Course Description

This course gives a broad overview of American literature from 1945 to the present, examining fiction, poetry, drama, and graphic novels alongside the major sociopolitical trends and movements of the period. Dramatic shifts in economics, politics, and philosophical inquiry in the postwar years engendered new ways of understanding the world in which we live, and this course asks students to contextualize these issues within and alongside literature. Postmodernism, the predominant philosophical movement emerging from this period, will provide the chief analytical lens for examining these texts, and one of the goals of the course is furnish students with a deep understanding of postmodernism and its literary offshoots. More than just developing this critical position, students will grapple with the debates surrounding the major literary texts of the past several decades, attuned to the ways in which postmodernism shapes our understandings of race, class, gender, and the practice of everyday life.

Required Texts

West, Nathanael. *The Day of the Locust*.
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*.
Pynchon, Thomas. *The Crying of Lot 49*.
Reed, Ishmael. *Mumbo Jumbo*.
Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*.
Vonnegut, Kurt. *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

Course Grading

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments, exams, blackboard postings, and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

Writing Assignment #1: 200 points
Writing Assignment #2: 300 points
Blackboard Postings: 100 points (25 points each)
Participation: 100 points
Exam 1: 150 points
Exam 2: 150 points

Participation will be calculated based on class attendance and participation in class discussions. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

**Course Objectives**

1. To examine the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts by reading texts by authors from a range of cultures and nationalities.
2. To explore the distinctive characteristics of postmodernism and to gain a deep understanding of postmodern critical theory.
3. To understand and use basic literary terms and concepts.
4. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
5. To use writing as a tool for learning.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students who successfully complete ENGL 3356 will be able to:

1. Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
2. Respond critically to literary works.
3. Participate in debates that are grounded in postmodern critical theory.

**Class Policies**

**Academic Honesty:** I will follow the university’s policy on academic honesty. Plagiarism, which is “the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work” is only one form of academic dishonesty, which also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), multiple submissions (using the same material for two separate assignments or courses without permission from the instructors), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials). Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Therefore, if you have questions or doubts about what constitutes a breach of integrity or a violation of policies, it is important that you consult with me.

**Grade Appeal Process:** As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed...
for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Website at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

Policy on class attendance: Students are allowed a maximum of four (4) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed four absences will be penalized one letter grade on their final grade for every absence over the limit.

- Note: Students who participate in university-sanctioned activities should meet with me during the first week of classes.

If I am absent: If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

Late Writing Projects: All papers are due at the beginning of class. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Absence is no excuse for a late assignment. If you are unable to attend class, make arrangements to have your paper submitted by a friend or simply turn the paper in early.

Resources

1. Writing Center: The Writing Center of Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi provides free help for students at any stage of the writing process. Writing Center consultants are trained to work with writers one-on-one to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, cite sources, and succeed at all aspects of the writing task. The Writing Center works closely with faculty across campus to understand the writing projects they assign and to help students meet the expectations of those assignments. The Writing Center is located in the Center for Academic Student Achievement in CASA 112 (formerly Glasscock Center). Both drop-in and scheduled appointments are available. For more information see http://casa.tamucc.edu/wc.php.

2. Students with Disabilities and Veterans: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in CCH 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

3. Academic Advising Center: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor,
and the department chair. The College’s Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Procedures for Posting to Blackboard**

For those of you new to this system, Blackboard is an interactive forum that facilitates communication in the form of discussion boards, course documents, email, etc. For this class, I will post our writing assignment sheets, supplemental course readings, and any other items of interest to our course page. As noted above, you will be expected to contribute a minimum of four times to the discussion board, which I facilitate and monitor throughout the semester. Your posting should contain between 200 and 400 words and should critically engage the texts, following the prompt I set up for each posting. I want you to cite the text as often as possible—at least twice in each posting—in order to support your claims. Postings will not be accepted after 8 p.m. on the day indicated.

**Blackboard 9.1:** To log into Blackboard, go to: [http://bb9.tamucc.edu](http://bb9.tamucc.edu). You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: [http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html](http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html). If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

**Reminder to English Majors**

As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should **keep a copy** of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**Course Calendar**

**Unit One—Into Postmodernity**

**Week 1:** (September 5)
- **Thursday**
  - Introduction
  - Syllabus Overview

**Week 2:** (September 10, 12)
- **Tuesday**
  - Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (2327-2357)
- **Thursday**
  - Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (2357-2392)
Week 3: (September 17, 19)
Tuesday
  Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” (2576-2584)
  John Cheever, “The Swimmer” (2250-2257)
Thursday
  Adrienne Rich, Selected Poems (2651-2664)
  Sylvia Plath, Selected Poems (2700-2711)

Week 4: (September 24, 26)
Tuesday
  Eudora Welty, “Petrified Man” (2148-2157)
  Flannery O’Connor, “Good Country People” (2529-2543)
Thursday
  Raymond Carver, “Cathedral” (2828-2838)
  John Updike, “Separating” (2713-2720)
  **Blackboard Posting #1 DUE**

**Unit Two—The Postmodern Novel**

Week 5: (October 1, 3)
Tuesday
  Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (Chapters 1-17)
Thursday
  Nathanael West, *The Day of the Locust* (Chapters 18-27)
  **Blackboard Posting #2 DUE**

Week 6: (October 8, 10)
Tuesday
  Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Chapters 1-5)
Thursday
  Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse-Five* (Chapters 6-10)

Week 7: (October 15, 17)
Tuesday
  Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1-79)
  **WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE**
Thursday
  Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (79-152)

Week 8: (October 22, 24)
Tuesday
  **MIDTERM EXAM**
Thursday
  Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1-106)
Week 9: (October 29, 31)
Tuesday
Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (106-Finish)
Thursday
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (3-85)

Week 10: (November 5, 7)
Tuesday
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (86-199)
Thursday
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (200-275)
**Blackboard Posting #3 DUE**

**Unit Three—Race, Class, and Gender through the Lens of Postmodernity**

Week 11: (November 12, 14)
Tuesday
Gloria Anzaldúa, “La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness,” “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (2936-2955)
Sandra Cisneros, “Woman Hollering Creek” (3164-3171)
Thursday
Alberto Ríos, Selected Poems (3148-3153)
Simon Ortiz, Selected Poems (2915-2919)
Li-Young Lee, Selected Poems (3198-3204)

Week 12: (November 19, 21)
Tuesday
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-63)
Thursday
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (63-138)

Week 13: (November 26, 28)
Tuesday
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (138-262)
**Blackboard Posting #4 DUE**

Thursday (THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS)

**Unit Four—Post-Postmodernity?**

Week 14: (December 3, 5)
Tuesday
Art Spiegelman, excerpt from *Maus* (3091-3107)
Thursday
Writing in a Time of Terror, Selected Works (3205-3219)
Week 15: (December 10)
Tuesday
WRITING ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE
Last Day of Class

FINAL EXAM WILL BE GIVEN ON THE DATE AND TIME DESIGNATED BY THE UNIVERSITY