

English 312-01

American Literature 1865-1920

(syllabus slightly revised 1-12-05)

MWF 12:00 noon-12:50 p.m.

B 126

Dr. Michael Barry

Texts:

Baym, Nina, editor. *Norton Anthology of American Literature Vol C.*

Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. Various editions.

Dixon, *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*. Pelican, 2002.

Crane, Stephen. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets and Other Stories*. Bantam.

Gates, Henry Louis, editor. *Three Classic African American Novels*. Vintage-Random House, 2000.

Alger, Horatio Jr. *Ragged Dick and Struggling Upward*. Penguin.

Twain, Mark. *Puddnhead Wilson*. Various editions.

Course aims: Here are some of the areas of content that will be emphasized. Literary history lessons—I would like to have you know a little bit (well, three sentences off the top of your head of not-obvious information, for example) about all of the thirty-or-so writers that we cover this semester, and what aesthetic philosophies they subscribe to, if such affiliation is evident. Sociohistorical lessons—I would like you to learn what fine points there are to learn about the American mythology of the self-made individual, the philosophy of literary naturalism, racial conflict under Reconstruction and thereafter, and the roles of women as represented by some American literary artists and hacks. Certainly there will be other sociohistorical matters that come through, but these I have just mentioned are recurrent. Aesthetic lessons—I would like you to be able to see the details of literature as the result of small artistic decisions, and to find in your reading, accordingly, insights beyond those involving plot and character, perhaps those involving point of view and irony. Writing lessons—I would like you to write essays that show complex understandings and move your readers toward such understanding, and to be able to easily make use of outside sources in the completion of these essays.

Attendance: Mandatory. If you miss thirteen classes, you fail the course. You will see that attendance is not included in the grading formula, but quizzes are, and you may miss some if you don't come to class.

English Major Portfolios: Keep in mind that if you are an English major, you need a portfolio of essays collected for graduation. One or those essays might well come from this class. Save it, or give it to your advisor to save.

Plagiarism and Documentation: I will spend some time in this course on the techniques by which writers give credit when they borrow ideas, research, statistics, or language from sources. Failure to properly document sources is called plagiarism, and by the end of this course, I hope that no student will have a problem with it. When it is done intentionally, plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty that should be met with failure for a course, or worse. When it is done unintentionally, professors cannot necessarily see that it is unintentional, and they therefore meet it with the same penalties. So you will hear more about this concept; in the meantime, remember that changing an idea into your own words does not release you from the obligation to give credit. Also remember that the use and understanding of quotation marks is absolutely essential if you use the language of a source.

Conferences: My office is 218 Briggs, and office hours are M 1:30-2:30 and Th 2:00-3:00. Email: barrymg@udmercy.edu. Website: <http://barrymg.faculty.udmercy.edu> Phone: 313-993-1050.

Writing Center website: <http://ids.udmercy.edu/twc>

Breakdown of the Course Grade by Percentage:

1. 24%: 3-5 page essay (outside criticism or historical sources optional)
2. 24%: 3-5 page essay using literary criticism and historical sources
3. 7%: Summary of Literary Criticism

4. 16% Approximately 12 quizzes or proof-of-reading exercises, and probably some participation in email forums.
5. / 3-page exchange between authors on issues treated in their novels
6. 12% { Another 3-page exchange between authors on issues treated in their novels
7. \ A treatment (a synopsis) of a story about a self-made person, with notes on reference to a master narrative.
8. 17% A final, which will include four open-book essay questions, chosen from among class discussion topics. (Chosen by me, that is, but you too, will have a choice. There will be no surprise questions; you will have seen all of the questions ahead of time.) A few closed-book questions too, and an opportunity to submit a rewritten version of one of the exercise essays (#5,6, or 7, above).

Notes on grades: If your grade is tremendously “tipped” in the direction of either written work or quiz grades—if, that is, you read the material well but do poorly on written assignments, or if you turn in good essays but do not read the material—I reserve the right to depart from the grading formula. For example, you should not get a “C” in the course if you have never gotten a “C” or better on a writing assignment.

Missed work: Failure entirely to turn in an essay is not comparable to turning in a failing essay; a zero is not as good as an “F,” and you have to have all the assigned essays completed to pass the class.

Proposals to make up for missed work: If you miss a quiz and wish to make it up, or if you do poorly on a quiz and wish to take it again, or miss a class and do not want it to count as an absence (and, let’s say, you want me to count a completed writing-process step for that day), write me a proposal. Perhaps it will look something like the example below (at the end of this syllabus--but it should also depart from the example in a way significant enough so that it does not look like a form letter). I will evaluate the proposal on its merits—its specificity and its proactive quality will go much farther with me than the excuse that is offered, and it should be typed and business-like. Proposals can be submitted after the work is missed, but are more likely to be approved if they are submitted ahead of time.

Sample proposal

Date: March 11, 2005
 To: Michael Barry, Professor of English
 From: your name here
 Subject: Absence from class on March 18

I won’t be in class March 18 because of a family emergency, so I will miss the scheduled quiz. I would like to make it up by talking to you in your office about the assigned reading, and I am free during your office hours on Monday, March 15. I will talk to you more about this in class (today--March 11).

Calendar

Jan. 10 Robert Frost, “After Apple-Picking”; “The Road Not Taken”; “Mending Wall”; “Design.” Carl Sandberg, “Chicago”; “Graceland.”

Jan. 12 Whitman, Selections from “Song of Myself” (Norton 122-140).

Jan. 14 Emily Dickinson, 49 “I never lost as much but twice”; 216 “Safe in their Alabaster Chambers”; 324 “Some keep the Sabbath going to Church”; 465 “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died”; 712 “Because I could not stop for Death”; 754 “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun”; 1129 “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant.”

Jan. 19 Harper, *Iola Leroy* (in *Three Classic African American Novels*); quiz

Jan. 21 *Iola Leroy* (cont.) Edwin Arlington Robinson, “Luke Havergal”; “Miniver Cheevy”; “Richard Cory.”

Jan. 24 Washington, Selections from *Up from Slavery* (Norton 744); quiz

Jan. 26 DuBois, Selections from *The Souls of Black Folk* (Norton 876); quiz

Jan. 28 DuBois, continued.

Jan. 31 Alger, *Ragged Dick*; quiz.

Feb. 2 Alger, continued; treatment/synopsis due.

Feb. 4 Alger, continued.

Feb. 7 Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (in *Three Classic African American Novels*); quiz.

Feb. 9 Chesnutt, continued.

Feb. 11 Chesnutt, continued; quiz.

Feb. 14 Chesnutt, cont.; exchange/forum due.

Feb. 16 Chesnutt, cont.

Feb. 18 Dixon, *The Clansman*.

Feb. 21 Dixon, *The Clansman*, continued; quiz.

Feb. 23 Dixon, continued.

Feb. 25 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (Norton 832); Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "A New England Nun" (Norton 725).

Feb. 28 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*; beginning of worksheet (proof of reading).

Mar. 2 Dreiser, continued.

Mar. 4 Dreiser, continued. **Essay due.**

Mar. 14 *Sister Carrie*, continued. W. James, "The Moral Equivalent of War," "The Stream of Thought," and "The Dilemma of Determinism"; more of worksheet completed.

Mar. 16 Dreiser, W. James.

Mar. 18 W. James, continued.

Mar. 21 H. James, *Daisy Miller*; quiz

Mar. 23 H. James, continued.

Mar. 25 H. James, continued.

Mar. 28 Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*; "The Blue Hotel." (Photocopies); possible quiz.

Mar. 30 Crane, continued.

Apr. 1 London, "The Law of Life" (Norton 972). Charles Baudelaire, Jules LaForgue, selected poems, and Emile Zola, a selection from *L'Assommoir* Exchange/forum due.

Apr. 4 Wharton, "Souls Belated" (Norton 847); Chopin, *The Awakening*; quiz.

Apr. 6 Chopin, continued.

Apr. 8 Chopin, continued; summary of literary criticism due.

Apr. 11 Twain, selections from *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *Puddnhead Wilson*; quiz

Apr. 13 Twain, continued.

Apr. 15 Twain, continued.

Apr. 18 Twain, continued.

Apr. 20 Zitkala Sa (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), "Impressions of an Indian Childhood," "The School Days of an Indian Girl," and "An Indian Teacher Among Indians" (Norton 1008). **Essay due.**

Apr. 22 Sui Sin Far (Edith Maud Eaton) "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" (Norton 867).

Final exam **Th., April 28**, 11:00 a.m.-12:50 p.m.

Some texts available (including *Puddnhead Wilson*) at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu>. For William James, start with <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca>.

Quiz and notes on Iola Leroy:

For next week (Jan. 19), I would like you to read Frances Ellen Watkins Harper's *Iola Leroy* in its entirety; we will not be very much carrying the discussion of the book into the third week. Although I hope you will read the whole thing, the quiz that I will give will only cover the first 140 pages or so. In addition to your reading, I would like you to do the following: keep track of the apparent attitudes of Harper toward race matters—later, I am going to ask you to make up a brief forum or exchange between Harper and Chesnut (or Twain or Du Bois, perhaps), where you assign dialogue to each (sometimes taking it straight from the text if it is appropriate and if you think it represents the author's view). Of course she opposes slavery and oppression of African Americans. But what else? Does she think mixed race people contribute to the victimization of darker-skinned blacks? Does she think darker-skinned blacks exclude mixed-race people? Does she have any attitude toward African American "respectability" that you think is remarkable? What does she think of nice white slaveholders? What does she think of nonmilitant African Americans, loyal to their white masters or employers? What does she think about the differences between the North and the South? Those kinds of questions, and more. We will, of course, talk about this in class. But if you take notes, either in the margin of your book or on a separate sheet, show them to me early in next week's class. These notes are not mandatory and not formally graded, but they can help you to do the forum/exchange I mentioned above, and they also can enable me to excuse a couple of missed quiz questions.