

# Modern American Novel

## Course Outline and Outcome Summary

### ***Course Information***

<b>Organization</b>	Mercer County Community College
<b>Developers</b>	Laura Knight, knightl@mccc.edu, ext. 3309
<b>Revised Date</b>	4/11/2008
<b>Course Number</b>	ENG 208
<b>Total Credits</b>	3

### **Description**

Traces the triumph of prose Realism over Naturalism and the recurrent forms and techniques of the contemporary novel in the American idiom. Emphasizes the novel as the dominant modern American literary art form, as a social document, and as a portrait of time and place. (Catalog description)

### **Prerequisites**

minimum C grade in ENG 102 or divisional permission

### **Required texts/other materials:**

Required reading should include six to ten novels, including but not limited to:

Zora Neale Hurston, [Their Eyes Were Watching God](#)  
Edith Wharton, [House of Mirth](#)  
Gertrude Stein, [The Making of Americans](#)  
John Dos Pasos, [USA Trilogy](#)  
Ernest Hemingway, [The Sun Also Rises](#)  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, [The Great Gatsby](#)  
Jean Toomer, [Cane](#)  
Nella Larsen, [Quicksand](#)  
Langston Hughes, [Not Without Laughter](#)  
William Faulkner, [Light in August](#)  
John Steinbeck: [Cannery Row](#)  
Richard Wright, [Native Son](#)  
Eudora Welty, [Delta Wedding](#)  
Thomas Wolfe, [You Can't Go Home Again](#)  
Carson McCullough, [The Heart is a Lonely Hunter](#)  
Robert Penn Warren, [All the King's Men](#)  
Ralph Ellison, [Invisible Man](#)  
Henry Roth, [Call It Sleep](#)  
Bernard Malamud, [The Fixer](#)  
Chaim Potok, [My Name is Asher Lev](#)  
Thomas Berger, [Little Big Man](#)  
Larry McMurtry, [Horseman, Pass By](#)  
Kurt Vonnegut, [Slaughterhouse-Five](#)  
John Barth, [Giles Goat-Boy](#)  
James Dickey, [Deliverance](#)  
Toni Morrison, [Song of Solomon](#)  
Ken Kesey [One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest](#)  
Alice Walker, [The Color Purple](#)  
Barbara Kingsolver [Pigs in Heaven](#)

Anna Quindlen One True Thing  
Katherine Dunn, Geek Love  
Tim O'Brien, The Things They Carried  
Don DeLillo, White Noise  
Gish Jen, Mona in the Promised Land  
Amy Tan, The Joy Luck Club  
Tom Perrotta, Little Children  
Thomas Pynchon, V  
Christopher Moore, Fluke  
Jane Smiley, A Thousand Acres  
Sandra Cisneros, Caramelo

## **Grading Information**

### **Grading Rationale**

Instructors have some discretion in determining the format and content of required work. However, written and verbal assignments in any literature course should be designed to help students develop General Education skills. Instructors should emphasize these goals in their assignments and should state them in their written and verbal instructions to the students.

Literature courses should, therefore, use essay examinations, written reports and oral presentations as standard methods of assessing student learning. Below are the parameters within which instructors may operate:

#### Reading Assignments

.. Works of classic American literature should be clearly assigned to the students

#### Exams & Quizzes

.. Quizzes on the novels

.. Final Exam which must include an essay component

#### Projects

Individual or group project/class presentation demonstrating an understanding of the author, the novel, or the unit.

Writing Assignments (to assess discipline specific knowledge, communication skills, and critical thinking skills). Students are expected to develop the ability to construct narratives—written or verbal or both that clearly present their own thesis based on solid evidence that has been thoroughly and critically evaluated. Students are directed in developing competencies in accumulating evidence from a variety of sources, assessing the validity of the evidence, and extracting substantive generalizations from what they have discovered (Information Literacy).

.. At least four (4), writing assignments

.. Length of the writing assignments may be determined by the instructor, but their total should be no less than 15 pages

.. At least one (1) one assignment should incorporate library or internet research or both; this assignment should be a term paper.

### **Library Resources**

Databases: American Humanities Index (Ebsco Host), AP Photo Archive, Biographies Plus Illustrated Wilson (Vale), EBooks (Net Library), Facts on File Online, Literature Resource Center (Gale), New York Time Historical (Proquest), Newspapers Index (Ebsco)

Websites: American Literature Web Resources (<http://www.millikin.edu/aci/crow/links.html>), Harlem Renaissance (<http://www.nku.edu/~diesmanj/poetryindex.html>), Modern American Literature Resource (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/modeng/modeng0.browse.html>), Modern American Writers (<http://www.colorado.edu/English/amlit/mod.html>), A Web Directory of American Literature ([http://www.zeroland.co.nz/american\\_literature.html](http://www.zeroland.co.nz/american_literature.html)) Journals: American Literature (Duke University Press), African American Review (St. Louis University), Modern Fiction Studies (The Johns Hopkins

## ***Exit Learning Outcomes***

### **Core Abilities**

- A. Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.  
Students will read, write, and listen actively, critically, and reflectively.  
Students will logically, informatively, persuasively, and creatively respond orally and/or in writing to what they read, hear, and see.  
Students will evaluate and revise their written and/or oral communication.  
Students will write and speak clearly and effectively in formal American English.  
Students will understand, analyze, and assess nonverbal, cultural, and gender communication in both small group and public communication settings.
- B. Use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.  
Students will distinguish among opinions, facts, and inferences.  
Students will identify and critique underlying or implicit assumptions.  
Students will thoughtfully evaluate diverse perspectives and alternative points of view.  
Students will ask informed questions and make informed judgments.  
Students will solve problems by applying discipline-appropriate methods and standards.
- C. Recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.  
Students will identify ethical implications of an issue or a situation.  
Students will analyze and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of different perspectives on an ethical issue or a situation.  
Students will integrate their knowledge, take a position on an ethical issue or a situation, and defend it with logical arguments.
- D. Recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.  
Students will recognize the value of using information to strengthen arguments and articulate a research question.  
Students will identify resources needed and develop and modify appropriate search strategies to obtain the information required to answer a research question.  
Students will recognize the factors that affect the quality of information and extract the pertinent information needed for the specific research question.  
Students will integrate the information located in a cohesive manner that addresses the research question and communicate the information to the appropriate audience.  
Students will respect the privacy, security, and ownership of the information they locate and use.  
Students will identify the ethical considerations relevant to the use of information, with a particular focus on how to prevent plagiarism.
- E. Use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.  
Students will demonstrate proficiency in using major categories of computer software such as word processing, spreadsheet and presentation software.  
Students will be proficient in using an interface and managing files.  
Students will use email and communication software effectively and appropriately.  
Students will use a web browser and search engines to seek information and will recognize types of information and sources.  
Students will understand the impact of computers on society.

- F. Demonstrate interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.  
 Students will demonstrate communication skills that promote effective function and interpersonal relations within group situations or settings.  
 Students will recognize and employ strategies and role-playing which encourage a productive and supportive group climate.  
 Students will employ aspects of reflective thinking to solve problems utilizing brainstorming and consensus within collaborative projects.  
 Students will identify leadership, task, maintenance and self-serving roles and their effect on group function.
- G. Demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.  
 Students will understand the privileges and responsibilities of being a citizen in a democratic society.  
 Students will demonstrate understanding of the behaviors and beliefs of different social groups within a pluralistic society, including groups based on culture, ethnicity, race, religion, creed, disability, marital status, national origin or ancestry, age, gender, economic status, and sexual orientations.  
 Students will utilize strategies for effective cross-cultural communication.  
 Students will respect and appreciate diverse points of view.  
 Students will use inclusive language.

## **General Education Outcomes**

- A. Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.
- B. Goal 4. Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.
- C. Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.
- D. Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.
- E. Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.
- F. Goal 9: Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

## **Competencies**

1. **Engage in informed and perceptive reading of individual texts.**

### **Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

### **General Education Outcomes**

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

### **You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class activities and discussions.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

### **Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you can use appropriate analytic strategies, including summarizing, close reading, analysis of figurative language, analysis of narrative structures.

- o you can ask critical questions about texts.
- o you can understand the main idea and details of a reading.
- o you can grasp the tone of a reading.
- o you can understand and analyze pertinent themes.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Develop and practice close reading strategies.
- b. Use schema while reading.

**2. Read secondary literary sources critically, with an understanding of their validity, perspective bias, audience, and context.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.  
Use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussions and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you can locate the argument and support in a secondary source.
- o you can assess the validity, perspective, and bias of a secondary source.
- o you can consider the affect of audience and context on the argument made in a secondary source.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Read and assess secondary literary sources.

**3. Use information technologies in acquiring new knowledge and perspective.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

Use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 4. Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussions and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you can locate relevant websites and databases.
- o you can evaluate the source, reliability, and content of a website.
- o you can evaluate the utility of a database.
- o you can search effectively.
- o you can read source critically.
- o you can evaluate and apply new ideas.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Locate and evaluate relevant websites.
- b. Choose appropriate databases and websites
- c. Gain insight from and respond to secondary sources.

**4. Construct essays that present a clear thesis, a persuasive argument, and well-researched supporting data.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o by completing a research paper on [TOPIC]

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o research paper topic is directly relevant to the project assigned and is approved by the instructor
- o research paper includes a cover page
- o research paper contains an introductory paragraph
- o research paper contains [SPECIFIC NUMBER] of clearly written main points
- o each main point is supported with evidence
- o direct quotes are documented correctly
- o evidence is included in the Works Cited Page
- o research paper is based on at least [SPECIFIC NUMBER] sources
- o Works Cited page is formatted correctly according to [TYPE] documentation style
- o research paper includes a conclusion
- o research paper evidences correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling
- o you submit a draft of the paper
- o second draft of paper evidences suggestions taken from peer editing process
- o research paper is word processed
- o research paper is submitted on time

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Practice the skills learned in ENG 101 and 102, especially a writing process with multiple drafts and the use of outside sources.
- b. Discuss ideas from multiple texts.
- c. Make effective and appropriate use of secondary sources.
- d. Build on class discussion, using it as a base to develop original insights.

**5. Describe with authority, in writing and verbally major movements, trends, and developments of American literature.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o by preparing a giving a presentation on [TOPIC]
- o by completing a written product on [TOPIC]

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you present information in a style and tone consistent with the audience's level of interest and level of knowledge or understanding
- o delivery is extemporaneous
- o delivery holds audience attention; you are energetic and enthusiastic
- o your voice inflection, volume, and rate are appropriate for the content
- o your nonverbal communication is consistent with your verbal message
- o you maintain eye contact with audience
- o you use acceptable language
- o presentation purpose is clear
- o introduction includes an attention getter that grabs the audience's attention
- o introduction includes an overview of the main points
- o main points are clear and concise
- o each main point is proven using a variety of supporting material
- o sufficient supporting material is used to persuade the audience
- o conclusion includes a summary of the main points
- o you introduce and use the visual aid appropriately
- o visual aid (including any words or pictures on the visual) is large enough to be seen by the audience
- o visual aid includes only one main idea
- o visual aid is visible to all members of the audience
- o written product fulfills a clear purpose
- o written product reflects accurate analysis of the target audience
- o written product shows evidence of logical critical thinking
- o written product follows an effective organizational plan
- o written product follows prescribed format, meeting criteria for all components
- o written product exhibits correct and appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and word usage

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Understand key elements of Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, the Southern Renaissance, Postmodernism, Ethnic fiction, the Road novel, and the Novel of the West
- b. Understand the similarities and differences between different literary schools.
- c. Understand how different literary schools and forms are a response to earlier ones, and to their own time and place.

**6. Compare texts of different kinds.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussions and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you can identify similarities and differences of style, tone, and genre between multiple texts.
- o you can compare themes and theses from multiple texts.
- o you can understand how texts build in a genealogical succession, i.e. later texts responding to earlier ones.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Develop and practice close reading techniques.
- b. Compare different writing styles, structures, and content.
- c. Understand allusion and intertextuality.
- d. Understand how texts and writers "speak" to each other.

**7. Understand the development of literature within certain specific historical periods.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

Demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 7. History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussion and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you analyze the relationship between a given historical event and a given text.
- o you can understand the impact on literature of a particular cultural milieu, e.g. Greenwich Village.
- o you can understand the role of place (nature, city, or specific sites, real or imagined: Yoknapatowpha) in literature.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Connect literary texts with major historical events and social changes.
- b. Reflect on the use of literature as a response to and/or critique of cultural and historical events.
- c. Consider how literature can reflect, create, or subvert American culture.

**8. Grasp the development of theoretical approaches to literature and criticism.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

Recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 1. Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussions and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you understand the main principles and critical practices of each school.
- o you can apply critical approaches to literary texts.
- o you understand how critical analysis helps us read literature and culture.

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Study various critical approaches such as New Criticism, Marxism, Feminism, Race Theory, Structuralism, Post-Modernism, and Post-Colonialism.
- b. Apply key ideas from these critical schools to literary and other texts.
- c. Use ideas from critical schools to enhance the study of literature and culture.

**9. Understand the ways in which literature can be explored through associated disciplines.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading. Use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 6. Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o In class discussions and activities.
- o In formal and informal writing assignments.

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you can make interdisciplinary connections.
- o you can apply the insights of different disciplines to literary analysis (e.g. how does Social Darwinism help us read Sister Carrie?).
- o you can understand the synaesthesia of different art forms (what does it mean to "write like Cezanne paints"?).

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Create a coherent body of interdisciplinary knowledge.
- b. Understand how ideas "flow" between art forms (e.g. painting and writing, film and writing).
- c. Understand the relationship between disciplinary form and the development and presentation of an idea.

**10. Read texts that reflect the ethnic, racial, and other diversities of American Culture.**

**Linked Core Abilities**

Communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading. Demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

**General Education Outcomes**

Goal 8. Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

Goal 9: Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

**You will demonstrate your competence:**

- o by participating in the class
- o by completing a written product on [TOPIC]

**Your performance will be successful when:**

- o you enter into class discussions

- o you offer questions or comments during class
- o you engage in the electronic learning forum
- o you offer questions or comments via e-mail
- o you attend class regularly
- o you arrive for class on time
- o you listen attentively during class
- o written product fulfills a clear purpose
- o written product reflects accurate analysis of the target audience
- o written product shows evidence of logical critical thinking
- o written product follows an effective organizational plan
- o written product follows prescribed format, meeting criteria for all components
- o written product exhibits correct and appropriate grammar, punctuation, spelling, syntax, and word usage

**Learning Objectives**

- a. Analyze the cultural significance of the writing of women and minorities and reflect on the particular concerns of these writers.