

**Carleton University  
Winter 2015  
Department of English**

**ENGL 2701A: *American Literatures II (1945-Present)***  
***Prerequisite: 1.0 credit in ENGL at the 1000 level or permission of the department***

**Tuesday/Thursday: 8:35-9:55 AM**  
**Location: SA 518**  
***Please confirm location on Carleton Central***

**Instructor: Robert Mousseau**  
**Email: [robert.mousseau@carleton.ca](mailto:robert.mousseau@carleton.ca)**  
**Office: 1909 DT**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10:00-11:00 AM**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course focuses on the development of American literature following World War II to the present. Students will read and engage critically with a variety of genres (poems, short fiction, novels, graphic novels, non-fiction prose). Studying texts themed loosely around popular culture, we will question the influence of popular culture on literature as well as the role that literature plays in defining American citizens' sense of national identity in the second half of the twentieth century leading to present day. Discussions will focus variously on social issues such as sexuality and war as well as aesthetic developments like experimentalism, postmodernism, and new journalism. Ultimately, we will attempt to discern the role that literature and culture play in articulating America's shifting social and economic influence in the second half of the 20th century. Lectures will help situate the readings in their social, historical, and political contexts, however focus will also be placed on close reading skills through class discussions and assignments.

**READING LIST:**

**All texts available at Octopus Books (116 Third Avenue)**

Course Pack  
Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*  
Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*  
Daniel Clowes, *Ghost World*  
Dave Eggers, *A Hologram for the King*

**METHOD OF EVALUATION (SUBJECT TO CHANGE):**

Attendance/Participation	15%
In-Class Assignments (5)	15% (3% each)
Critical Response Papers (2)	40% (20% each)
Research Essay	30%

**Attendance/Class Participation -- 15%**

Our class and its discussions will succeed or fail based on your attendance and prepared engagement. For this reason, class participation will make up 15% of your grade. This grade will reflect not only your contribution to our conversations, but also your ability to listen and respond to the ideas of others in the class, and your attendance record. You may miss two classes without any penalty, but more than two absences will affect your participation grade, bringing it down by one letter grade for each meeting missed.

**In-Class Assignments (5) -- 15% (3% each)**

Over the course of the semester there will be **five unannounced in-class assignments**. Do not worry: the assignments will be small and will require no preparation beyond the reading assigned for any given class. These assignments may take the form of brief responses to the assigned reading, or of reading quizzes. These assignments are designed to encourage attendance, to demonstrate you have completed the reading, and to indicate reflection on the reading both before and during class. Given their connection to attendance, you will be unable to make up these assignments.

**Critical Response Papers (2) -- 40% (20% each)**

Twice throughout the semester, students will write a critical response paper performing close readings of works on the syllabus. Responses should be **3-5 pages double spaced (~1000 words) in an appropriate font**. Assignments shorter than 3 full pages will not be accepted. Papers should respond analytically to a single course text, presenting a thesis based on the chosen text and supporting it with direct references. Since we have no final exam, students may not write about the same text multiple times throughout the semester **unless approved by the instructor**; by and large, each critical response paper must address different works, and **works may not be recycled for the final essay**. Choose your texts carefully near the start of the term so ideally you write on works you find appealing!

Both critical response papers will be graded based on whether or not they present a clear, argumentative thesis about a work which is proven with analysis of examples lifted directly from the chosen text. Close reading is at the core of the critical response paper: your mark will reflect whether or not you successfully and persuasively argue your thesis based on the content and language of the text under analysis. You must quote directly from your chosen text, and you must explicate your selected quotations to support your thesis statement. Be sure you analyze your text as a whole and your selected quotations in specific; summary of plot is unsatisfactory and will reflect negatively on your mark.

Critical response papers are **to be submitted no later than the date your selected text is scheduled to be discussed in class**. In the event that discussion of a text spans multiple class meetings, assignments are to be submitted at the beginning of the first class a text is scheduled for discussion.

**The first critical response paper must be submitted no later than February 12 (the final class before reading week); the second response is due no later than March 31.**

Secondary reading is not required for this assignment, however some historical or biographical reading about the text and its author is recommended since we will not have discussed the work in class before you submit your assignment. You are encouraged to include citations if you intend to make claims about a text's historical or theoretical context. **Assignments are to be formatted according to MLA citation guidelines.**

Visit the OWL Purdue website for a full MLA citation guide with examples for most imaginable citation types: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

### **Research Essay -- 30%**

Write a **6-8 page** (~1650-2000 word) critical research paper drawing from **two (2) of the texts discussed in class**. Essays must also make use of and refer directly to **AT LEAST three (3) scholarly sources** (in addition to the two selected course texts). Papers less than six full pages (1650 words) will not be accepted.

Students will construct a thesis which unites their selected texts thematically. The research essay must present this thesis clearly, supporting it with evidence in the form of examples and quotations from both chosen literary texts. Analysis must be supplemented with quotations or paraphrasing from scholarly sources. **Be sure to cite all sources correctly!** All paper topics (and ideally paper theses) must be approved by the instructor at least one week (7 days) before the final paper is submitted -- that is, paper topics must be approved by March 31, and the paper is to be submitted April 7. Failure to confirm the paper topic will result in a 10% deduction from the assignment's grade.

Again, assignments are to be formatted according to MLA standards. I encourage you to refer to the MLA citation guide at OWL Purdue before requesting citation assistance: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

**The research essay is to be submitted on April 7 at the beginning of our final class meeting.**

### **COURSE REGULATIONS AND OTHER INFORMATION:**

#### **Grades**

Grades out of 100 will correspond to the following scale:

A+	90-100	B+	77-79	C+	67-69	D+	57-59	F	0-49
A	85-89	B	73-76	C	63-66	D	53-56		
A-	80-84	B-	70-72	C-	60-62	D-	50-52		

### **Assignment Submissions**

Assignments must be submitted at the beginning of the class on the due date, or dropped off at the English Department office (DT 1812) to our department secretary or in the office drop-box after hours. I cannot accept assignments received under my office door. I also cannot accept electronic or faxed submissions. Students should keep a backup copy of their work to be submitted on request in the unlikely event that I lose or do not receive an assignment.

### **Late Assignments**

Unless a student has a physician's note or other appropriate documentation, any late assignments will receive a deduction of five percentage points per day to a maximum of five days (**including weekends**). After five days, no undocumented late papers will be accepted. Rare extensions may be granted, at the discretion of the instructor, to students with non-emergency situations that will prevent them from submitting an assignment on time. Not all requests for extensions will be granted. If non-emergency situations seem likely to develop throughout the semester, notify the instructor of the issue **BEFORE** it occurs whenever possible. Be aware: late assignments and assignments that receive extensions may receive few or no comments.

### **Posted Grades**

All assignment grades will be posted on the course's cuLearn site. Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

### **Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

**Pregnancy obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

**Religious obligation:** write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide.

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism

Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

### **Plagiarism**

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in “substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.”

Plagiarism is a serious offense, which cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor.

The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

**(Specific readings subject to change or reorganization)**

**January 6 -- Introduction**

**January 8** -- Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*

**January 13** -- Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*

**January 15** -- Raymond Chandler, *The Long Goodbye*

**January 20** -- Normal Mailer, "The White Negro"

Allen Ginsberg, "Howl;" "Footnote to Howl;" "A Supermarket in California"  
"America"

**January 22** -- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (excerpts); "The Essentials of Spontaneous Prose"

**January 27** -- Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*; Amiri Baraka, "Letter to the *Evergreen Review*  
About Kerouac's Spontaneous Prose"

**January 29** -- Langston Hughes, "Parade;" "Sister;" "Juke Box Love Song;" "Movies;" "Not a  
Movie;" "Ballad of the Landlord;" "Theme for English B;" "Deferred;"  
"Nightmare Boogie;" "Harlem"

\*\*Gwendolyn Brooks, "kitchenette building;" "we real cool;" "To the Diaspora"

**February 3** -- Adrienne Rich, "Trying to Talk with a Man;" "When We Dead Awaken;"  
"Incipience;" "After Twenty Years;" "The Stranger;" "Diving Into the Wreck;"  
"Rape;" "Burning Oneself In;" "Burning Oneself Out;"

**February 5** -- Joan Didion, "The White Album"

**February 10** -- Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*

**February 12** -- Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*;

**FIRST CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER DUE**

**February 17** -- **READING WEEK**

**February 19** -- **READING WEEK**

**February 24** -- Greil Marcus, "The End of the 1960s;" "Rock Deaths in the 1970s: A  
Sweepstakes;" "The Next President of the United States;" "Four More Years;"  
"The Last President of the United States;" "Sand In Your Mouth"

**February 26** -- Donald Barthelme, "The Indian Uprising;" "The Balloon;" "Robert Kennedy  
Saved From Drowning;" "A Picture History of the War"

**March 3** -- Lydia Davis, "Betrayal;" "Priority;" "The Meeting;" "Companion;" "Blind Date;"  
"Old Mother and The Grouch;" "Jury Duty;" "The Old Dictionary;" "They Take  
Turns Using a Word They Like;" "Oral History (With Hiccups);" "The Silence of  
Mrs. Iln"

**March 5** -- Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried;" "How to Tell a True War Story;"  
"The Man I Killed;" "Ambush;" "Speaking of Courage;"

**March 10** -- Yusef Komunyakaa, "Hanoi Hannah;" "Camouflaging the Chimera;" "Tunnels;"  
"Facing it;" "Somewhere Near Phu Bai"

**March 12** -- David Foster Wallace, "Little Expressionless Animals"

**March 17** -- Jonathan Lethem, "13, 1977, 33;" "The Ecstasy of Influence;"

**March 19** -- Daniel Clowes, *Ghost World*

**March 24** -- Daniel Clowes, *Ghost World*

**March 26** -- Dave Eggers, *A Hologram for the King*

**March 31** -- Dave Eggers, *A Hologram for the King*

**SECOND CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPER DUE**

**April 2** -- Dave Eggers, *A Hologram for the King*

**April 7** -- **LAST CLASS; RESEARCH ESSAY DUE**

**\*\*Designates texts are available online**