



School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies

English

ENGL 332: American Literature: The Twentieth Century

Trimester 2, 2009

13 July to 15 November 2009

Course information and lecture programme

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 13 July to 16 October

Study week: 19 to 23 October

Examination/Assessment period: 27 October to 15 November

Course co-ordinator	Anna Jackson (Anna.Jackson@vuw.ac.nz , room VZ 918, extn.6840)
Lecturers	Anna Jackson Charles Ferrall (Charles.Ferrall@vuw.ac.nz , VZ 904, extn. 6804) Erin Mercer (Erin.Mercer@vuw.ac.nz , VZ 910, extn. 9679)
Lecture times:	Monday and Wednesday, 3-4
Location of lectures:	Hunter (HU) LT 119
Tutorials	Weekly tutorials will begin in the second week of term Times and rooms to be announced Tutorial lists will be posted on the English notice-board (2 nd floor HM) Enquiries to Anna Jackson
Course Delivery:	

The two lectures a week will provide background information on the writers, their works, and the contexts in which they were writing, to give a context for students' own close reading of texts and further research through the reading of recommended

secondary sources. Brief summaries of the lectures will be provided on Blackboard, along with the powerpoint slides shown, which will include all major quotations provided. However Blackboard should not be considered an alternative to lectures, which will include the discussion of much audio-visual material.

The tutorials will involve the close reading of select passages from the texts, or the discussion of thematic or stylistic issues that will usually have been announced in advance. Students are expected to have read the primary texts in advance of the tutorials and will usually be asked to bring written notes to class which will be handed in at the end of the session.

Communication of additional information: Additional information or notices about changes that may have to be made will be posted on Blackboard and announced in lectures.

Course content

This course introduces students to some of the central movements in American literature in the twentieth century, including Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, the Jazz Age, the Beat period, the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry movement, and the Minimalist fiction of the 1980s.

Five major works of fiction will be introduced and discussed in lectures and tutorials, in addition to a selection of poetry, which will be made available in class along with other supplementary material.

The fiction texts, in order of teaching, are:

- 1) F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
- 2) Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- 3) Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*
- 4) Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
- 5) Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Learning Objectives

In studying a wide selection of writing by American poets, novelists and short story writers, students will gain an understanding both of specific texts and genres and of the historical, social, political and literary contexts in which such writing occurs.

Specifically, students will:

- a) develop skills of attentive and critical reading through the study of selected text
- b) increase their understanding of American culture and of the role of the writer/artist in relation to the some of the shifting values and ideas of American culture;
- c) be familiar with the some of the key literary movements of the Twentieth century

- d) be able to place a range of significant American writers within a literary and cultural context

Workload

The expected workload for this course is twenty hours a week: that is, sixteen hours a week of self-directed study in addition to the class contact hours.

Required texts:

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of VicBooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from VicBooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Recommended reading:

A recommended, but not prescribed, text is (Ed.) Geoffrey Moore, *The Penguin Book of American Verse* (revised edition 1983, Penguin, \$31.95).

In addition, a reading list of books in our library will be provided. Students are expected to read one or more secondary texts, to provide contextual information for their readings of the primary texts. Guidance for further reading will be given in tutorials but students are also encouraged to talk to their tutor for further assistance.

Assessment requirements:

Assessment will ensure that the student has a broad acquaintance with the set texts, and a close knowledge of at least six authors within a cultural and critical framework. Both the essays and the examination questions will develop and assess the ability to read and write about literary works with attention to detail and context.

Coursework is worth 50%, and is made up of two essays of 2000 words each, each worth 25%. The first assignment is due on **Friday 14 August** and the second assignment is due on **Friday 25 September**.

Both essays are designed to assess how well students are meeting the learning objectives of close and attentive reading skills, and an ability to place American writers in a literary and cultural context. Grading will also take into account the ability to construct a logical argument, the effective use of textual evidence in support of claims made, and writing style. A basic level of literacy is required for an essay to receive a passing grade whether or not the essay otherwise meets the required standards. Essays must conform to the standards and guidelines set out in the **SEFTMS Guidelines for Students**.

Examination (50%): This is a three hour examination and will consist of three questions, each of equal value. You will be expected to write on at least four authors in the exam. The examination is closed book.

Penalties

You are expected to arrange an extension with your tutor **in advance** if for any reason you are not able to complete coursework by the due dates. Essays handed in late without an extension will lose one grade (e.g. will drop from a B grade to a B-). The **final** deadline for any written coursework is **Friday 16 October**. No work will be accepted after this date.

Mandatory Course Requirements

You are required to attend lectures and tutorials regularly. **At least seven tutorials must be attended as a mandatory requirement for the course, and preparation for the tutorials is essential.** This includes reading the set texts for tutorial discussion, and will usually also involve bringing written notes to the class which will be handed in at the end of the session. Both major assignments must be completed and handed in, and the three-hour final examination must be completed at the end of the course.

A student who has obtained an overall mark of 50% or more, but failed to satisfy a mandatory requirement for a course, will receive a K grade for that course, while a course mark less than 50% will result in the appropriate fail grade (D, E or F).

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

The AVC(Academic) website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates. This website can be accessed at:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic/Publications.aspx>

Lecture programme

Monday 13 July Introduction: From modernism to post-modernism (AJ)

1920s: Modernism and the Jazz Age

Wednesday 15 July Gertrude Stein (AJ)

Monday 20 July William Carlos Williams (AJ)

Wednesday 22 July T.S. Eliot (AJ)

Monday 27 July Hemingway (AJ)

Wednesday 29 July *The Great Gatsby* (AJ)

Monday 3 August *The Great Gatsby* (AJ)

Wednesday 5 August *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (CF)

Monday 10 August *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (CF)

Wednesday 12 August *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (CF)

1950s: Culture and the Counter-culture

Monday 17 August 1950s conformity culture (AJ/EM)

Wednesday 19 August Ginsberg (AJ)

MID-SEMESTER BREAK

Monday 7 Sept *Invisible Man* (EM)

Wednesday 9 Sept *Invisible Man* (EM)

Monday 14 Sept Beat poetry (AJ)

Wednesday 16 Sept *On the Road* (AJ)

Monday 21 Sept *On the Road* (AJ)

1980s: L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E and Realism

Wednesday 23 Sept Dirty realism: Raymond Carver (AJ)

Monday 28 Sept Carver and after (AJ)

Wednesday 30 Sept *The Things They Carried* (CF)

Monday 5 October *The Things They Carried* (CF)

Wednesday 7 October L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry (AJ)

Monday 12 October L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry (AJ)

Wednesday 14 October Conclusion (AJ)