

Missouri Western State College
Division of Liberal Arts and Sciences
Department of English, Foreign Languages and Journalism

ENG 210: Approaches to Literature Westward Ho!: The Art of Western Literature

Section 97 - JGM 119
January 5 - 9: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm and 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm
January 12: 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Wintersession 2003

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Course Philosophy and Objectives

From the Mississippi River to the California coast, Western America and its associated images have inspired generations of writers, artists, and filmmakers. Their work has provided us with impressive and meaningful, and yes, sometimes stereotypical, images of cowboys, Native Americans, and the Calvary; of mountains, plains, and deserts; of explorers, pioneers, and gold prospectors. In this course, we will read a small selection of the literature of the West, including fiction, poetry, and drama, and watch films that characterize a variety of the western genres; we will also discuss and write about the western as a literary form.

As part of MWSC's General Studies program, this course is also designed to fulfill the Category IV General Studies Requirement. All English 210 sections provide practice in reading poetry, prose fiction, prose nonfiction, and drama. Upon completion of English 210, a student should be able to:

- Recognize the major characteristics of literary genres
- Discuss literature, orally and in writing, with assurance
- Appreciate literary works which are encountered
- Understand the different ways in which literary theme may be treated in literature.

To reach these goals, the student is expected to:

- Read poetry, prose fiction, and drama
- Investigate various methods of approaching and understanding literature
- Write papers, including themes and essay examinations
- Read a variety of works in which a chosen theme is dominant.

This course also meets the state level Institutional Competencies, as follows:

Skills Area - Valuing:

- Compare and contrast historical and cultural ethical perspectives and belief systems.
- Utilize cultural, behavioral, or historical knowledge to clarify and articulate a personal value system.
- Recognize the ramifications of ones' value decisions on self and others.
- Recognize conflicts within and between value systems.
- Recognize and analyze the effect of context on ethical decisions.

Knowledge Area - Humanities and Fine Arts:

- Identify works in humanities and fine arts.
- Explain historical, cultural, and social contexts in humanities and fine arts.
- Identify aesthetic standards used to make critical judgments in humanities.
- Understand differences and relationships between formal and popular culture.
- Apply aesthetic standards to works in humanities and fine arts

For more information on the general studies requirements and institutional competencies for this course, see the English Department website for general studies courses at <http://www.missouriwestern.edu/eflj/genstud.asp>. Click on English 210: Approaches to Literature.

Required Materials

Required Texts:

- Anaya, Rudolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. New York: Warner Books, Inc., 1972.
- Lyon, Thomas J. ed. *The Literary West: An Anthology of Western American Literature*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Sherwood, Robert Emmet. *The Petrified Forest*. New York: Dramatists Play Service, Inc., 1962.

Other:

- Computer Disks for saving your work.
- A Binder Notebook with notebook paper and pockets for holding hard copies of your writings and copies of materials gathered and received.
- A hole punch, so that materials may be inserted into your notebook.
- Stamina and Good Humor.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Promptness

Attendance is mandatory. You can not be gone for any portion of our 5 1/2 day schedule. Each hour gone from class will lower your final grade by 10%.

Preparation and Participation

Because of the condensed schedule for this course, you must do the readings IN ADVANCE of the start of class. To help you prepare for our class meetings, there are reading questions over each of the assigned readings. Bring both your texts and reading question answers with you to class.

Participation includes the contributions you make to class discussion. Active and insightful contributions to class discussion are not extra credit. Like the written assignments, your substantive comments are part of the minimal requirements for successful completion of the course. Keep in mind that live classroom discussion

- gives us an additional indication of how closely and thoughtfully you have read, enabling us to evaluate your knowledge and abilities more fairly and accurately.
- gives you prompt feedback on difficult or confusing issues and material.
- increases your retention of material through explaining, summarizing, and questioning.

Classroom Courtesy

Students are expected to be courteous and respectful in all of their exchanges with the instructor and other students and students should be particularly careful to note how tone and language contribute to the overall impression of their words. The college expects all students to conduct themselves so as to maintain an effective environment for learning; to act responsibly in accordance with good taste; and to respect fully the rights of others.

Student Disability

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of abilities should contact either Dr. Bensyl or Dr. Donaher PRIOR to the start of the course, with the appropriate documentation from Lois Fox's office, to make alternative arrangements.

Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of the hour on the due date. Given the brevity of the course, no work will be accepted late.

Computer Usage

You will be called upon to use a computer outside of class time for some of your assignments. Further, all final writings for this course must be word-processed according to MLA guidelines. Save all the work that you do for this class, in both hard and disk copies.

Grading

For the course, students will read a variety of stories and poems, a novel, and a play, as well as view several films. In addition to the readings and films, students will answer questions over the readings and films, do in-class work, write four one page papers, and take a final exam. In order to pass the course, you must complete the four papers and take the final exam. In addition, the quality of your work, the percentage of the work that you complete, and your efforts at participation will determine your final grade.

Your Final Grade Distribution is as follows:

- Daily Assignments and Participation = 10%
- Paper One = 15%
- Paper Two = 15%
- Paper Three = 15%
- Paper Four = 15%
- Final Exam = 30%

One Final Note on Plagiarism. . .

. . . *it is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation.* -- Herman Melville

Plagiarism is literally the stealing of others' words and ideas and using them as your own. Make every effort to give credit where credit is due, and if you are not sure of "how"--ASK. Students are responsible for proving that all work turned in for grading is their own original work. Plagiarism is a serious offense and, therefore, will receive harsh punishment. Papers with evidence of plagiarism will result in failure of the course. Don't think that you won't be caught; writing style is distinctive and verifiable.

English 210 - Course Schedule

LW = *The Literary West: An Anthology of Western American Literature*

NOTE: Each reading assignment below is linked to Reading Questions about the text. Print off the questions, or save them to a disk, and write your responses to the questions as you read. Reading Questions must be completed prior to the beginning of the class in January. Bring completed Reading Questions with you for class discussion.

January 5 - Monday

9 am -12 pm:

- Introduction to Course, Syllabus
- Defining the Western Experience and Western Literature
- Readings - Early Narratives:
 - Font, [Ventura to Santa Barbara in 1776] LW pp 40-45
 - Lewis and Clark, [North Dakota journals from the spring of 1805] LW pp 46-54

- Dutton, "The Valley of the Virgen" LW pp 60-64
- Winnemucca, from *Life Among the Piutes* LW pp 65-69
- Film:
 - *How The West Was Lost*

1 pm -4 pm:

- Readings - The Naturalist:
 - Muir, "From the Foothills with a Flock of Sheep" LW pp 55-59
- Readings - Western Naturalism:
 - Jeffers:
 - "Tor House" LW p 142
 - "November Surf" LW p 143
 - "Signpost" LW p 144
 - "The Answer" LW p 144
- Readings - The Settlers
 - Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw" LW pp 70-82
 - Cather:
 - From *O Pioneers!* scholarly edition online
 - from *My Antonia* LW 123-130

January 6 - Tuesday

9 am -12 pm:

- Paper One Due
- Readings - The Westerner:
 - Wister, "Enter the Man" LW pp 83-87
 - Grey, "Lassister" LW pp 110-119
 - Schaefer, Chapter 1 from *Shane* LW 177-183
- Film - The Cavalry:
 - *She Wore A Yellow Ribbon*

1 pm -4 pm:

- Reading - The Gold Rush:
 - London, "All Gold Canyon" LW 93-109
- Film - Gold Fever:
 - *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*

January 7 - Wednesday

9 am -12 pm:

- Paper Two Due
- Film - The Anti-Western:
 - *The Petrified Forest*
- Readings - Redefining the West:
 - Sherwood, *The Petrified Forest* (play)

1 pm -4 pm:

- Readings - "We were here first..."

- Standing Bear, "Nature" LW pp 145-149
- Waters, "Hopi Ceremonialism" LW pp 184-194
- Momaday, Introduction to *Way to Rainy Mountain* LW pp 208-213
- Snyder, "Anasazi" LW pp 305-306

January 8 - Thursday

9 am -12 pm:

- Paper Three Due
- Readings - Sherman Alexie's "A Drug Called Tradition"
 - "A Drug Called Tradition" Reading Questions
- Film - Native American:
 - *Smoke Signals*

1 pm -4 pm:

- Readings - "And so were we..."
 - Villarreal, From *Pocho* LW pp 195-202
 - Anaya, "B Traven Is Alive and Well in Cuernavaca" LW pp 291-303
 - Chavez, "The Last of the Menu Girls" LW pp 323-344
 - Anaya, *Bless Me Ultima*, pp 1-135 (first half of book)

January 9 - Friday

9 am -12 pm:

- Paper Four Due
 - Anaya, *Bless Me Ultima*, pp 136-262 (second half of book)
- Film - Three Generations of Chicanos in America
 - *My Family*

1 pm -4 pm:

- Film: *Blazing Saddles*
- Review for Final Exam

January 12 - Monday

9 am -12 pm:

- Final Exam

