Phone Calls

- A. Try to call during listed office hours.
- B. If I am not available when you call, leave your name, number, which course you are taking, and times you will be available (between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday - Friday) so I can return your call.

FINAL EXAMINATIONS

The course will conclude with a final at-home examination that must be submitted by Monday, July 28, 2008. The final exam will consist of four one-page essay questions. These questions will be based on the video lectures and the readings for the course.