Like an Old Testament prophet, Mark Twain told the world a good deal of what it didn't particularly want to hear. Among his most troubling habits was his direct assault not just on social institutions like the Church, but upon God. This course will read and analyze selected works by Twain in order better to understand his lifelong fury at the Creator— as well as his longing for belief. We will read some of Twain's best-known works, such as *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, but also some of his lesser-known writings, such as "Eve's Diary" and his biography of Joan of Arc. It is a common mistake to think of Twain as a genial humorist, or even just a social satirist. Twain was a pessimist who saw God as a vengeful, petty, and cruel deity. Twain's view of humankind was no better. In part, his views reflect his backwoods Calvinist upbringing, which dwelt upon sin and damnation and the depravity of human beings, and they also emanated from his troubled relationship with his own father. Twain agreed that humankind was depraved, but he blamed God for making human beings the way He did. Calvinism meshed well with Twain's own sense that there is no free will; for him freedom was ultimately a beautiful but cruel illusion. Twain's campaign against God appears throughout his long career and in many different forms of writing. We will seek to understand some of the sources of his ideas and analyze their forms in his literary works.

**Requirements:**

- 12-page research-based analytical paper: 40%
- 3-page prospectus for paper: 20%
- 2 Reports: 20%
- Discussion: 10%
- Midterm Exam: 10%

**Required Texts:**

Kaplan, Justin. *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain: A Biography*. Simon and Schuster.
------. *Roughing It*, U of California P
------. *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Oxford World Classics
------. *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, U of California P
------. *No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*, U of California P
------. *The Innocents Abroad*, Modern Library
------. *Mark Twain: Historical Romances: The Prince and the Pauper / A Connecticut*
Yankee in King Arthur's Court / Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc, Library of America

**Syllabus**

(short fiction selections are from The Best Short Stories of Mark Twain, ed. Berkove)

August 30

Introduction to course, syllabus, requirements, grades

Lecture: “Mark Twain versus God”

September 6


Kaplan, chapters 1-2

Sept. 13

*The Innocents Abroad*

Kaplan, chapters 3-4

Sept. 20

*Roughing It*

Kaplan, chapters 5-6

Sept. 27

*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*

“The Man That Corrupted Hadleyburg”

Kaplan, chapters 7-8

October 4

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Kaplan, chapters 9-10

Oct. 11

*Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, con’t.

Kaplan, chapters 11-12

**MIDTERM EXAMINATION ASSIGNED**

October 18


Kaplan, chapters 13-14
MIDTERM EXAMINATION DUE

October 25  
Selections from Nonfiction: "To the Person Sitting in Darkness,"  
"King Leopold’s Soliloquy," "The Battle Hymn of the Republic  
(Brought Down to Date)," "The United States of Lyncherdom,"  
'The War Prayer'  
Kaplan, chapters 15-17

November 1  
*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

PROSPECTUS DUE

Nov. 8  
*Letters from the Earth*

Nov. 15  
"Extracts from Adam’s Diary," "Eve’s Diary," "Captain Stormfield’s  
Visit to Heaven," "Letter from the Recording Angel," "The Great  
Dark"

Nov. 22  
*No. 44, The Mysterious Stranger*

December 29  
*Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*

December 6  
FINAL REPORTS ON PAPERS; PAPERS DUE

Class Policies:

1. Late papers are not acceptable and will be penalized one letter grade for each day M-F  
they are late. This includes the midterm exam.

2. Regular class attendance is strongly encouraged. Students should keep up with the  
reading, come to class having read the selection for the day and prepared for discussion.

3. According to the UTSA Student Code of Conduct, "Scholastic dishonesty" includes, but  
is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act  
designed to give unfair advantage to the student (such as, but not limited to, submission of  
essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of  
the instructor, providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a  
postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment), or the attempt to  
commit such an act. Students who are guilty of scholastic dishonesty face penalties as  
outlined in the Code of Conduct.

4. Students with a documented disability are advised to review the University’s disability  
policy at http://utsa.edu/disability.