

**ENGL-4715-M01: American Postmodernisms**

**Prof. Anne Dewey**

**3 credits**

**Spring 2016**

**Class Time: Tuesday and Thursday, 16:00-17:15**

**Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 9:30-10:30, 12:30-14:30**

**Email address: adewey@slu.edu**

**PREREQUISITES**

ENGL-190 and at least one 200-level English course

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The literature of our time. Inaugurated by the Holocaust and the atomic bomb, shaped by movements for social revolution in the sixties; the Vietnam War; ghetto, suburban, and mass culture; immigration and an increasingly global consciousness. Analysis of how the troubling and wildly experimental contemporary novel represents our culture, with emphasis on the avant garde and the emergence of ethnic literature.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To provide students with familiarity with the literature of postmodernism, from its origins in the 1960s through the present, as well as reading techniques to interpret these difficult texts. We will also discuss some theories of postmodernism, its status as a historical and/or esthetic movement, and the current relevance of the term. Students will also research some critical literature on postmodernism and write interpretive and research papers to develop their analytical skills.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

O'Connor, Flannery, *Wise Blood*. (1949)

Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1962)

Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior*. (1976)

Don DeLillo, *Libra* (1988)

O'Brien, Tim. *The Things They Carried*. (1990).

Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dogeaters*. (1990)

Wideman, John Edgar. *Two Cities: A Love Story*. (1998)

Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake*. (2003)

**COURSE OUTCOMES**

- *Produce* sophisticated close readings that attend to multiple dimensions of textual complexity.
- *Generate analyses that* situate texts within their historical, cultural, and aesthetic contexts, as well as within literary and theoretical traditions
- Compose clear and original spoken and written arguments that demonstrate facility with critical approaches and research methods.

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance Policy:** Unexcused absences and lateness will lower a student's grade. *More than 3 unexcused absences or persistent lateness will result in a lower grade. More than 10 unexcused absences results in automatic failure of the class.* We will discuss what constitutes an "excused" absence during the first day in class.

**Class assignments:** Students should read the assigned texts carefully and critically before class. Please come with questions, observations, and ideas to share. All papers are to be typed or printed on a word processor. Thoughtful listening and engagement of ideas discussed in class is essential to our learning community.

**Students with Disabilities:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to:  
[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning\\_resources.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html)

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

**Writing Aids:** The English Writing Assistance Center (EWAC) (and the Spanish Assistance Center) provides students with help in writing. They will review TYPED draft material to help you improve any aspect of a paper you wish to work on. You can sign up for an appointment online on the English Department webpage or drop in and wait your turn. Be sure to take a copy of the paper assignment to your tutorial if you have one. The English Department webpage posts the hours of EWAC and a series of links to *online writing resources*, including research resources and style and documentation guides.

**Late Paper Policy:** The assignment schedule states when papers are due. Late papers will drop one half letter grade (for example, from a B+ to a B) per day late. Always contact me before an assignment is due if you anticipate a problem. All written assignments must be complete in order for you to pass the course.

**My Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:** Because cheating, falsification, and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, because you cheat yourself of the education and self-development you deserve, and because my experience has taught me that

offenders who are not punished often repeat, I am merciless in pursuing plagiarism. Sanctions for violations of academic integrity include an F (grade of 0) on the assignment for a first occurrence and an F for the course in the case of further occurrences, with the possibility of further disciplinary action taken by the University.

We will discuss plagiarism and review Saint Louis University's policies on academic integrity further during our first class meeting and in the class about writing about literature. *Always* cite your sources, and do not hesitate to ask me if you are in doubt about how to cite your sources properly.

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

#### **Summary of SLU Madrid's Academic Honesty Policy**

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

The complete SLU Academic Honesty Policy can be found by selecting "Academic Honesty Policy" at the following link:

[http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies\\_&\\_procedures.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/policies_&_procedures.html)

#### **Title IX anti-discrimination**

- Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of

misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU's Title IX deputy coordinator, Marta Maruri, whose office is located on the ground floor of Padre Rubio Hall, Avenida del Valle, 28 ([mmaruri@slu.edu](mailto:mmaruri@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 213) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

- If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall ([counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu); 915-54-5858 ext. 230) or Sinews Multiplettherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid ([www.sinews.es](http://www.sinews.es); 91-700-1979) To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: [http://spain.slu.edu/student\\_life/docs/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf](http://spain.slu.edu/student_life/docs/SLUMadridSexualMisconductPolicy.pdf)

**Assessment and Submission of Work:** The Saint Louis University Department of English is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our courses and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose, we keep on file representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, multimedia presentations, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course—including exams, presentations, submitted papers or other assignments—may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. All samples of student work will be anonymized before they are used in assessment exercises. If you prefer that the Department of English does not keep your work on file, you need to communicate your decision in writing to your instructor.

## EVALUATION

You will be evaluated based on your progress toward achieving the course objectives in both oral and written expression. While all of the items listed in the evaluation below provide the occasion for you to achieve the course outcomes, specific assignments focus more on some outcomes than on others: Class participation, presentations, and projects on your special interest help you to articulate your understanding of the poetry and deepen critical understanding and knowledge of supplementary areas you choose to explore. Exams focus on your familiarity with the content of the literature and theories we discuss, as well as your ability to compare, contrast, and synthesize themes and critical issues the specific works studied. Papers provide the opportunity to research, apply and integrate these theories to analyze how specific works of literature in greater depth and to develop original interpretations of them.

I am especially interested in your ability to think creatively and responsibly, developing your own questions and paths of inquiry in research and constructing careful arguments that critique, synthesize, and build on the knowledge you are acquiring. Your work should show understanding and critical consciousness of the ideas discussed in the

readings and in class and should develop from dialogue with classmates, benefitting from their diverse experiences with poetry.

**Class presentations:** In pairs or individually, you must do one of each kind of presentation below. I will provide a list of suggested topics for the presentations, but you may also pursue your own topics.

- *Passage presentations:* close reading of a passage as it contributes to significance of element of literature. 5 minutes.
- *Context presentation:* Use research into relevant information from the author's biography, a literary movement, or a historical event to illuminate the text. Your presentation should be 5-8 minutes long and must include reference to at least three full-length critical articles from bibliography provided or of your own finding. 7-10 minutes.

Individual components of coursework are assigned a letter grade; the final grade is a weighted average of those grades. Those percentage weights are calculated as follows:

Class participation, including presentations	15%
First interpretive paper (4-5 pp.)	20%
Second interpretive paper (4-5 pp.)	20%
Midterm exam	15%
Research paper (10-12 pp., minimum 5 high-quality sources)	30%

### Grading Scale

Office of the University Registrar:

[https://sites.google.com/a/slu.edu/registrar\\_resources/grades/scale](https://sites.google.com/a/slu.edu/registrar_resources/grades/scale)

### Undergraduate Grading Scale

A	4.00	C+	2.30
A-	3.70	C	2.00
B+	3.30	C-	1.70
B	3.00	D	1.00
B-	2.70	F	0.00

### SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

#### Week 1

Thursday, January 13      Introduction

#### Week 2

Tuesday, January 19      Flannery O'Connor, *Wise Blood*, chapters 1-7

Thursday, January 21      O'Connor, *Wise Blood*, chapters 8-end

<b>Week 3</b>		
	Tuesday, January 26	Thomas Pynchon, <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> , first half <b>Last Day to Drop a Class without a Grade W and /or Add a Class</b>
	Thursday, January 28	Pynchon, <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> , second half
<b>Week 4</b>		
	Tuesday, February 2	<b>First paper due, 4-5 pp.</b>
	Tuesday, February 4	Maxine Hong Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , 1 <sup>st</sup> 1/3
<b>Week 5</b>		
	Tuesday, February 9	Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> 1/3
	Thursday February 11	Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> 1/3
<b>Week 6</b>		
	Tuesday, February 16	Don DeLillo, <i>Libra</i> , pp. 1-116 (to “20 May”)
	Thursday, February 18	DeLillo, <i>Libra</i> , pp. 117-214 (to end of Part One)
<b>Week 7</b>		
	Tuesday, February 23	DeLillo, <i>Libra</i> , pp. 215-354 (to “In Mexico City”)
	Thursday, February 25	<b>Winter break—no class</b>
<b>Week 8</b>		
	Tuesday, March 1	DeLillo, <i>Libra</i> , pp. 355-end
	Thursday, March 3	Tim O’Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 1-84 (to “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”)
<b>Week 9</b>		
	Tuesday, March 8	<b>Second essay due in class, 4-5 pp.</b>
	Thursday, March 10	Tim O’Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 1-84 (to “Sweetheart of the Song Tra Bong”)
	<b>Friday, March 11</b>	<b>Last day to DROP class and receive grade of “W”</b>
<b>Week 10</b>		
	Tuesday, March 15	Tim O’Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 1-84 (to “Good Form”)
	Thursday, March 17	Tim O’Brien, <i>The Things They Carried</i> , pp. 85-end

<b>Week 11</b>	March 22-24	<b>Holiday—no class</b>
<b>Week 12</b>	Tuesday, March 29	Jessica Hagedorn, <i>Dogeaters</i> , 1-88 (to “High Society”)
	Thursday, March 31	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	Tuesday, April 5	Hagedorn, <i>Dogeaters</i> , 89-178 (to “Golf”)
	Thursday April 7	Hagedorn, <i>Dogeaters</i> , 179-end <b>Position paper due for final research paper, minimum 3-4 pages, 3 sources</b>
<b>Week 14</b>	Tuesday, April 12	John Edgar Wideman, <i>Two Cities (A Love Story)</i> , pp. 1-80 (to “Mr. Mallory”)
	Thursday April 14	Wideman, <i>Two Cities (A Love Story)</i> , pp. 82-141 (to “Philadelphia”)
<b>Week 15</b>	Tuesday, April 19	Wideman, <i>Two Cities (A Love Story)</i> , pp. 143-end
	Thursday, April 21	Jhumpa Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , pp. Chapters 1-4 <b>Rough draft of final paper due</b>
<b>Week 16</b>	Tuesday, April 26	Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , pp. Chapters 5-8
	Thursday, April 28	Lahiri, <i>The Namesake</i> , pp. Chapters 9-end
<b>Week 17</b>	Tuesday, May 3	<b>Final research paper due, 9-11 pp., minimum 5 sources</b>

## **FINAL MEETING**

**Thursday, May 5, 15:30-18:30 -- Presentation on paper findings, 3-4 mins. and discussion**