

## ENGL 3612-WA/WAO : Contesting America – Modernism and Beyond

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| <b>Instructor</b>    | Dr. Scott Pound (RB 3037, 343-8298, spound@lakeheadu.ca) |
| <b>Meeting Time</b>  | M & W 11:30-1:00   |
| <b>Meeting Place</b> | AT 5041 & OA 2020  |
| <b>Office Hours</b>  | Mondays and Wednesdays 1-2 pm and by appointment         |

### Description

A study of American texts from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in a variety of genres, with an emphasis on the following questions: How have modern and contemporary American authors sought to contest the idea of America? In an era of radical political and social movements, how have they understood or challenged categories of race, class, gender, and sexuality? How have they experimented with cultural forms?

### Learning Objectives

At the end of this course students should be able to:

- Read and evaluate texts for their formal and thematic significance
- Participate in critical discussions about literature and culture
- Analyze specific literary and cinematic devices and explain how they operate
- Observe and discuss relations between art works and their historical contexts
- Formulate questions about texts that yield learning and research opportunities
- Integrate knowledge from a variety of discourses and contexts
- Employ scholarly research methods to investigate issues raised in texts
- Compose a sustained argument on a topic related to the course

### Required Texts (available for purchase at LU bookstore)

William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (New Directions, 2011 [1923])

Jean Toomer, *Cane* (Penguin, 2019 [1923])

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (Scribner, 2004 [1922])

Suzan-Lori Parks, *The America Play* (Theatre Communications Group, 1994)

Tony Kushner, *Angels in America* (Theatre Communications Group, 1993)

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen* (Graywolf, 2015)

Ben Lerner, *Leaving the Atocha Station* (Coffee House, 2013)

### Assignments and Evaluation

|                                    | Value | Due Date          | Length     |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------------------|------------|
| Course Log                         | 30%   | End of each month |            |
| Class Participation                | 20%   |                   |            |
| Paper Proposal                     | 10%   | March 9           | 500 words  |
| Annotated Bibliography and Outline | 10%   | March 23          | 1500 words |
| Term Paper                         | 30%   | April 5           | 2500 words |

### Details of Assignments

*Course Log* – a record of your engagement with the course material and your research. See guidelines below.

*Term Paper* – a research essay that identifies a topic of critical interest and presents an argument about that topic. Your goal in the essay is to contribute to and advance the critical conversation about the topic in question.

*Quizzes* – quick tests of your knowledge of course material.

*Class Participation* – I expect you to prepare for class by reading and carefully considering the assigned texts so that you are prepared to contribute to class discussions and ask questions.

*Paper Proposal* – a description of your topic, the critical conversation it seeks to contribute to, the main research question it poses, and where you expect to go with it.

*Annotated Bibliography and Outline* – an annotated list (i.e. citations in MLA format with a 3-4 sentence description of the source, its argument, and its specific relevance to your paper) of 6 scholarly sources related to your term paper topic and an outline that lays out your claim and the support you plan to use in support of it.

### Course Policies

Attendance in class is integral to your success in the course and is therefore mandatory. Absences due to serious illness or emergency will be excused if prior notice and/or documentation are provided.

Late arrivals to class are disruptive. Please arrive on time. Habitual lateness (i.e. more than twice per month) will cost you one class participation mark per month.

Late assignments will not be accepted unless your inability to submit work is due to serious illness or emergency and prior notice and/or documentation is provided.

All writing assignments are to be submitted in accordance with “Guidelines for Submitting Written Work” below.

If you are having trouble understanding expectations or assignments or instruction, please speak up. I am here to help you succeed.

## **University Policies**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, and copying another student's work all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted for another course constitutes academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties.

Students are expected to conform to the Student Code of Conduct<sup>1</sup>:

Lakehead University provides academic accommodations for students with disabilities<sup>2</sup> in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course.

## **Archive**

Save copies of all work produced for the course in the event of retrieval mishaps.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>

## Schedule

(Underlined texts are available online.)

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Jan. 6            | Introduction to the Course   |
| Jan. 8            | What is Modernism? I   |
| Jan. 13           | What is Modernism? II  |
| Jan. 15           | Gertrude Stein, <u>Melanctha</u>                                   |
| Jan. 20           | Gertrude Stein, <u>Melanctha</u>                                   |
| Jan. 22           | D.W. Griffith, <u>Birth of a Nation</u> (3 hours, 24 mins.)        |
| Jan. 27           | Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i>   |
| Jan. 29           | Jean Toomer, <i>Cane</i>   |
|                   | <b>[Course Logs due]</b>   |
| Feb. 3            | William Carlos Williams, <i>Spring and All</i>                     |
| Feb. 5            | William Carlos Williams, <i>Spring and All</i>                     |
| Feb. 10           | F. Scott Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>                       |
| Feb. 12           | F. Scott Fitzgerald, <i>The Great Gatsby</i>                       |
| <b>Feb. 17-21</b> | <b>Reading Week – No Classes</b>                                   |
| Feb. 24           | Research Workshop – Finding a topic, generating research questions |
| Feb. 26           | Allen Ginsberg, <u>Howl</u>  |
|                   | <b>[Course Logs due]</b>   |
| Mar. 2            | Joan Didion, " <u>Slouching Toward Bethlehem</u> "                 |
| Mar. 4            | Research Workshop – Making claims, finding / organizing support    |
| <b>Mar. 6</b>     | <b>Last day to drop without academic penalty</b>                   |
| Mar. 9            | Suzan-Lori Parks, <i>The America Play</i>                          |
| Mar. 11           | Suzan-Lori Parks, <i>The America Play</i>                          |
| Mar. 16           | Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America</i>                             |
| Mar. 18           | Tony Kushner, <i>Angels in America</i>                             |
| Mar. 23           | Ben Lerner, <i>Leaving the Atocha Station</i>                      |
| Mar. 25           | Ben Lerner, <i>Leaving the Atocha Station</i>                      |
| Mar. 30           | Claudia Rankine, <i>Citizen</i>                                    |

## **[Course Logs due]**

April 1      Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

### Guidelines for Submitting Written Work

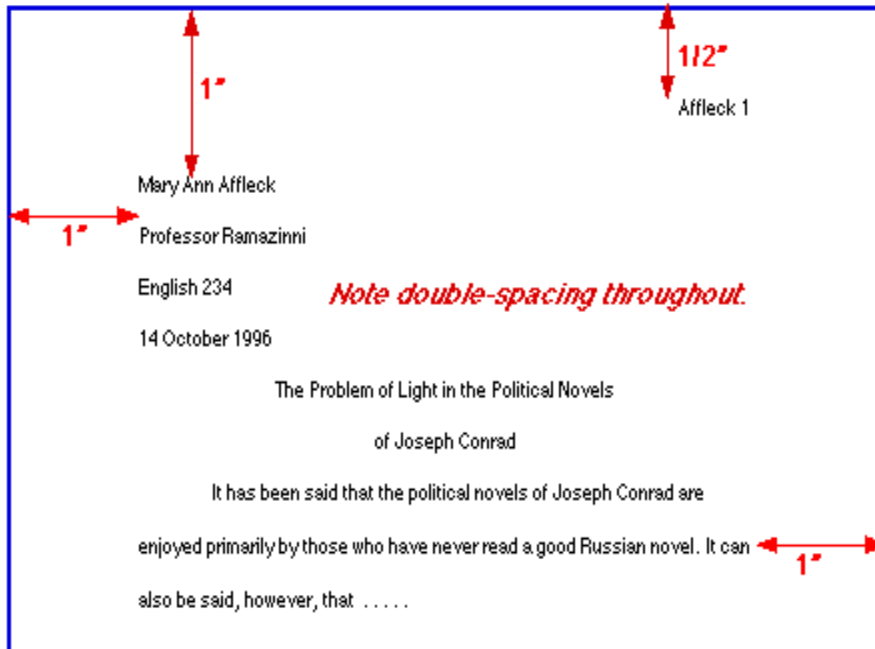
Use white, 8½ X11 paper. Print your text in black, double-spaced 12 pt. type.

Except for page numbers (see below), leave one-inch margins all around the text of your paper. Indent paragraphs half an inch; set-off quotations should be indented an inch from the left.

*Your research paper does not need a title page.* At the top of the first page, at the left-hand margin, type your name, your instructor's name, the course name and number, and the date -- all on separate, double-spaced lines. Then double-space again and center the title above your text. (If your title requires more than one line, double-space between the lines.) Double-space again before beginning your text. The title should be neither underlined nor written in all capital letters.

Capitalize only the first, last, and principal words of the title. Titles might end with a question mark or an exclamation mark if that is appropriate, but not in a period. Titles written in other languages are capitalized and punctuated according to different rules, and writers should consult the *MLA Guide* or their instructors.

Number your pages consecutively throughout the manuscript (including the first page) in the upper right-hand corner of each page, one-half inch from the top. Type your last name before the page number. Most word processing programs provide for a "running head," which you can set up as you create the format for the paper, at the same time you are establishing things like the one-inch margins and the double-spacing. This feature makes the appearance and consistency of the page numbering a great convenience. Make sure the page-number is always an inch from the right-hand edge of the paper (flush with the right-hand margin of your text) and that there is a double-space between the page number and the top line of text. Do not use the abbreviation *p.* or any other mark before the page number.



### Course Log Guidelines

The most important thing to me as your professor is the quality of your engagement with the course material and instruction. I want to know, first of all, that you read / screened the material. I also want to know what you thought about it—not just whether or not you liked it, but *why* you liked or disliked it and what that reaction was based on. Most of all, I want you to grow your understanding by getting into the habit of asking questions of the material, of me, and of the discipline of English Studies.

The Course Log is informal. You can write in any manner you like, preferably in your own voice. Your unvarnished personal opinions are perfectly valid so long as you use those as a launching pad for the development of critical responses. I am especially interested in the transition from emotional, personal response to reasoned, critical response. The stronger the emotional response the more you should interrogate and question it to see what lies beneath.

#### *Some Basic Guidelines:*

- Provide a date and a heading e.g. "13 January 2020, *Melanctha*"
- Describe the text and your reading experience
- Discuss the genre of the text
- Note and discuss the most distinctive and significant aspects of the text
- Identify the central conflict in the text and discuss how it is developed

- End each entry with 2 or 3 questions you would like to see answered in class.

**Always bring your course log to class with you because I will often ask you to write one-minute papers at the end of class.**

**Do not record your lecture notes in the course log.**