Lauro

ENGLISH 2150 sec. 100
LITERATURE of the 20/21st centuries: The Outsiders, HONORS
Spring 2014

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MEETING TIMES: MWF, 9:05 a.m.-9:55 a.m.
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class will study literature from 1900 to the present, covering broad intellectual, aesthetic, and philosophical movements in British, American, and Anglophone literatures: including Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, the Southern Gothic, Postmodern and Postcolonial literature, as well as several schools of poetry, including Confessional, Beat, New York School, and LANGUAGE poetry. We will study the broad scope of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st by reading poetry and short fiction. In addition, we will focus on four novels: Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*; James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room*; Toni Morrison’s *A Mercy*, and JM Coetzee’s *Waiting for the Barbarians*, as well as Jennifer Egan’s twitter narrative, “Black Box” and many short stories and other texts.

Goals: Using a theme of “The Outsiders” to guide our reading selections, students will consider the way literature has dealt with issues like the psychological trauma suffered by war veterans, the societal ostracism experienced by different types of minorities, and the complications of defining nationality in an increasingly technology-filled, global world. Students will emerge from this class with a sense of the way literature in English develops over the twentieth century, the central issues that have been a concern and the various critical and theoretical approaches that have been applied to literature of the time period.

Critical Thinking: This is a CT2 Thinks class, which means that developing critical thinking skills will be a focal point of the class, established through the type of assignments given and the emphasis upon student-lead learning. *Clemson Thinks*, the University’s Quality Enhancement Plan, is an ambitious experiment in critical thinking that will transform learning and teaching through second-year Critical Thinking (CT) Seminars, a cohort of CT faculty scholars, faculty development, rigorous assessment and scholarly research. For more information about this program, see the website at: http://www.clemson.edu/assessment/thinks2/ In accordance with the policies of the CT2 initiative, our progress will be measured in testing conducted both before and after the class (The California Test) and in the production of a critical thinking artifact (the binder assignment) that we will submit for evaluation. The California Critical Thinking Skills
Test will be given in class: your score will not effect your grade, but your participation is mandatory and will be factored into your participation category.

LEARNING OUTCOMES
This is a critical thinking course that emphasizes student-lead discussion. Students will be active rather than passive participants, structuring the conversations we have about texts by raising questions and answering them in weekly blog assignments as well as in the classroom. They will also take ownership of a short text and present and lead discussion of it. Many short writing assignments, including in-class writing days will help students to process material, assess their responses to it, and synthesize our discussions. I have four goals for this course: (1) Students will become familiar with texts both obscure and canonical that are key components of modern and contemporary literature written in English; (2) They will develop reading skills, critical thinking, and practice thoughtful conversation and collaboration with one another in class discussion and in completing group projects; (3) They will write about various kinds of literature, and see writing as something that happens in stages, from preliminary drafting of observations about a text, to developing a more complex argument, to revising and rewriting drafts; (4) In weekly blogs and in several short writing assignments, rather than a traditional long term paper, students will demystify the process of reading and writing about literature, present original engagement with the texts, and trust their own observations.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
In essence, I require three things from you in this course: reading, talking, and writing. Essays, exams, participation, attendance, and your shorter writings will all relate in some way to these expectations (I’ll discuss the graded portions of the course in more detail in the following pages).

Reading: I expect you to come to class each day having read closely the assigned text for that day and having some thoughtful things to say about it. Class reading needs to go beyond skimming the text fifteen minutes before class. It means setting aside a significant block of time to do the reading, sometimes reading the text more than once in order to understand it better. It’s not too hard for me to discern whether or not you have done the reading for a particular class period. There will be ample discussion of reading and note-taking practices in the first weeks of class.

Talking/Participation: This is not a course during which you will sit back and listen to me lecture for an hour. The quality of the course depends on the insights that you and your classmates bring to the table each day. Everyone is expected to contribute to discussion on a regular basis. Don’t expect me or your classmates to simply accept your in-class contributions at face value without any arguments, though. The study of literature depends on cultivating an environment of collegiality and critique. If I challenge something you say, it is usually because I want to get to the heart of your rhetoric. I want
to know why you think one way about a text and not another. As such, I expect you to respond thoughtfully to the insights your classmates bring to the table as well. When there is disagreement on an issue, however, I must insist on a civil and collegial atmosphere. People can disagree with one another in class while still maintaining respect for each other’s opinions. Respect for your classmates is not optional. If you find yourself reluctant to voice your thoughts in class, come talk with me about it.

**REQUIRED TEXTS to buy:**

Author: Ernest Hemingway  
Title & Ed: The Sun Also Rises  
Publisher: Scribner  
ISBN: 0743297334

Author: James Baldwin  
Title & Ed: Giovanni’s Room  
Publisher: Vintage  
ISBN: 0345806565

Author: JM Coetzee  
Title & Ed: Waiting for the Barbarians  
Publisher: Penguin  
ISBN: 0-14-028335-8

Author: Toni Morrison  
Title & Ed: A Mercy  
Publisher: Vintage  
ISBN: 9780307276766

These are available at the bookstore; all other readings will be posted to black board, or you will be provided with links.

Other texts: available online or on bb:  
Author: James Joyce  
Title: The Dead  
Supplemental Text: James Larkin, “If they want war, then war they will have”

Author: Charlotte Perkins Gilman  
Title: The Yellow Wallpaper  
Supplemental Text: Michel Foucault, excerpt from Madness and Civilization

Author: Jonathan Safran Foer,  
Title: A Primer for the Punctuation of Heart Disease  
Supplemental Text: Zadie Smith, Speaking in Tongues

Author: Annie Proulx
Title: Brokeback Mountain  
Supplemental Text: Eve K. Sedgewick, How to Bring Your Kids Up Gay

Author: Jennifer Egan  
Title & Ed: Black Box  
Supplemental Text, Marshall McLuhan, exerpt from Understanding Media

ATTENDANCE
You are given a total of three (3) absences without any penalty to your final grade. After your third absence, I will deduct a letter grade from your end-of-semester grade for each absence. Six absences is grounds for failing the course. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so I advise you to exercise prudence in using your free absences. If an emergency arises, I will need proper documentation (doctor’s note, letter from an athletic coach, etc.). If you anticipate missing more than three course periods during the semester, please discuss with me immediately. Finally, be on time to class. I take attendance at the beginning of each course session, and three late arrivals to class is akin to one absence.

ASSIGNMENTS
Blogs: I will touch on this aspect of the course more in the “Essays” section and the “Exams” section, but suffice it to say here that the factor that most differentiates literature courses from most other courses in the liberal arts is that we emphasize thoughtful critical thinking and writing about texts. To that end, you will write a weekly “blog” posted to blackboard about the readings. You will practice developing “good questions,” and post these to the blog as well as answering the questions posed by your peers. Due each Sunday/Tuesday at 5 pm. Blogs will NEVER be accepted late. Blog Q & A will be graded on a point system (based on the strength of thought and development) rather than a letter grade system. Blogs will also help you prepare for class discussion.

Instead of writing long papers, we will focus on developing an argument in stages and improving on our writing in a short form essay.

Essays:
1.) You will write four short essays for this course that come out of your weekly blogs and/or our “writing days.” All papers should be at least 2.5 pages double-spaced, written in Times New Roman 12 point font with 1-inch margins. (Failure to make this minimum will result in a severe grade deduction, as will missing the writing days scheduled into our syllabus without a written excuse.) We will have writing exercises and draft workshops before these mini-papers are due, and there will be multiple “deadlines” so that students can choose when to turn in papers. This is meant to strengthen students’ skills in the areas of time management: students should not leave all four paper deadlines until the last weeks of class, or their grades are likely to suffer. Papers may be turned in any Monday after a “Writing Day.” These are not optional. Come to the writing workshops with the requested materials. Failure to participate (either by turning in a
complete draft, or by turning up to give your peers’ feedback on their drafts) will result in a grade penalty of 2/3 of a letter grade on your next paper. If you want to talk about any of your essays, feel free to come see me in my office about it. If my office hours are not convenient for you, let me know, and we can set up another time to meet.

**Discussion leading:** In addition to the course readings and writing assignments, each student will be responsible for taking part in a group that will lead discussion of a reading. Working with group members or a partner, you will read the text and generate questions that you think will keep the conversation going. It will be up to you to do your own research on the author, her life and works and present this (5-10 minutes) at the beginning of class. You should design or borrow a critical thinking exercise to implement as a part of your discussion leading, and you should provide your classmates with some kind of handout. (I’ll model how to do this in the first full week of classes and we will have sign-ups shortly thereafter.)

**Final exam:**
There will be no final exam in this class. Instead, you will produce a “**Critical Thinking Binder**” that will include all of your reading notes, blogs, and the critical thinking in-class exercises that we do on our writing days. For each novel that we read, there will be “critical thinking” journal exercise, as well as other assignments posted to blackboard or handed out in class. These will be referred to in class discussion, and the expectation is that you will be doing them as we go through the readings, though they will not be collected until the end of the course as a part of your binder.

Every Friday, I will introduce you to a poet or poem and we will practice thinking and writing about texts together.

Quizzes will occur as necessary. They may be unannounced, and will be factored into the participation category (see the “Course Requirements” section above). My quizzes are brutal. Ask your friends.

**GRADE BREAKDOWN**

- Essay 1: 15%
- Essay 2: 15%
- Essay 3: 20%
- Essay 4: 20%
- Blogs & Blog Comments: 10%
- Discussion leading and attendance/participation: 10%
- Critical Thinking Binder (in place of Final Exam): 10%

**READING SCHEDULE** (subject to change)
(NOTE: The dates indicate the day by which you should have completed the assignment or reading. We will be discussing the assigned reading on that day.) Remember that
BLOGS, though not stated here, will be due every Monday and Wednesday (the class will be divided into two blog-writing teams). Remember, too, that your poetry paper is due ON THE SAME DAY AS YOUR PRESENTATION. Page numbers are not given here, because I hope that we can be flexible about our reading schedule and go either faster or slower, as the class needs. Please exchange cell phone numbers with a classmate: DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR THE READING ASSIGNMENT; GET IT FROM A CLASSMATE. If the reading is made available online, I expect you to print it and bring it to class, or bring it on a laptop or ipad—You must have the text at hand!

Week 1

Wednesday. August 20 Introductions; Hand out syllabus.
Fri August 22: California test—bring laptops!

Week 2:
Wed. Aug. 27: Modeling Discussion leading, Foucault, Madness and Civilization
Friday. Aug. 29: Poetry/Writing Day

Week 3:
Mon. Sept. 1 The Sun Also Rises
Wed. Sept. 3. The Sun Also Rises
Friday Sept. 5. Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 4:
Mon. Sept. 8 The Sun Also Rises
Wed. Sept. 10 The Sun Also Rises
Friday, Sept. 12 Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 5.
Mon. Sept 15. Discussion lead, James Joyce, The Dead
Wed. Sept. 17. Discussion lead, Larkin speech
Friday Sept. 19. Writing Day

Week 6.
Monday Sept. 22 James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room
Wed. Sept. 24 James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room
Friday Sept. 26 Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 7.
Monday Sept. 29, James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room
Wed. Oct. 1. James Baldwin, Giovanni’s Room
Friday. Oct. 3 Poetry Day/Writing Day
Week 8.
Monday Oct. 6. Discussion lead, Annie Proulx, Brokeback Mountain
Fri. Oct. 10 Writing Day

Week 9.
Friday Oct. 17 Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 10.
Mon. Oct. 20 Toni Morrison, A Mercy
Fri Oct. 24. Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 11.
Friday. Oct. 31 Writing Day

Week 12.
Monday Nov 3: No Class (Fall Break)
Wed. Nov 5: JM Coetzee, Waiting for the Barbarians
Friday. Nov. 7: JM Coetzee, Waiting for the Barbarians

Week 13.
Mon. Nov 10: JM Coetzee, Waiting for the Barbarians
Wed. Nov. 12: JM Coetzee, Waiting for the Barbarians
Friday Nov 14: Poetry Day/Writing Day

Week 14.
Mon. Nov. 17 Jennifer Egan, Black Box
Wed. Nov. 19 Jennifer Egan, Black Box
Friday. Nov. 21 Discussion Lead, Marshall McLuhan

Week 15.
(Thanksgiving Week)
Mon. Nov. 24: Poetry Day/Writing Day
Wed. Nov. 26: No Class
Friday Nov. 28 No Class

Week 16.
Monday Dec. 1 Writing Day
Wed. Dec 3. California test—bring laptops!
Fri. Dec 5 Last Day: Critical Thinking Binder Due
Other Information:

A: 90-100  B: 80-89  C: 70-79  D: 60-69  F: <60

An A-range essay will make an ambitious argument about a selected text in such a way that it is clear that the writer has grappled with the text in a unique and perceptive fashion. It will make its argument clearly, explicating passages from the text in a way that enhances the argument and moving clearly from one point to the next so that each point builds on the previous one. The A essay should have ONE central thesis that the author supports with compelling textual evidence. The argument of the A-range essay should be one that adds to, rather than simply repeats, the observations that we have made about the text in class. The language should be clean, easy to understand and precise (not ambiguous). The argument is not confused by poor grammar or transitions.

A B-range essay will make a satisfactory argument about a selected text. While the argument may not be particularly unique, it should be a thoughtful and thought-provoking argument. It will make most of its arguments clearly, explicating passages from the text in a way that enhances the argument. The B essay should have a central thesis, even though the thesis may get lost from time to time throughout the essay. The argument of the B-range essay might regurgitate claims from class discussions more so than an A-range essay would, but should still add something new to the scholarly discussion surrounding the selected text. The language should be mostly clean and mostly free of ambiguity. The argument is seldom confused by poor grammar or transitions.

A C-range essay has trouble making a satisfactory argument about a selected text. The argument may or may not be unique, but the author’s thoughts are often lost in confusing language or in points that are not clearly related to one another. The C essay might repeat itself over and over again, or it might not have an easily identifiable thesis. Grammar, transitions, and word choice are often problems. The language is often ambiguous.

D and F-range essays show little or no engagement with the reading from the course. They usually have either a weak argument, an unidentifiable argument, or no argument at all. These essays might have poor grammar, poor word choice, or poor transitions. Some F essays are the results of plagiarism (see below).

HONOR CODE

What follows is Clemson’s official statement on academic integrity:

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At
the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge.

Plagiarism is a violation of Clemson’s honor code; acts of plagiarism can include—but are not necessarily limited to—copying a paper from a website, having someone else write a paper for you, or even copying portions of text from a secondary source without properly citing it. Plagiarism will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis, but may result in a failing grade for the course, the filing of a report with the university, or even expulsion from the university. If you have questions or concerns about plagiarism, feel free to talk to me.

(See the Clemson site below for information about Academic Integrity and procedures regarding the violation of Clemson policies on scholastic dishonesty: http://www.cs.clemson.edu/html/academics/academic_integrity_2002.html)

**MISCELLANEOUS**

**Late work and hard copies:** For every calendar day that an essay is late (including weekends), I will deduct 5 points from the essay’s final grade. For instance, an essay turned in one day late that would have received a number grade of 85 otherwise would receive an 80 instead. Please bring a hard copy of your assignment(s) to class on the day that it is due. I will collect papers at the beginning of class; if you turn in the paper after that point, it will be considered late. (A similar penalty will be incurred for late journals.)

**Disruptive behavior:** I reserve the right to ask a student to leave if he/she exhibits a sustained pattern of disruptive behavior during class.

**Late instructor:** If I am more than fifteen minutes late to class, you are free to leave. Don’t count on that happening, though.

**Students with disabilities:** It is university policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities. Students are encouraged to contact Student Disability Services to discuss their individualized needs for accommodation. For more information visit http://www.clemson.edu/sds/student_guide/index.html

Students with disabilities who need accommodation should make an appointment with me to discuss specific needs within the first month of classes. Students should present a Faculty Accommodation Letter from Student Disabilities Services when they meet with instructors. Student Disability Services is located in G-20 Redfern (telephone number: 656-6848; e-mail: sds-l@clemson.edu). Please be aware that accommodations are not retroactive and new Faculty Accommodation Letters must be presented each semester.

**Writing Center:** The Writing Center is a free tutoring service available to the entire student body, regardless of major or academic standing. It provides students opportunities to discuss questions or problems related to academic writing—from generating a topic and thesis to organizing a draft and integrating appropriate citations. The Writing Center’s goal is to help Clemson students become confident and effective writers. You can make an appointment with a tutor by visiting the Writing Center’s website http://www.clemson.edu/caah/english/about/resources/writing_center/, calling them at 864-656-3280, or simply stopping by 305 Daniel, where they are located.
**Cell phones and laptops:** If you have your laptop out during class, I will assume you are using it to take notes. I will from time to time walk around the room and if I see that you are using your laptop for other purposes, I reserve the right to ask you to close it. Texting on your cell phone is not allowed in class. If a student does not put away their technology when asked, I reserve the right to ask them to leave for the day.

**Previous work:** I don’t accept essays that were originally written for another class. I’m interested in what you have to say about a text *now* as opposed simply to what you might have said about it a year ago, for instance. If you want to draw thoughts or research from another paper you’ve written previously, come talk with me about it.