

English 2329-006: When I'm at Home? – Self and Society in American Literature
Fall 2012, MWF 1-1:50PM

Room: LS 424 ([Campus Map Location](#))
Instructor: Dr. Chris Kilgore
Office: 201F Social Work A / 605 Carlisle
Office Hours: MW 2-3:30PM at Social Work A 201F, and by appointment
Email (Preferred): chriskilgore@uta.edu English Dept. Phone: (817) 272-2692

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Yellow Wall-Paper*

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*

Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun*

Pynchon, Thomas. *The Crying of Lot 49*

Wilson, August. *Fences*

Moore, Alan, & Dave Gibbons. *Watchmen*

Recommended: *The MLA Handbook, 7th Edition*.

NOTE: Additional required reading materials will be posted to Blackboard as PDF documents. Please be prepared to print these and bring them to class for discussion.

Course Description

This course is not designed as a survey of American Literature (that would be English 3340), but rather an exploration of the tensions between individual identity and social identity across the history of American literature. Beginning even before our nation's independence, Americans have pondered the boundaries between self and other, and the obligations each of us owes—to ourselves, our families, and those we define as “others.” Although the course's readings are selective, they cover a variety of genres, geographical areas, and perspectives.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you should be able to...

- ...demonstrate an informed understanding of the changes in how American texts present the idea of self and identity, and use genre-specific terms to describe these changes.
- ...demonstrate an informed understanding of how people who self-identify as “American” use ideas about others to construct that sense of self.
- ...respond critically to all course material, using synthesis, analysis, comparison, contrast, critique and evaluation, and express your ideas in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.
- ...find new insights into not only stories, poems, and plays, but also into your own experience, at UTA and beyond!

"Would I had phrases that are not known, utterances that are strange, in new language that has not been used, free from repetition, not an utterance that has grown stale, which men of old have spoken." (attributed to Khakheperresenb, c. 2000 BCE)

Attendance and Participation

Our daily class activities will use a discussion format, rather than a lecture. I will prepare study guides to help you take notes on the readings, and we will be doing some in-class writing to help us keep track of our discussions, but there will be no slides or lectures. So it will be your responsibility to come to class having completed the assigned reading, and prepared to take notes on our discussions.

Attendance: Because of this discussion format, your attendance is very important! I allow **6 absences for any reason**, and I do not differentiate between "excused" and "unexcused," so please do not miss class unless it is an **emergency**. After the sixth absence, **your Overall Grade will drop 10% for each subsequent absence**. If you know there's a chance you'll miss class, **email me immediately**.

Participation and Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: There will be in-class writing assignments and activities, amounting to 10% of your overall grade. In the course schedule, reading assignments appear on the dates when we'll be **discussing** them in class, so please read them **before that date**. We're going to try to cover a lot of ground, so **the reading load will be very heavy**. Be prepared to spend significant time outside of class reading and writing.

Major Assignments

In addition to your Attendance and Participation, I will be expecting you to complete five major assignments, whose due dates you will find on the Course Schedule:

Paper 1 (2-3 pages)	Midterm Exam
Paper 2 (3-4 pages)	Final Exam
Paper 3 (3-5 pages)	

Please Note: You must complete all Major Assignments in order to pass the class. If you know you will miss class on a due-date, please plan ahead, and contact me **well before the due date**.

Grade Breakdown

Participation:	10%
Attendance:	10%
Paper 1:	10%
Paper 2:	15%
Paper 3:	15%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Final Exam:	20%

"The goal of all inanimate objects is to resist man and ultimately to defeat him."

—Russel Baker

Digital Communication Policy

Email and our Blackboard site will constitute my primary means of communication with you throughout the semester. Please be prepared to **check your UTA email every day**, and to access Blackboard for reading assignments, paper assignments, grade information, and announcements. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>. Also, texting and cell-phone communication are a distraction in class, so I expect all digital communication devices to be **turned off**, and **put away** during class, unless I instruct otherwise.

Academic Integrity

All students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington 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.

By enrolling in this course, you agree to adhere to these statements. 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.

In addition, use of others' material without appropriate documentation will result in a grade of zero for the assignment, and possibly a failing grade in the course.

Drop Policies

It is your responsibility to officially withdraw if you 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://www.uta.edu/ses/fao>

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). I am 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. For more information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations, please see the Office for Students with Disabilities, via phone at (817) 272-3364, and on the Web at www.uta.edu/disability.

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.

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a 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>.

Jack London's Credo

As the term moves on, and you find that you have a great deal to read and to write for this class, I invite everyone to remember Jack London's Credo, and especially the last line...

*I would rather be ashes than dust!
I would rather that my spark should burn out
in a brilliant blaze than it should be stifled by dry-rot.
I would rather be a superb meteor, every atom
of me in magnificent glow, than a sleepy and permanent planet.
The function of man is to live, not to exist.
I shall not waste my days trying to prolong them.
I shall use my time.*

For further discussion, please see the excellent commentary by Clarice Stasz ([click here](#)).

Course Schedule

"You never know what is enough unless you know what is more than enough."

—William Blake

This schedule is subject to revision. All revisions will be announced, and the revised schedule will be posted, on our Blackboard site.

Key to Readings:

BB = Online, see Blackboard or Email

G = Gilman, *The Yellow Wall-Paper*

F = Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

H = Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

W = Wilson, *Fences*

M/G = Moore / Gibbon, *Watchmen*

<u>PART 1: Constructing a "Self"</u>		W 9/12	G (Read as much as you can)
Week 1:		F 9/14	G (Finish the story)
F 8/24	First day of class / "Trickster" Story		BB Gilman, "Why I Wrote the Yellow Wall-Paper"
M 8/27	BB Anne Bradstreet: "The Flesh and the Spirit," "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild," "For Deliverance from a Fever," "The Prologue."	Su 9/16	TURN IN: PAPER 1, via Blackboard Dropbox (11:55pm)
		<u>PART 2: Becoming "Other"</u>	
W 8/29	BB Jonathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (Excerpts)	Week 4	
	BB Benjamin Franklin: "The Way to Wealth"	M 9/17	F Chapters 1-2 (1-42)
F 8/31	BB Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Feathertop"	W 9/19	F Chapters 3-4 (43-85)
		F 9/21	F Chapter 5 (86-102)
Week 2		Week 5	
M 9/3	Labor Day (No Class)	M 9/24	F Chapters 6-7 (103-153)
W 9/5	BB Whitman, "Leaves of Grass / Song of Myself" (Excerpts), "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer," "Beat, Drums"	W 9/26	F Chapter 8 (154-170)
		F 9/28	F Chapter 9 (171-189)
F 9/7	BB Thoreau "Why I Went to the Woods" Continue discussing Whitman		F The Text of <i>The Great Gatsby</i> (191-194)
			F Preface (vii-xvi)
Week 3		Week 6	
M 9/10	BB Emily Dickinson: 258, 324, 328, 341, 348, 435, 441, 465, 501, 510, 632, 712, 754, 822, 1072, 1129, 1383, 1624, 1732	M 10/1	BB Langston Hughes (selected poems)
		W 10/3	Review for Midterm
		F 10/5	MIDTERM EXAM
		Week 7	
		M 10/8	H Act 1, Scene 1
		W 10/10	H Act 1, Scene 2
		F 10/12	H Act 2, Scene 1
		Prepare for Paper 2 NOTE: <i>If you prefer to write on a computer, you may use one in class today.</i>	

<p>Week 8 M 10/15 H Act 2, Scenes 2-3 W 10/17 H Act 3 F 10/19 PEER REVIEW: Bring 3 copies of your Paper 2 Draft to Class Su 10/21 TURN IN: PAPER 2, via Blackboard Dropbox (11:55pm) Weekend View <i>Citizen Kane</i></p> <p><u>PART 3: Deconstructing Self & Other</u></p> <p><u>Week 9</u> M 10/22 Film: Discuss Mise en Scène W 10/24 Film: Discuss <i>Citizen Kane</i> F 10/26 P Chapters 1-2 (1-30)</p> <p><u>Week 10</u> M 10/29 P Chapter 3-4 (31-79) W 10/31 P Chapter 5 (80-119) <i>Last Day to Drop</i> F 11/2 P Chapter 6 (120-152)</p> <p><u>Week 11</u> M 11/5 W Act 1, Scenes 1-2 W 11/7 W Act 1, Scenes 3-4 F 11/9 Prepare for Paper 3 <u>NOTE:</u> <i>If you prefer to write on a computer, you may use one in class today.</i></p> <p><u>Week 12</u> M 11/12 W Act 2, Scenes 1-2 W 11/14 W Act 2, Scenes 3-5 F 11/15 PEER REVIEW: Bring 3 copies of your Paper 3 Draft to Class</p>	<p><u>Week 13</u> M 11/19 M/G (Sections TBA) BB Supplementary Reading (TBA) W 11/21 M/G (Sections TBA) BB Supplementary Reading (TBA) F 11/23 Thanksgiving Holiday</p> <p><u>Week 14</u> M 11/26 M/G (Sections TBA) BB Supplementary Reading (TBA) W 11/28 M/G (Sections TBA) F 11/29 Film: Discuss Cinematography, Editing, Sound Weekend Watch <i>Boys Don't Cry</i></p> <p><u>Week 15</u> M 12/3: Film: Discuss <i>Boys Don't Cry</i> W 12/5: Last Day of Class: Review for Final</p> <p><u>FINAL EXAM:</u> Monday, 12/10, 11-1:30 PM</p>
--	--

From Tom Stoppard's (UK) play, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* (1966-7):

Guildenstern: What's your name when you're at home?

Rosencrantz: What's yours?

Guildenstern: When I'm at home?

Rosencrantz: Is it different at home?

Guildenstern: What home?

Rosencrantz: Haven't you got one?

Guildenstern: Why do you ask?

Rosencrantz: What are you driving at?

Guildenstern (*with emphasis*): What's your name?!

Rosencrantz: Repetition. Two—love. Match point to me.