

## English 211: The City in American Literature: New Orleans, Chicago, and New York

Mr. Matthew Teutsch, Instructor

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Office Hours: TR 9:00-11:00 or by appt.

### Course Description:

This course will cover works from 1899 through the present, focusing on those that incorporate the urban landscape into the work. Cities provide a unique lens to examine American literature because the urban environment provides a landscape where people of different social, cultural, and economic groups converge and occupy the same space. These spaces have been constructed from various historical influences, but they have also provided their inhabitants with new experiences and cultural expressions. As Cyrus Patell writes when discussing literature of New York, “Its greatest writers and artists have tended to be explorers, moving beyond their comfortable neighborhoods, embracing rather than shrinking from the experience of difference.” This course will provide students with the opportunity to “embrace” the many facets of the urban environment through literature. Students will examine literature that incorporates this urban space into the text, specifically looking at works that focus on New Orleans, Chicago, and New York, cities that played, and continue to play, unique roles in American history.

### Required Texts:

- Charles W. Chesnutt *Paul Marchand, F.M.C.*
- John Kennedy Toole *A Confederacy of Dunces*
- Tennessee Williams *A Streetcar Named Desire*
- Nelson Algren *Chicago: City on the Make*
- Lorraine Hansberry *A Raisin in the Sun*
- F. Scott Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*
- Saul Bellow *Seize the Day*
- Edward Albee *Homelife & A Day at the Zoo*

### Course Requirements and Explanation of Grading

Online Assignments and Participation	10%
Quizzes	10%
Response Paper/Annotated Bibliography	20%
Wiki	20%
Research Paper (6-8 pgs.)	20%
Final Exam	20%

A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 or below

**Online Assignments and In-Class Participation**— This class will use Moodle to post responses to readings and to informally discuss readings in small groups. Along with this, Moodle will also serve as a repository for terms that will be discussed in class. The online grade will come from the

responses and discussions. Along with this portion of the grade, please be aware that daily attendance is not sufficient to guarantee you a passing participation grade. Any activities taking place during class time contribute to your in-class participation grade. This includes note-taking during lectures, actively participating during discussion, and otherwise participating in class activities.

**Quizzes**—Periodically we will have quizzes on the texts we read in class. These quizzes will occur at the beginning of class and they will consist of five questions. **Quizzes cannot be made up if they are missed.**

**Response Paper/Annotated Bibliography**—During March, there will be a field trip scheduled. The field trip will involve a literary tour of the French Quarter in New Orleans. If you go to the tour, you will be required to write a **three to four page** response paper on the trip, describing what you learned and how that information relates to things we have discussed in the class. If you do not attend the field trip, you will be required to turn in an annotated bibliography. Annotated bibliographies are common in academic writing; in fact, entire books of nothing but annotated sources exist. For this bibliography, you must have **five to six** credible sources (journal articles, books, credible/academic Internet sources, or magazine articles) and annotations for each source. Each annotation must be between 150-300 words.

**Wiki**—The wiki will be a collaborative project that the entire class can view. It will be constructed on Moodle, and there will be one for nine of the texts that we read in class. Each text will have a group of four students that will construct a wiki with a title page, notes, allusions or references, interactive map, questions about the text, a review of the text, and a creative page. The wikis will be graded when we cover the text in class.

**Research Paper**—For this assignment, each student will select a text that we have covered in class and construct an analytical paper on some aspect of the text. The paper needs to be 6 to 8 pages in length, and it must contain 3 secondary sources along with the primary text. The secondary sources should be scholarly articles, essays, or book chapters published since 1990 on the text chosen. The essay can be an extension of a topic that a short response paper explores, but it does not have to be. The paper should follow the “Critical Essay” paper from English 101/102. More information will follow.

**Final Exam**—The final exam will consist of definition/identification questions, short answer questions, and long essay questions. Only the works we discuss in class or that I otherwise specify will be covered on the exam. Please bring a large blue book to each exam period.

### **Attendance**

Although I believe that as adults you should have control over your own education, attendance is vital to your success in this course. Much of your learning and work will take place in class, and you will be involved in discussing the readings in class. To fully comprehend and hopefully appreciate the texts, you should come to class fully prepared. This means you should have read the homework and completed any assignments for class. You are allowed four absences; after you miss the allowed number of classes, your grade will be penalized. If you miss five classes, you will receive nothing higher than a B; six absences will result in nothing higher than a C; seven will result in nothing

higher than a D. If you miss more than seven classes, you will automatically receive an F. *I will not accept any more work if this occurs.*

Tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful to your peers and to the teacher. After the first week of classes, two late arrivals (entering the class after 10:05) will result in one absence. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences and late arrivals.

### **Late and Make-up Work**

1. Essays and assignments are due on the Due Date.
2. Late daily assignments will be failed if unexcused.
3. Quizzes cannot be made up
4. Exams will not be made-up unless the student provides an excuse from the Dean of Students.

### **Response Paper and Final Essay:**

**You have one week after the due date to turn your essay into me. However, you will not receive any comments or marks on the paper. Instead, you will just receive a grade after I read it. Essays will not be accepted more than week after the due date.**

### **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

The English Department wishes students to have a clear idea of what plagiarism is from the start so there can be no mistakes later.

There are two major types of plagiarism:

1. Word-for-word copying, without acknowledgement, of the language of another writer. (Almost needless to say, having another person write or dictate all or part of one's composition is plagiarism of this kind and clearly forbidden. But in addition students should copy no printed passages, no matter how brief, without acknowledging its source and either placing it in quotation marks or setting it aside as a blocked quotation.)
2. The unacknowledged paraphrasing of an author's ideas. (The student should no more take credit for another writer's thoughts than for another writer's language. Any distinctly original idea taken from another writer should be credited to its author. If the student does not know whether another writer's idea is distinctly original, he or she should incline to believe that it is; no fault attaches to over-acknowledge, but under-acknowledgement is plagiarism.)

Because of its serious nature, a case involving plagiarism is referred to the Discipline Committee, which can recommend that the student, if found guilty, be dismissed from the university. (See Code of Student Conduct, Section 15, Point 7.)

### **The Writing Center**

The Writing Center is a free service located on the first floor of Griffin Hall, in room 107. The Writing Center consultants are experienced writers and students who pride themselves on creating a comfortable environment for every phase of your writing project. From thesis statements, to research planning, document design, to just getting started, the Writing Center staff works to help you become more focused, organized, and confident with your work. In addition to providing the

latest style manuals and handbooks, the Writing Center also operates a computer lab, located next door in Griffin Hall, room 108. Both of these services are free, student-operated, and devoted to helping you be a more successful and productive student. Walk-ins are accepted, but scheduling an appointment in advance (482-5224) is recommended. Appointments that are more than ten minutes late will have to be rescheduled.

### **Students with Disabilities**

In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette makes accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office at 337.482.5252 or [ssd@louisiana.edu](mailto:ssd@louisiana.edu) during the first week of classes. SSD will assist you with an accommodation plan. The university also has a Supported Education Program (SEP, <http://disability.louisiana.edu/SEP.html>), which provides free confidential help on campus for students with psychological disabilities (Bipolar Disorder, Depression, Anxiety, etc.). Please contact Kim A. Warren, MSW, PhD, LCSW, Supported Education Advisor, at [kimawarren@louisiana.edu](mailto:kimawarren@louisiana.edu) or in Conference Center room 126.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

A map of this floor is posted near the elevator and most fire extinguishers. This map shows evacuation routes and the Designated Rescue Area, the area to which emergency personnel will first go to seek out individuals who require assistance in exiting the building.

### **Miscellaneous**

On a final, I hope unnecessary, note, here are some additional guidelines regarding classroom decorum.

- Cell phones are to be turned off (not switched to vibrate) and put away during class. If your cell phone goes off, you will be asked to leave class and lose your participation points for the day.

- It is acceptable to have a (non-alcoholic) drink in class, but please refrain from eating.

- Bonus points may occasionally be offered to the class as a whole. Solicitations of extra credit, however, will be denied. Please don't ask.

- I respect confidentiality in the student-teacher relationship. I expect that you respect this confidentiality as well.

- Be considerate of your fellow students. This course will involve a good deal of discussion, so please respect civil discourse when addressing your fellow students and allowing everyone to share their opinions.

**Any and all information in this syllabus is subject to change at the instructor's discretion. If changes are made, efforts will be made to notify you as soon as possible.**

## Schedule

Week	Texts
January 14 T	No Class
January 16 TR	Class introduction, review syllabus, historical background
January 21 T	Benjamin Franklin <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> & Max Weber <i>The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism</i>
January 23 TR	Robert E. Park "The City: Suggestions for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment"
January 28 T	Kate Chopin <i>The Awakening</i> (I-XX)
January 30 TR	Kate Chopin <i>The Awakening</i> (XXI-XXXIX)
February 4 T	Charles W. Chesnutt <i>Paul Marchand, F.M.C.</i> (I-IX)
February 6 TR	Charles W. Chesnutt <i>Paul Marchand, F.M.C.</i> (X-XIII)
February 11 T	John Kennedy Toole <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> (1-5)
February 13TR	John Kennedy Toole <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> (6-10)
February 18 T	John Kennedy Toole <i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i> (11-14)
February 20 TR	Tennessee Williams <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Scenes 1-6)
February 25 T	Tennessee Williams <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Scenes 7-11)
February 27 TR	Ring W. Lardner <i>You Know Me Al: A Busber's Letters</i> (I-III)
March 4 T	<b>Mardi Gras Holiday</b>
March 6 TR	Ring W. Lardner <i>You Know Me Al: A Busber's Letters</i> (IV-VI)
March 11 T	Carl Sandburg and Gwendolyn Brooks selected works
March 13 TR	Carl Sandburg and Gwendolyn Brooks selected works
March 18 T	Nelson Algren <i>Chicago: City on the Make</i> (1-4)
March 20 TR	Nelson Algren <i>Chicago: City on the Make</i> (5-Afterword)
March 25 T	Lorraine Hansberry <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (Act I-Act II scene i)
March 27 TR	Lorraine Hansberry <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (Act II scene ii-Act III)
April 1 T	F. Scott Fitzgerald <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1-5)
April 3 TR	F. Scott Fitzgerald <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (6-9)
April 8 T	Saul Bellow <i>Seize the Day</i> (I-IV)
April 10 TR	Saul Bellow <i>Seize the Day</i> (V-VII) <b>Response Paper/ Annotated bibliography due!</b>
April 15 T	James Baldwin selections
April 17 TR	James Baldwin selections
April 22 T	<b>Easter/Spring Break</b>
April 24 TR	<b>Easter/Spring Break</b>
April 29 T	Edward Albee <i>Homelife &amp; A Day at the Zoo</i> <b>Research paper due!</b>
May 1 TR	Edward Albee <i>Homelife &amp; A Day at the Zoo</i>
May 5-9	<b>Finals!</b>