

**ENGL-4890-M01: The City in American Literature and Culture**

**Prof. Anne Dewey**

**Spring 2015**

**3 credits**

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

**Office Hours: Tues. and Thurs., 11:00-14:00 and by appointment**

**Office: 3rd floor of San Ignacio Hall, No. 316**

**Contact information: adewey@slu.edu; 91 554 5858, ext. 226 or ask for me**

**PREREQUISITES**

One 200-level English course or equivalent

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

At the vanguard of modernization, the city has long captured the literary imagination of American writers. The city's vast scale, novel infrastructure, anonymity, and cosmopolitanism make it a dynamic setting for exploring new forms of identity and social relation produced by technological innovation economic change. This course will explore representations of the city and urban life as fundamental elements of culture, from the emergence of the modern city during the Industrial Revolution to the global metropolis, juxtaposing literary representations with those in film and painting.

*We will address such questions as:* How is the city different from “the country” or small towns? What forms do artists develop to represent the city, and how and why do these forms change over time? How do the city and different urban spaces individual and/or collective identity? How is community created in the city? Do specific cities have distinctive character, and how does this character shape literature?

**COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES**

To provide students with critical understanding of American literary (novelistic) representations of the city in, from the emergence of the metropolis in the early 1900s to the global city of the 21<sup>st</sup> millennium, as well as varied theoretical approaches (urban, cultural, ethnic studies; sociology; philosophy; ecocriticism; transnational/global studies), comparison to other art forms, and close reading techniques to interpret these representations.

Students will develop an understanding of how American cities have changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, how those changes have influenced our understanding of individual and collective identity, and how cities have influenced artistic movements and innovations. They will acquire the knowledge and develop their analytical skills to integrate understanding of the historical context of the city represented, theoretical analyses of cities, and their own close interpretation of the novels we read by researching the theories and works studied and writing interpretive and research papers and giving oral presentations.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

Theodore Dreiser. *Sister Carrie*. 1901.

Edith Wharton. *The Age of Innocence*. 1920.

Nella Larsen. *Quicksand*. 1928.

James Baldwin. *Giovanni's Room*. 1956.

Joan Didion. *The White Album*. 1979.

Chang Rae Lee. *Native Speaker*. 1995.

Margaret Atwood. *Oryx and Crake*. 2003.

## 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 and participation:** Students should read the assigned texts and complete written assignments 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. 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. 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.

**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)

**Collection of student work for assessment:** Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus 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 teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. *Thus, copies of your work for this course, including exams and papers, may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes.* If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

### **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 city literature 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 literature.

Class participation, including presentations and quizzes	15%
Paper 1: interpretive (4-5 pp.)	10%
Paper 2: interpretive (4-5 pp.)	15%
Paper 3: interpretive and research (10-12 pp., minimum 7 sources)	25%
Midterm exam	15%
Final exam	20%

#### Passage presentations, Tuesdays

Provide a close reading-based interpretation of a passage no more than half a page long from the day's reading. Close reading should not merely paraphrase but develop an interpretation of the passage and raise discussion questions about it, based on awareness of how its literary structure, form, devices contribute to its meaning.

#### Critical article presentations, Thursdays

Summarize a critical article or book chapter from the general list of criticism/theory on the city or from the criticism on the author being discussed in class that day. (List is on Blackboard.) Then discuss how that article illuminates aspects of the day's reading or what discussion questions it raises.

*Each student will do one passage presentation and one critical article presentation, 5-10 minutes each. You may do your presentation by yourself or with a partner.*

#### Independent Research Presentation

Research and prepare a 10-minute presentation on a theme related to the course. The presentation must integrate some research on historical context, some literary theory, and interpretation on one of the novels we have read. Please develop your topic in discussion with me in office hours.

#### Quizzes

During the semester, there will be 5 unannounced quizzes on the day's reading.

#### Rough draft and rewrite policy

I am very committed to helping you improve your writing. I am happy to discuss ideas in office hours, read *rough drafts* before the paper is due. Because of the size of this class, I must receive rough drafts by 9 a.m. of the day before the paper is due to be able to respond fairly to everyone.

You may *rewrite* papers after they are due and will receive the higher grade if the rewrite improves, but the rewrite must be handed in before the next paper is due.

## SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

### Week 1

Thursday, January 15 Introduction

## THE METROPOLIS AND SOCIAL CHANGE

### Week 2

Tuesday, January 20 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chs. 1-13 (“His Credentials...”)

Thursday, January 22 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chs. 14-27 (“When Waters...”)

### Week 3

Tuesday, January 27 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chs. 18-37 (“The Spirit Awakens”)

**Last day to DROP a class and not receive a grade of “W” and/or to add a class**

Thursday, January 29 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, Chs. 38-end

### Week 4

Tuesday, February 3 **First paper due, 4-5 pp.**

Thursday, February 5 Wharton, *Age of Innocence*, Chs. 1-10

### Week 5

Tuesday, February 10 Wharton, *Age of Innocence*, Chs. 11-19

Thursday, February 12 Wharton, *Age of Innocence*, Chs. 20-29

### Week 6

Tuesday, February 17 Wharton, *Age of Innocence*, Chs. 30-end

Thursday, February 19 **Second paper due, 4-5 pp.**

### Week 7

Tuesday, February 24 Larsen, *Quicksand*, Chs. 1-7

Thursday, February 26 Larsen, *Quicksand*, Chs. 8-16

### Week 8

Tuesday, March 3 Larsen, *Quicksand*, Chs. 17-end

Thursday, March 5 **Midterm exam**

## AMERICANS IN THE EUROPEAN CITY

### Week 9

Tuesday, March 10 Baldwin, *Giovanni’s Room*, Part I

Thursday, March 12

Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*, Part II, Chs. 1-3

Friday, March 13

**Last day to drop a class and receive grade of W**

**Week 10**

Tuesday, March 17

Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*, Part II, Chs. 4-end

**URBAN LIFE IN MASS AND GLOBALIZING CULTURE**

Thursday, March 19

Didion, *White Album*, pp. 1-80 (to "Bureaucrats")

**Week 11**

Tuesday, March 24

Didion, *White Album*, pp. 81-152 (to "Sojourns")

Thursday, March 26

Didion, *White Album*, pp. 153-end

**Proposal for final paper due**

**Week 12**

**Tuesday, March 31 – Thursday, April 2      Holiday -- no class**

**Week 13**

Tuesday, April 7

Lee, *Native Speaker*, pp. 1-130

Thursday, April 9

Lee, *Native Speaker*, pp. 131-230

**Week 14**

Tuesday, April 14

Lee, *Native Speaker*, pp. 231-end

Thursday, April 16

**Rough draft of final paper due**

**CITIES OF THE FUTURE? THE DYSTOPIAN CITY**

**Week 15**

Tuesday, April 21

Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Sections 1-4

Thursday, April 23

Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Sections 5-7

**Week 16**

Tuesday, April 28

Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Sections 8-12

Thursday, April 30

Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, Sections 13-end

**Week 17**

Tuesday, May 5

**Research paper due, 10-12 pp., minimum 7 sources**

**Week 18**

**Thursday, May 7, 12:00 – 15:00**

**Final exam**