English 3033
American Literature 1945 to Present
University of Texas-San Antonio 1604
Fall 2012  MWF 2:00 – 2:50  MH 3.04.12
Karen Dodwell, Ph.D.  210 458 – 5364  MB 2. 476
Office hrs:  MWF 9–9:45 and 1–1:45.
Also by appointment after 3:00
karen.dodwell@utsa.edu  – permanent UTSA address
Please use Blackboard MAIL during course.

Course description in UTSA Catalogue
(3-0) 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: Completion of the Core Curriculum requirement in literature. Critical study of the literature written in the United States since 1945.

Description of this section
The course covers a sampling of poetry, nonfiction, fiction, and drama in American Literature after 1945. It begins with an examination of new distributions of power after World War II and how optimism about economic progress as well as ongoing political and cultural tensions influenced literary development. Students discuss film clips that highlight a seemingly good-humored Father Knows Best attitude about domestic life and contrast them with rebellious attitudes portrayed in James Dean’s iconic role in Rebel Without a Cause and Elvis Presley’s lyrics in “Jailhouse Rock.” Anthologized literary texts that highlight the contrasts of the post-war era in the U.S. are the focus of the first part of the course.

Jack Kerouac’s On the Road is the centerpiece text for understanding the contradictions of the Beat Generation: its rebellious, quixotic, counter-cultural ways of living and writing juxtaposed with a genuine quest for Zen-like, mystical moments in which the self is completely in IT—the fiery present.

With a shift to the sixties, students explore the hippie culture, the Civil Rights Movement, Vietnam protests, and emerging Second Wave Feminism that dramatically reshaped the literary canon and literary criticism and increased interest in gender studies, previously marginalized writers, and new ways of thinking about history. Toni Morrison’s Beloved (frequently labeled the greatest novel of the twentieth century) is the centerpiece text for an analysis of the process by which histories of women, blacks, Hispanics, and other previously marginalized groups have been erased and are in the process of being retrieved in poetry, fiction, memoir, and critical projects.

Sandra Cisneros’ Caramelo is the centerpiece text for a study of narratives in which a protagonist travels and searches either literally or figuratively for family histories; evocative locales and material cultures; common language(s); and shared ideals. The focus is on how individuals come to know what they know about themselves and their communities and how they feel about that knowledge in what some call a fragmented postmodern world. Students will investigate this question: do protagonists in contemporary fiction become inert, feel exhausted, and mourn the disappearance of stable meaning, or do they celebrate difference, delight in the mixing of high and low culture, and value the emergence of a multiplicity of disparate voices and language patterns?

In the last unit of the course, the focus is on place—in the civilized world and the natural world (and in the fluid boundaries between). Students will read anthologized works by writers for whom particular locales are essential in the formation of plot, character, theme, and, at times, narrative structure. The centerpiece text for the unit is Edward Abbey’s book-length nonfiction work, Desert Solitaire, which is set in Arches National Park in southern Utah and which engages readers in discussions of wilderness, excessive development and tourism, encroachment on Native American territories, the solitary self, and the hunger (or lack of desire) for primitive lands and ways of being. Students use an eco-critical perspective in understanding how meaning is shaped by particular environments.

Course objectives
- Discuss and write about American literature from 1945 to the present from an informed and flexible perspective
- Understand how American literature after 1945 fits into a continuum of literary development
- Provide information about major American writers and their literary works
- Read literary texts closely; analyze them; and synthesize ideas about them
- Use a scholarly vocabulary and voice in classroom discussions and written work
- Write scholarly arguments about a literary text
- Use MLA style in formatting papers and documenting information from sources
- Find relevant critical texts in the library and in databases
- Read critical texts and integrate scholarly debate into one’s own scholarly writing
- Produce a writing sample for use as COLFA conference submission, in job applications and graduate school applications

Texts and other material
- Two blue books for midterm and final exams
- See Blackboard for a record of your course grade, descriptions of assignments, and study guides.

Course policies
- Attendance is important. Roll will be taken in every class. Missing a class for any reason results in a 4 point deduction from the class attendance grade. (See “Class attendance” below for ways to make up points lost.)
- Dropping the course by the specified UTSA deadline is the responsibility of the student. Students who do not drop before published drop dates will receive a grade in the course, even if they have quit attending. Students should check for drop dates at myutsa/ASAP/Class Schedules/Academic Calendar for the semester.
- Support services, including registration assistance and equipment, are available to students with documented disabilities through the Office of Disabled Student Services (DSS), MS 2.03.18. Students are encouraged to contact that office at 458-4157 early in the semester. Also see http://www.utsa.edu/disability/students.htm
- Plagiarism will not be tolerated and may result in an F for the course. Plagiarism consists of cheating on an exam, copying another student’s work, copying a paper off the
Students begin the semester with 100 points for class attendance. Each absence, regardless of reason, results in a loss of 4 points. Students can make up the lost points by doing two of each of the following:

- Participate in a panel discussion 4
- Present a report on an approved topic 4
- Review an approved literary event 4

The maximum points averaged into the final grade for class attendance is 100. See Blackboard for details.

Quizzes will be given at the beginning, middle, or end of the class periods designated below on the Schedule. Five quizzes are scheduled, but the best 4 out of 5 quizzes will be averaged into the course grade. If a student misses a quiz and receives a zero, that zero will be dropped. No make-ups on quizzes.

The midterm exam will be taken in class and will contain brief two-sentence identification and short and long essays.

The final exam will be given during the time scheduled by UTSA. It will be similar to the midterm exam but will primarily focus on course readings after the midterm.

Paper #1 and Paper #2 are formal argument papers that present a clear thesis and support. Relevant scholarly secondary sources are required, and information from sources must be documented using MLA style in-text citations and a works cited page. Paper #1 page length = 4 pages. Paper #2 page length = 10 pages. See Blackboard for more details. Also see Guidelines for Writing an Argument about a Literary Text.

Late papers are excused from point penalties only if a student verifies in writing an incapacitating physical illness or death in the family. Students who will be absent for religious reasons or to conduct official University business should make arrangements with the instructor before the absence in order to avoid penalties.

Unexcused late paper penalties

Less than 24 hours late = 5 point deduction
24 – 48 hrs late = 10 point deduction
over 48 hours late = 15 point deduction

Online help for paper writing

- Outline of guidelines for Papers #1 and #2 – Go to Blackboard, Course Content, Paper Writing folder
- Detailed guidelines for Papers #1 and #2 – Go to Blackboard, Course Content, Paper Writing folder, Guidelines for Writing an Argument about a Literary Text.
- Articles in UTSA databases (Your fees pay for these, so use them!) – Go to UTSA library, click on databases, Liberal and Fine Arts. Scroll down to these data bases and search by author, title, or subject: Galenet, LION, Literature Resource, MLA, and JSTOR. (There are more.)
- MLA style guide for format and documentation - Go to UTSA’s Tomas Rivera Center and scroll down to “Citation”; see MLA Style Guide PowerPoint. Also go to Purdue Owl, MLA style.
- Information on punctuation, grammar, and style – Go to the UTSA Writing Center web site, “Writing Resources”
- Introductory guide to literary criticism – Go to Purdue Owl, search for literary criticism, look left, and click on the criticism explanation and questions that might help you.
- Sample argument papers about a literary text – Go to Guidelines for Writing an Argument (see above) and scroll to end. See also Purdue Owl; search for “sample papers.”
Get help with paper writing in person
The UTSA Writing Center - JPL 2.01.12D; (210)458-6086
Schedule appointment or walk in. http://utsa.edu/twc/

Statement on website: “The Writing Center supports the entire UTSA Community, including undergraduates, graduate students, and faculty/staff members. Our experienced tutors provide assistance with each step of the writing process: brainstorming, establishing a thesis statement, achieving coherence and unity, documenting, and revising.” Please note that Writing Center tutors “do not edit or proofread your paper, but they help you improve your own editing skills.” Plan ahead; tutors do not work with assignments at the last minute just before they are due. Bring the guidelines for your paper.

Visit with Dr. Karen Dodwell at MB 2.476 – Show up during office hours or make an appointment (210) 458 5364.

The Tomás Rivera Center (TRC) - building study skills and tutoring in course content. These services are available at no additional cost. The TRC has several locations at the Main Campus. For more information, visit the web site at www.utsa.edu/trcss or call (210) 458-4694.

Schedule

Aug 29 W – Introduction to the course
Aug 31 F – Norton: pp. 3 – 19; introduction to American literature after 1945. (Begin reading On the Road for week of Sept 10 - 14)

Post-WWII anxieties, repressions, and exuberance
Sep 3 M – Labor Day holiday - no class
Sep 5 W – Lecture on post WWII anxieties and repressions (continue reading On the Road)
Sep 7 F - Introduction to the Beats and Jack Kerouac

Sep 10 M – On the Road – Part 1
Sep 12 W – On the Road – Parts 2 and 3
Sep 14 F – On the Road – Parts 4 and 5 Quiz 1

Sep 17 M – Allen Ginsburg – pp. 490 – 506; focus on “Howl”

New voices, new stories, new histories
Sep 19 W – Lecture on the sixties culture (Begin reading Beloved.)
Sep 21 F – Adrienne Rich – pp. 566 - 583

Lucille Clifton – pp. 705 - 710

Sep 26 W – Toni Morrison – Beloved – pp.1 - 100
Sep 28 F – Beloved – pp. 101-195

Oct 1 M – Beloved – pp 196 – 322 (end)
Oct 3 W – Beloved – Quiz 2
Oct 5 F - Toni Cade Bambara – “Medley” – pp. 769 - 781

Oct 8 M – Rudolpho Anaya – from Bless Me Ultima – pp. 713 - 723
Oct 10 W – Gloria Anzaldua – pp. 837 - 862

Oct 12 F – Dorothy Allison – from Stubborn Girls and Mean Stories – pp. 1183 - 1187

Personal and communal identities
in a decentered world
Oct 15 M – Paper #1 due in class printed out;
“Postmodern manifestos” covered in class.
Oct 19 F – Sherman Alexis – pp. 1207 - 1222

Oct 22 M – Midterm exam
Oct 24 W – Midterm exam
Oct 26 F – Sandra Cisneros – Caramelo – Part 1

Oct 29 M – Caramelo – Part 2
Oct 31 W – Caramelo – Part 3, pp. 235 - 335

Last day to submit paper #1 as late paper – by end of class period.

Nature, civilization, and eco-criticism
Nov 7 W - Introduction to eco-criticism and nature writing in American literature (Begin reading Desert Solitaire.)

Nov 12 M – Edward Abbey - Desert Solitaire – pp 1-111
Nov 14 W – Desert Solitaire – pp 112 - 195
Nov 16 F – Desert Solitaire – pp 196 - end

Nov 19 M - Quiz 4
Thomas McGuane – “Gallatin Canyon” – pp 781 - 791
Nov 21 W – term paper workshop;
Nov 23 F – No class – Thanksgiving holiday

Nov 26 M – Sam Sheppard – True West – Act 1
Nov 28 W – True West – Act II
Nov 30 F - Quiz 5; – Annie Dillard – from Pilgrim at Tinker Creek – pp 975-987

Dec 3 M – Nature poetry – no assignment; read in class
Dec 5 W – Nature poetry – no assignment; read in class
Dec 7 F – Paper #2 due in class printed out
Review for final exam

Dec 11 – Last day to submit Paper #2 as late paper in English Dept. office – by 5:00 p.m.

Final exam – Friday, Dec 14 7:30 – 10:00 a.m.