

SYLLABUS

Literature Seminars: American Literature: New and Old Classics

Fall 2003 Term 2: COMM 5390.02

Thursdays, 5-9:00 pm, Webster Hall

Instructors: Nick Otten & Sue Teson

- Oct 30 introductions
 syllabus & assignments
 Franklin's *Autobiography* & Douglass's *Narrative*
- Nov 6 *The Red Badge of Courage* & *The Awakening*
 take-home test
- Nov 13 famous speeches & essays
 teaching expository prose
- Nov 20 *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* & *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
 1st major assignment (unit/essay) due
- Nov 27 NO CLASS — THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
 See handout, "Assignment in Lieu of Class"
- Dec 4 Faulkner's "The Bear" & Morrison's *Song of Solomon*
 2nd major assignment (unit/essay) due
 HW: read classmates' handouts for next week
- Dec 11 poetry
 1st set of student presentations (poetry)
 HW: read classmates' handouts for next week
- Dec 19 "Death of a Salesman" & "Fences"
 2nd set of student presentations (poetry)
 course evaluation

American Literature: New and Old Classics — Otten & Teson / Fall Term 2, 2003

MAJOR WORKS IN SEQUENCE:

[NO]: Nick gives the main presentation. [ST]: Sue gives the main presentation.

Autobiography (Self-Expression as Freedom):

Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin [NO]
& *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* [ST]
plus *Black Boy* [ST] or *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* [NO]

Novel (What's "Modern"? What's the Canon?):

The Red Badge of Courage [ST]
& *The Awakening* [NO]
plus "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber" [NO]
& "The Yellow Wallpaper" [NO] & "Bartleby the Scrivener" [ST]

Expository Prose (Power through Persuasion):

Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" [NO]
& King's "I Have A Dream" speech [ST]
plus "Desiderata" [NO], "I Want A Wife" [NO],
Banneker's "Letter" [ST], and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" [ST]

Novel (Vernacular Voices):

Adventures of Huckleberry Finn & *Their Eyes Were Watching God* [NO & ST]

ASSIGNMENT IN LIEU OF CLASS ON NOVEMBER 27, 2003:

Classic stories and classic movies
On reverse.

Mythic Stories: (American Identities)

Faulkner's "The Bear" [ST]
& Toni Morrison's *Song of Solomon* [NO]
plus *To Kill A Mockingbird* [NO] & "A Rose for Emily" [ST] & "Barn Burning" [ST]

Poetry (The Value of Voice):

Phyllis Wheatley [ST] & Anne Bradstreet (2) [NO]
Walt Whitman (selections from "Song of Myself") [NO]
& Emily Dickinson (letter to TWH & "I'm Nobody") [ST]
Frost's "Home Burial" & "Out, out —" [NO]
Langston Hughes (2-3) [ST], Amy Lowell [ST], Sylvia Plath's "The Mirror" [ST]
and Andrienne Rich [NO]

Drama (Generations and "American Dreams"):

"Death of a Salesman" & "Fences" [NO & ST]

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS ON REVERSE

ASSIGNMENT IN LIEU OF CLASS on November 27, 2003:

See/read one of the following combinations

and include them in either a paper or a unit, including an annotated 50-word bibliographical entry describing *and* explaining your use of the chosen combination.

- "Fight Club" (movie) with Edgar Allan Poe's story "William Wilson"
- "Barn Burning" (movie) with Faulkner's story
- "Ben and Me" & "Beauty & the Beast" (Disney movies)
- "Bartleby" (movie, 2002) & Herman Melville's story, "Bartleby the Scrivener"
- "Stagecoach" with "Smoke Signals" (movies)
- "The Alamo" with "Lone Star" (movies)
- "Lolita" (two movie versions)
- "Gone With The Wind" (movie) with "Everything That Rises Must Converge" (story)
- [Some other combination chosen by the student & approved by the instructors]

OTHER MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS:

Take-home test (*letter grade*) Due November 13.

All students will take a take-home test on either Franklin's or Douglass's book.

Expository essay (*letter grade*) Due November 20 or December 4.

3-10 pages on a topic relevant to our class work.

Each student will choose his or her own topic. (Instructors will present suggestions.)

Topics must be approved by the instructors by November 13 & November 20.

[The assignment in lieu of class, above, must be integrated into one unit or essay.]

Teaching Unit (*letter grade*) Due November 20 or December 4.

A set of teaching materials for one day, one week, etc., up to one semester

A rationale for the unit (1 paragraph-2 pages)

A time-frame, outlined and sequenced

A list of major works to be used

Topics must be approved by the instructors by November 13 & November 20.

[The assignment in lieu of class, above, must be integrated into one unit or essay.]

Student Presentation in Class (*written evaluations but no grade*) Due December 11 or 19.

Each student chooses & prepares 2 poems — a classic and a potential classic.

Presentations will be limited to 5-10 minutes, timed.

Each presentation must include:

- . a xerox handout of both texts for the class to read the week prior to presentation
- . a set of 3 key questions to be answered/answerable from the presentation
- . an oral reading of each text by the student presenter in class
- . a discussion of the two texts, led by the presenter

Student grades for the course will be based entirely on attendance plus 3 graded assignments plus quality of participation in class. One absence, for professional reasons, can be excused.

More than one absence will automatically mean a lower grade.

