Please note that this syllabus is subject to change. If you are a student, I advise you to wait until the first day of class to print the syllabus. At that point, the updated and complete document will be available on Blackboard.

**Fall 2013 / English 3340: History of American Literature**

**The University of Texas at Arlington**

Course No. 80928

Sec. 002

Meets M/W/F, 1-1:50

Preston Hall 207

Instructor: Dr. Kathryn Warren

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Office hours: WF, 2-3:30, Carlisle 403

**Course Description:**

This course provides an overview of American literature from its beginnings as it is related to developments in American history and culture.

**Disclaimer:**

The title of this course coyly suggests that within a 15-week period, you will come away having studied and mastered *the* history of American literature—as if there were any such thing. Titles, being what they are, force us into such white lies. I want to acknowledge up front that any course that seeks to cover 400+ years of literature within 15 weeks is, by necessity, partial and incomplete. In this case, the literature we will read is an idiosyncratic collection of texts that reflects not only major currents in American literature, but also my preferences and interests. At this point, you might have a few questions.

Q: Do we cover every major American author?

A: *Absolutely not. (I’m sure you can spot some egregious omissions; feel free to ask me why so-and-so didn’t make the reading list.)*

Q: Do we read every great American text?

A: *No way.*

Q: Is this syllabus representative of all American voices?

A: *Not by a long shot.*

Q: Do we read even a single novel?

A: *Um, sadly, no.*

But this I *can* say: I have chosen texts that I find interesting and provocative in the hope that you, too, will find them stimulating. I am not asking you to read anything that I myself find boring, dry, or dull. My choices have also been shaped by the constraint of time; that is to say, I want us to actually discuss everything we read. For that reason, you will probably less literature this semester, overall, than you would in another section of 3340. This is because my aim here is not coverage, but understanding. I want us to read closely and thoroughly, striving to encounter the texts in two major ways:

1. As artifacts of unique historical moments. Reading this way requires a willingness to grapple with strangeness and distance, acknowledging that we are dealing with words that emerge from a world very different from our own. Reading from a historicist angle, we will look for ways that the texts are talking back to history and for ways that history shapes the texts.
2. As letters from the past that have meaning for us now. This unapologetically presentist perspective asks you to think about what the literature we read, foreign as it may seem, means for you as people living in the United States today, as human beings carving out lives for yourselves in 2013.

These two ways of reading might strike you as incompatible, but my hunch is that they will turn out to be oddly complementary. Let’s keep that question open as we move through the semester.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completion of this course students will be able to

* demonstrate critical understanding of the specific authors and texts covered in the course.
* identify connections among the texts, comparing and contrasting them, and locating them within larger narratives of American literary history.
* demonstrate knowledge of major themes, issues, and movements in the history of American literature.
* recognize and identify the characteristics of various literary genres important to American literary history.
* reflect critically on his/her own reading practices.
* draw connections between literature of the past and concerns of the present.

**Materials:**

1. A MavMail address that you check *daily*.
2. *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature,* 2nd edition, Vols. 1 and 2

**Assignments and Grade Distribution:**

Participation and quizzes 10%

Commonplace Book 20%

Essay 1 15%

Midterm 15%

Essay 2 20%

Final 20%

**Participation:**

I expect you to participate in class discussion, drawing on your commonplace book entries (more on those in class and on Blackboard) to articulate what you found meaningful about the readings. While there will be occasional lectures, the majority of class time will be spent in discussion. This is not a class where you can be a passive observer; your contributions are valuable and necessary to the functioning of the course.

I will give occasional pop quizzes at the beginning of class.

You must *always* bring the text under discussion to class. If we are discussing one of the readings available on Blackboard, be sure to print it out and bring a hard copy. Failing to bring the reading to class will have a negative impact on your participation grade. *Reading from your laptop or phone does not count as having a hard copy of the text* (see me if you have a compelling reason for using your laptop or phone in class).

**Attendance and Punctuality:**

Every day you come to class, you receive a participation score based on your attentiveness, contributions to class conversations, and contributions to group work. Every class you miss will have an adverse impact on your grade because you will receive a zero participation grade for that day, and you will not be able to make up the in-class work or quiz.

Punctuality is essential. Coming to class late disrupts the rhythm of the class, and it is disrespectful to me and to your classmates. By missing the first few minutes of class, you miss important announcements, clarification about upcoming assignments, and quizzes. Arriving after class has begun will have an adverse effect on your participation grade.

I do take attendance, but there is no maximum number of class days you can miss before failing the class. I hope that you see the value of coming to class and make the time to attend the class meetings because you will learn from them, and your contributions are of value to the rest of us. I am not, however, going to legislate your attendance.

Historically, students who miss fewer than three classes get the best grades.

**Grading:**

I grade holistically. The grades I assign indicate how well you meet the expectations of an assignment, which are explained in detail on every prompt. The prompts will be available on Blackboard well before the due dates, and we will go over them in class. If you do not understand my expectations for a particular assignment, it is up to you to ask for clarification. This is how I think of the letter grades I give you:

A for work that exceeds expectations

B for work that meets expectations well, better than average work

C for competent work that meets the basic requirements listed in the prompt

D for work that fails to meet basic requirements

F for work that is incomplete or that flouts requirements

For the purpose of calculating your final grades, I convert letter grades to numbers like this:

A+ = 97 B+= 87 C+= 77 D+ = 67

A = 95 B = 85 C = 75 D = 65 F = 55

A-= 92 B- = 82 C- = 72 D- = 62

**A grade of C at the end of the semester indicates that a student has demonstrated command of the reading and writing skills the course is designed to impart. A C, in other words, is a grade that indicates that you have succeeded. An A indicates that your performance is excellent, exceeding that of the majority of your peers.**

**Submission Requirements and Late Work:**

You will turn in all of your assignments on Blackboard (elearn.uta.edu). It is your responsibility to make sure that your submission goes through, which means going back after you have uploaded your assignment to double check that it is there. I cannot grade work I do not receive, and computer problems are not a valid excuse for late or missing work. If you are having trouble uploading an assignment from your home computer, go to the library and upload it from there. Plan ahead.

I do accept late work. But be advised: late work will lose a letter grade (10 points) for each calendar day (*not* class day) it is late. Heads up: your assignments are due on odd days (not always class days), so be sure to write the due dates on a calendar ahead of time so that you don’t miss them.

Extensions are negotiable. *If you anticipate needing more time for an assignment, you must get in touch with me at least two days before the assignment is due.* Together we will arrive at a later due date. I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me the day before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse.Plan ahead. I reserve the right to refuse extensions.

Unless we have made a special arrangement, do notsend me work by e-mail. I will not accept it.

If you need to miss class on an exam day, talk to me ahead of time so that we can schedule your exam in advance of the exam date. Should you miss an exam due to illness, I will give you a makeup exam only if you can provide a doctor’s note. Other extraordinary circumstances (car accidents and the like) also merit makeup exams; I reserve the right to decide whether a makeup exam is warranted on a case by case basis.

**Formatting and Citation:**

All writing assignments should be Word Documents that are formatted according to MLA style: double spaced, with 1-inch margins, in 12-pt., Times New Roman font.

When citing secondary sources, follow the citation style outlined in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, which is a recommended text for this course and is available both in the library and in bookstores.

**Academic Integrity:**

All UTA students are expected to adhere to the University’s Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

The University’s policy is that faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

My policy is to hold students to the highest standards of academic honesty, and I have zero tolerance for violations of academic integrity. Plagiarism of any kind will result in strict penalties, including the possibility of failing the course. You will be turning in all of your assignments via SafeAssign, a program available via Blackboard that checks your work against work on the web and a database of student work, thereby flagging potential instances of plagiarism.

*What is plagiarism?*

Plagiarism is presenting another person’s ideas or words as one’s own. Plagiarism occurs when a writer quotes, paraphrases, or summarizes another person’s work without crediting his/her sources. Plagiarism occurs whether the text quoted is a book, article, website, Wikipedia, a reader’s guide like Cliffs Notes or Sparks Notes, another student’s paper, or any other source. *An entire essay is considered fraudulent even if only a single sentence is plagiarized.*Also, please note that plagiarism has nothing to do with intent. If you do not properly credit your sources, you have plagiarized, whether or not you meant to.

*How can I avoid plagiarism?*

1. Develop your own opinions and ideas whenever you write papers or exams. Resist the temptation to look to online reading guides, analyses, or summaries for inspiration; it’s way too easy for the language you read and ideas you’re exposed to to seep into your own writing.
2. If you refer to another person’s ideas or words, use proper citation to give them credit. This can mean either paraphrasing an author’s ideas and indicating that you are doing so in your prose (e.g., writing, “As Brook Thomas has argued,” and following that opener with a statement of his argument in your own words) or citing a source directly via quotation (e.g., “As Brook Thomas writes, ‘xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx’”).

*What are the consequences of plagiarism?*

If I suspect you of plagiarism, I will contact you so that we can discuss my concerns. You will then have the opportunity to either accept or deny responsibility for plagiarism. If you deny responsibility, your case will be handled by the Office of Student Conduct, and you will receive an Incomplete in our course until the investigation is complete. Students who commit plagiarism will most likely receive a reduced grade, possibly a zero, for the fraudulent assignment. (I assess the academic penalty on a case-by-case basis.) Without exception, I will report the incident to the Office of Student Conduct, whether or not the student accepts responsibility for the alleged plagiarism. Disciplinary probation for a year is a common penalty for plagiarism issued by the Office of Student Conduct.

If you have any questions about these policies or about what constitutes plagiarism and/or collusion, ask me. Be sure to visit the website for the Office of Student Conduct for clarification on any of the above:

http://www.uta.edu/studentaffairs/conduct/academicintegrity.html

**Course Etiquette:**

The way you comport yourself during the semester has a substantial effect on your ethos, or credibility. Please take the following etiquette guidelines into account:

1. Turn off the ringers on your phones when you come into class and *put your phones away.* If I see you using your phone during class, you will receive zero participation points for that day. If you persist in using your phone during class, you may be asked to leave. Attention to discussion and showing respect for your instructor and classmates is part of being present.
2. Unless you have discussed doing so ahead of time with me, *do not use your laptop in class.*
3. I am happy to answer your questions about the course and your writing via e-mail. I check my e-mail several times a day, but I cease to do so at night and do so considerably less frequently over the weekend. Do not, therefore, rely on me to answer questions about an assignment (for instance) the night before it is due. It is your responsibility to seek help ahead of time. If you have substantive questions about your writing or the course, it is best to visit me during my office hours so that we can talk about your concerns face to face.
4. When you send me an e-mail, please be sure that it has both a salutation and a closing. I expect you to address me in your e-mail as a matter of courtesy; writing “hey” followed by a comma is not addressing me! Think of composing an e-mail as a rhetorical act.

**Writing Center:**

If you’re serious about your writing, you should take advantage of the Writing Center, located in Room 411 of the Central Library. The Writing Center offers guidance to UT-Arlington students on writing assignments. Students must register with the Writing Center before making appointments and should bring a printed copy of their assignment sheet, any instructor or peer comments, and their draft to the appointment. You may register and schedule appointments and find many other valuable resources and information online at http://www.uta.edu/owl.  
  
Writing Center consultants assist students with writing development, from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas or revising an early draft to polishing a final document. However, the Writing Center is not a document editing service; consultants will neither identify every error nor rewrite student assignments. They focus on improving writing skills and helping students become better editors of their own writing, which includes learning to identify and correct their own grammar, punctuation, and editing errors.

**Drop Policy:**

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session; the drop deadline this semester is October 30. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/).

**Electronic Communication:**

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php.

What does this mean for our course? It means that you need to check your MavMail *every day* during the week and at least once over the weekend. I will be using Blackboard’s e-mail function to communicate with you, sending important announcements, schedule changes, and clarifications over e-mail. Blackboard sends e-mails to your MavMail, not to your hotmail, gmail, or yahoo account. Therefore, you can’t get away with checking your MavMail only every now and again. Get into the habit of checking it daily.

**Student Support Services:**

UT-Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at www.uta.edu/resources.

**Americans with Disabilities Act:**

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Student Feedback Surveys:**

You’ll be hearing a lot about these from me as we get closer to the end of the semester. Here’s what the University has to say about them:

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT-Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit http://www.uta.edu/sfs.

**Final Review Week:**

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances, and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. *During this week, classes are held as scheduled.* In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:**

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which are the stairwells at both ends of the hall outside our door. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**Syllabus and Schedule Changes:**

*Phew!* I’ve tried to make this document as complete as possible; however, during the course of the semester I may be required to alter, add, or abandon certain policies and/or assignments. I reserve the right to make such changes as they become necessary. You will be informed of any changes in writing.

**The Syllabus as a Contract:**

You may have noticed that much of what’s written above begins with the pronoun “you.” I have made very clear what is expected of each of you in the course. This syllabus is more than a list of what *you* need to do, though; it’s also a contract, a list of obligations and responsibilities that each of us takes on at the beginning of the semester. By reading this syllabus and deciding to stick with the course, you are consenting to the policies outlined above and promising to uphold your end of the bargain. (If you disagree with any of the policies or do not want to adhere to them, now’s the time to find a new section of the course.) I am promising a few things, too. As your instructor, I will:

1. Always start class on time, as I know your time is valuable.
2. Always end class on time, as I know you have places to be.
3. Grade your work within two weeks of it being turned in.
4. Hold office hours every week and advise you well ahead of time of any changes to them.
5. Be respectful of your opinions and open to your questions.

I encourage you to talk to me if you feel I’m not holding up my end of the bargain or if you have any concerns about the course.

**A working course schedule with due dates and reading assignments will be available by the first day of class.**