

English 2000 (5532)—Perspectives in Literature

Monday/Wednesday 1:00-2:15, Namm 602A

Professor Laura Westengard

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays from 10:30-11:30 am and by appointment

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Course Description

Perspectives in Literature: Outsider Perspectives

This course will focus on literature written by or featuring voices from outside of dominant culture. Focusing specifically on the 20th century American novel but also including a literature from various genres, eras, and locales, the readings will represent an oppositional and/or variant approach to the conventions and power structure of the time and place in which they were written. We will learn relevant biographical information about the authors, situate the texts within their historical and literary context, and explore the major symbols and themes present in the work in order to reflect on the way the text is challenging conventions. Throughout the semester, we will learn to identify the basic features of a range of genres and develop a vocabulary to discuss these genres effectively in the context of academic writing. As a writing intensive course, students will be asked to respond to readings and class discussions through in-class exams, research papers, and weekly blog responses.

Required Texts (You must bring the required readings with you to class on the days they are assigned)

Giovanni's Room, James Baldwin (Random House)

On the Road, Jack Kerouac (Penguin)

Two or Three Things I Know for Sure, Dorothy Allison (Penguin Plume)

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison (Random House)

Other readings will be provided for you and posted on the course Open Lab site. You will be required to print, read actively, and bring these materials to class when assigned.

Required Materials

A flash drive or some other way to save and access your work electronically

A folder dedicated to this class (I will expect you to keep all handouts and all work you do in this class)

Grading

Essay 1 (20%)

Essay 2 (20%)

Essay 3 (20%)

Midterm Exam (10%)

Final Exam (10%)

In-class assignments, quizzes, and weekly blogs (10%)

Attendance/Participation (10%)

Open Lab

This course will use Open Lab. You will be asked to post assignments and contribute to other course related activities on the English 2000 Open Lab site. You must sign up for an Open Lab account, participate in activities, and check the site daily because important instructions for completing assignments, as well as class announcements, will appear there.

In order to set up your Open Lab account, you must activate your City Tech email. I will only send or reply to email from your City Tech email address, so make sure you set it up early and check it regularly.

Assignments and Essays

- All essay assignments should follow MLA format. This means that all rough and final drafts must be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around, in 12 point Times New Roman font. The first page must display student's name, your teacher's name (Professor Laura Westengard), the class you are in, and the date the paper is due. Every paper should have an original title. I recommend that you obtain a writing handbook for the purposes of formatting and editing your work. You may have one from an earlier writing course, or you can use the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab) at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>.
- Each week, I will post some discussion questions on the course Open Lab site, and each week you will have to complete a blog post that responds to one of these questions. This should be an opportunity for you to reflect on the themes and concepts that you found interesting and/or challenging in the week's reading and to discuss those thoughts with your classmates. Each post must be 100-200 words, thoughtfully respond to one of the posted discussion questions, and provide direct quotes from the text in order to support and clarify your discussion. Each week, you also must respectfully and thoughtfully comment on at least three other blog posts. ALL posts and responses must be completed each week by 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday. Do not wait until the last minute to post!
- I DO NOT accept late papers. All essays must be submitted by the deadline or you will get no credit for them. Because life can be unpredictable, each student will be allowed ONE "oops" paper during the semester. Your "oops" paper can be submitted up to 24 hours late with no penalty, but use this opportunity carefully because once you have used your "oops" paper all other essays must be submitted on time in order to receive credit.
- All homework assignments are due by the start of class, and there will be no make-ups on quizzes or in-class work. If you have a personal emergency or other circumstances that prohibit you from finishing your assignment on time or turning in an essay as scheduled, email or see me as soon as possible so we can discuss your situation.
- Your writing should be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors, and it should demonstrate increasingly complex critical thinking and analysis as the semester progresses. If this is a challenge for you, I encourage you to visit my office hours and the Learning Center for help throughout the semester.

Participation and Attendance

Since we will be covering topics such as race, gender, class, and sexuality in this class, it is imperative that our classroom is a safe space for respectful and engaged discussion. Please come to class with an open mind and a desire to learn about identities, cultures, times, and places that are unfamiliar to you. Also, please know that many of the topics we will read about and discuss include perspectives on violence, sexuality, and other topics that may be uncomfortable for some class members.

I expect you to exhibit maturity in class, to arrive prepared (which means you have read the assigned reading, considered the posted discussion questions, and completed any homework assignments), to ask and answer questions, and to participate in a positive classroom environment (including turning all electronic devices to silent and treating your fellow students and myself with a positive and respectful attitude). When you miss class it is your responsibility to keep up with the reading/homework. You should email me as soon as possible to let me know if you are going to miss a class and to find out what you will miss.

If you have more than three unexcused absences, your grade will be significantly lowered. After you have missed three classes, each absence without a documented excuse will lower your final grade by one step and may, ultimately, result in a WU grade.

New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity

Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

Tentative Course Schedule

(Each week, additional short readings will be announced in class and posted on Open Lab.
The schedule is tentative and subject to change.)

	Reading Due/Assignments Due	In-Class Activities
Week 1		
Monday, 1/28		Introductions, Review Syllabus In class reading (poem) “What is an outsider?”
Wednesday, 1/30	Read “The Elements of Fiction” by Ann Charters (handout)	Discuss “The Elements of Fiction” Set up Open Lab accounts, write introductions
Week 2		
Monday, 2/4	Read “Age, Race, Class, and Sex” by Audre Lorde (posted on Open Lab) Read Baldwin, Part I: Chapters 1-2	Academic integrity discussion Intersectional Identities
Wednesday, 2/6	Read Baldwin, Part I: Chapter 3 Blog Post 1 Due	Discuss Baldwin (bio, historical context) Essay 1 Prompt
Week 3		
Monday, 2/11	Read Baldwin, Part II: Chapters 1-3	Discuss Baldwin Writing about Literature
Wednesday, 2/13	Read Baldwin, Part II: Chapters 4-5 Blog Post 2 Due	Discuss Baldwin
Week 4		
Monday, 2/18 (holiday)	No Class	No Class
Wednesday, 2/20	Read Kerouac, Part I: Chapters 1-14 Blog Post 3 Due	Discuss Kerouac (bio, historical context)
Week 5		
Monday, 2/25	Read Kerouac, Part II: Chapters 1-11	Discuss Kerouac
Wednesday, 2/27	Read Kerouac, Part III: Chapters 1-8 Blog Post 4 Due	Discuss Kerouac
Week 6		
Monday, 3/4	Read Kerouac Part III: Chapters 9-11, Part IV: 1-5, and Part V	Compare/Contrast Baldwin and Kerouac Thesis workshop
Wednesday, 3/6	Essay 1 due	In class reading
Week 7		
Monday, 3/11	Read “La Güera” by Cherrie Moraga (posted on Open Lab) Read “Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (posted on Open Lab)	Making connections, reviewing intersections Essay 2 Prompt
Wednesday, 3/13	Excerpts from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> (posted on Open Lab) Blog Post 5 Due	Discuss Cisneros
Week 8		
Monday, 3/18	Midterm Review	Midterm Review
Wednesday, 3/20	Midterm Exam	Midterm Exam
Week 9		

Monday, 3/25	Spring Break	Spring Break
Wednesday, 3/27	Spring Break	Spring Break
Week 10		
Monday, 4/1	Spring Break	Spring Break
Wednesday, 4/3	Read Allison (all)	Discuss Allison (bio, historical context) Reading and writing about memoir
Week 11		
Monday, 4/8	Read Morrison, "Autumn"	Morrison discussion (bio, historical context)
Wednesday, 4/10	Read Morrison, "Winter" Blog Post 6 Due	Morrison discussion
Week 12		
Monday, 4/15	Read Morrison, from beginning of "Spring" through "SEEFATHERSEISBIGAND STRONG..."	Morrison discussion
Wednesday, 4/17	Read Morrison from "SEETHEDOGBOWWOWGOES THEDOG..." to the end Blog Post 7 Due	Morrison discussion Thesis Workshop
Week 13		
Monday, 4/22	Essay 2 Due	Essay 3 Prompt The Gothic Turn: Reading Difference in Metaphor
Wednesday, 4/24	Read selections from gothic packet (posted on Open Lab) Blog Post 8 Due	Discuss gothic readings
Week 14		
Monday, 4/29	Read selections from gothic packet (posted on Open Lab)	Discuss gothic readings
Wednesday, 5/1	Read selections from gothic packet (posted on Open Lab) Blog Post 9 Due	Discuss gothic readings
Week 15		
Monday, 5/6	Read selections from poetry packet (posted on Open Lab)	Reading and writing about poetry
Wednesday, 5/8	Read selections from poetry packet (posted on Open Lab) Blog Post 10 Due	Discuss poetry Thesis workshop
Week 16		
Monday, 5/13	Essay 3 Due	Wrap up/Catch up
Wednesday, 5/15	Final Review	Final Review
Finals Week		
Monday, 5/20	Final Exam	Final Exam
Wednesday, 5/22	Conclusion	Conclusion