

ENG 342: AMERICAN REALISM AND NATURALISM

Spring 2013

Mondays and Wednesdays from 12:30-1:45 in Heide 214 (January 22 to May 22)

Dr. Josh Mabie

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Office: Laurentide 3210

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:15-12:15, Wednesdays 3:40-5:00, and by appointment

**Course Description (from the UW-W course catalogue):**

“An exploration of developments in American literature in the period following the Civil War to 1910. In addition to naturalism and realism, the course will include more recent additions to the canon: women's fiction and African-American writing of the period.”

**Course Description (From the advertisement):**

Realism and its close cousin, naturalism, get a bad rap. If twenty-first century Americans think about realism at all, they typically imagine fat books with lots of boring details about the everyday lives of ordinary people. Sandwiched between the raw emotion of Romanticism and the clever daring of Modernism, realism sometimes falls between the cracks of literary history. Yet realism was, and remains to this day, shocking. Realist authors wrote about political corruption, death, sex, racism, immigration, the concentration of wealth and power, ecological beauty and catastrophe, the possibility of a world without God, and the silliness of middle class life. Moreover, they wrote about this material “truthfully,” in plain, descriptive English without hiding behind either romantic fancy or modernist obscurity. Forget, for a semester, Emerson’s silly eyeball and the “currents of the universal being circulating through him, blah, blah, blah.” Leave the impenetrability of Faulkner’s sound and fury (“Then the barn wasn’t there and we had to wait until it came back. I didn’t see it come back. It came behind us . . .” WHAT!?!). Instead, watch a woman go crazy after her physician (and husband) locks her in an attic. See what happens when a bored 18-year-old Wisconsin farm girl moves to Chicago and tries to sleep her way to the top. Now that you have seen *Lincoln*, see how the Thirteenth Amendment worked after Reconstruction ended. Think about where food came from and what (or maybe even who) might have been wrapped up in a polish sausage casing. Dare to consider what does or does not separate us from our pets. Peer into factory life before OSHA and walk the back alleys of New York City before electric streetlights. Watch a boy rise from rags to riches. And light out for the Western Territories just as the frontier was closing. sometime soon.

**Textbooks**

\*Alger, Horatio. *Ragged Dick*. New York: Penguin,

\*Cather, Willa. *O Pioneers!* New York: Dover, 1993.

\*Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage*. New York: Dover, 1990.

\*Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. New York: Dover, 1993.

Davis, Rebecca Harding, et al. *Four Stories by American Women [FSbAW]*. New York: Penguin, 1990.

\*Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. New York: Dover, 2004.

\*DuBois, W.E.B. *Souls of the Black Folk*. New York: Dover, 1994.

\*London, Jack. *Call of the Wild*. New York: Aladdin, 1993.

\*Norris, Frank. *McTeague*. New York: Norton, 1997.

\*Twain, Mark. *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. New York: Dover, 1994.

\* Free podcast of the audiobook on iTunes. All of the texts are available for free through eBooks or through Project Gutenberg. Feel free to use a Kindle, an iPad, or your laptop.

## What you can expect to learn in English 342

### Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge by:
  - Delineating the features and aims of realism and naturalism with reference to romanticism and modernism.
  - Identifying significant works of realism and naturalism.
  - Describing the opportunities and challenges that realists' and naturalists' aesthetic and political commitments presented to late nineteenth century women writers, writers of color, and the poor.
  - Analyzing and describing literary style by describing diction, syntax, imagery, details, and figurative language.
  - Explaining realists' and naturalists' positions on the role of ethics, morality, and virtue in literature.
  - Explaining why critics and the general reading public embrace or dismiss realist and naturalist writing at different points in American history.
2. Demonstrate that they have acquired and refined writing and research skills by:
  - Developing interesting and important questions and arguments
  - Finding, evaluating, interpreting, and synthesizing secondary material about literary texts to engage and participate in ongoing scholarly conversations.
  - Completing a research paper.
3. Develop ideas about literature's ability to exert pressure on social and political problems, both by enforcing the status quo and by stimulating change.
4. Consider the degree to which literature can or cannot communicate unfamiliar experiences to readers with enough force to move them.
5. Bring knowledge from other disciplines (history, the social and natural sciences, and the arts) to bear upon the study of literature and weigh the authority of disciplinary claims as they relate to literary arguments.

### Course Outcomes

English 342 contributes to the following LEAP Essential Learning Outcomes:

You will gain:

- ★ *Knowledge of Human Cultures*
  - Engage with big questions, both contemporary and enduring
- ★ *Intellectual and Practical Skills, including*
  - Inquiry and analysis
  - Critical and creative thinking
  - Written and oral communication
  - Teamwork and problem solving
- ★ *Personal and Social Responsibility*
  - Civic Knowledge and engagement – local and global
  - Intercultural Knowledge and competence
  - Ethical reasoning and action
  - Foundations and skills for lifelong learning

★ *Integrative and Applied Learning*

Across general and specialized studies

**Course Requirements**

1. Group Presentation with one-page handout
2. Researched essay and components
3. Mid-term exam – The exams will consist of short answer, quotation analysis, and an essay.
4. Final exam – same format as the midterm
5. Conversation Starter  
Each student will present a one or two sentence, arguable thesis about one day’s reading. Like all good theses, these argumentative statements should be clear, debatable, and appropriately focused. Please email your conversation starter to me (mabiej@uww.edu) by 9:00 am on the day that it is due.
6. Quizzes  
You will have opportunities to engage with the reading in short answer written form over the course of the semester. I give these quizzes to encourage you to keep up with the reading, to give you an opportunity to voice your responses to the course material, and to spur discussion. Given these objectives, I am not interested in quizzing you over the minutia of the reading or in tricking you. I am interested in giving you an opportunity to demonstrate your engagement with the major themes, questions, and concepts of the course and the texts. The quizzes are unscheduled and cannot be made up if they are missed.
7. Class Participation and Attendance  
This course cannot succeed without vigorous student participation. Please come to class having carefully read the assignment and be prepared to voice your thoughts. Please also come to class on time and stay the whole time  
A few words on electronics. . .I have recently become a huge fan of reading books on my iPad, but I recognize that iBooks is not the only app that I can access on the device. You may read the course materials on a Kindle, your laptop, or an iPad, but please do not surf the internet, play games, text message, or chat during class. If I see you distracted by your electronic device, I may ask you to put it away, but I may just make a note of your disengagement from the class and reduce your participation grade. Please silence and stow your phone during class.
8. Conversation Starter – each student will present a one or two sentence, arguable thesis about one day’s reading. Like all good theses, these argumentative statements should be clear, debatable, and appropriately focused. Please email your conversation starter to me (mabiej@uww.edu) by 9:00 am on the day that it is due.

Grading

Your final grade will be figured according to the following percentages:

Assignment	Percentage of Grade
Group Presentation and Handout	15
Researched Essay (8 pages)	30
Mid-Term Exam	15
Final Exam	20
Quizzes and Conversation Starter	10

Participation and Attendance	10
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Grading Scale

## Grading Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
88-89	B+
84-87	B
80-83	B-
78+79	C+
74-77	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

## Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

It is your responsibility to accurately present work that you turn in and to properly cite sources that you use.

Chapter fourteen of the UW system student handbook describes academic misconduct and its consequences:

Academic misconduct is an act in which a student:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance;
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to: cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas; stealing examinations or course materials; submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course; tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

([http://www.uww.edu/handbook/student/system\\_1403.html](http://www.uww.edu/handbook/student/system_1403.html))

Please feel free to consult me with any questions you have about citing sources and feel free to make use of resources on campus to help you avoid plagiarism. The time to have this conversation is before you turn in your final draft for a grade. If you have significant concerns, you might also consider participating in one of the Academic Support Center's plagiarism workshops (see [http://www.uww.edu/acadsupport/tutorial/plagiarism\\_workshop\\_registration.html](http://www.uww.edu/acadsupport/tutorial/plagiarism_workshop_registration.html) for more information).

The best way to avoid getting caught up in a messy and unpleasant academic misconduct imbroglio is to do your own work and to save all of the notes and drafts that you used to create your paper. If you compose on a computer, it is always a good idea to save multiple versions of your paper when you make substantial revisions. You can also email drafts to yourself.

### Deadlines

Unless you arrange for an extension in advance of the deadline, I will not accept late papers. Plan ahead and turn in your assignments on time. Pop quizzes cannot be made up. Papers must be turned in on paper; I will not accept emailed papers. You may print your papers double sided or you may print on the backs of previously printed pages if you would like to save paper.

### Special Needs

The university in general and I in particular are committed to providing, on a flexible and individual basis, reasonable accommodation to students who have documented disability conditions (e.g. physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please contact both the Center for Students with Disabilities and me to discuss your individual needs. The Center for Students with Disabilities is located on the first floor of Andersen Library in room 2002. You can also call them at 262-472-4711 (Main Phone/Relay) or 262-472-1109 (TTY), and you can find the Center on the web at <http://www.uww.edu/csd/>

## **Course Calendar**

W 1/23            Some Provisional Definitions: Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism,  
Modernism, *verisimilitude*, *mimesis*  
Poe, *Fall of the House of Usher*  
Howells, *Rise of Silas Lapham*

### **Classic Realism**

M 1/28            Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) Ch. 1-13  
Twain, "Fennimore Cooper's Literary Offenses" (D2L)

W 1/30            Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) Ch. 14-29

M 2/4             Twain, *Huckleberry Finn* (1884) Ch. 30 – The Last

W 2/6             James, "Daisy Miller" (D2L)  
Howells, selections from *Criticism and Fiction* (D2L)

### **Regionalism and Local Color**

M 2/11            Harte, "Luck of Roaring Camp" (1869) (D2L)  
Turner, "Is Sectionalism in America Dying Away?" (1908) (D2L)

W 2/13            Jewett, selections from *Country of the Pointed Firs* (1910) (FSbAW)

M 2/18 Chesnutt, selections from *Conjure Woman* (D2L)

**Realism Under Pressure**

W 2/20 Twain, selections from *The Innocents Abroad* (D2L)  
Robinson, selections from *Biblical Researches* (D2L)  
Thomson, selections from *The Land and the Book* (D2L)  
Prime, selections from *Tent Life in the Holy Land* (D2L)

M 2/25 Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899) Ch.1-17

W 2/27 Chopin, *The Awakening* Ch. 18-end

**Naturalism**

M 3/4 Wharton, "Souls Belated" (*FSbAW*)

W 3/6 Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895) Ch. 1-12

M 3/11 Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* Ch.13-24

W 3/13 London, *The Call of the Wild* (1903)

**March 18 to March 22: Spring Break**

M 3/25 Norris, *McTeague* (1899) Ch. 1-7

W 3/27 Norris, *McTeague* (1899) 8-15

M 4/1 Norris *McTeague* (1899) 16-End

**Realism and Naturalism in Action**

W 4/3 Adams, selections from *The Education of Henry Adams* (D2L)

M 4/8 Alger, *Ragged Dick* (1867)

W 4/10 Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861) (*FSbAW*)

M 4/15 Riis, selections from "How the Other Half Lives" (1890) (D2L)

W 4/17 Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892) (*FSbAW*)

Gilman, "Why I Wrote The Yellow Wallpaper" (D2L)

M 4/22 Washington, *Up From Slavery* (D2L)

W 4/24 DuBois, selections *Souls of the Black Folk* (1903)

M 4/29 Zitkala-Sa, *Impressions of an Indian Childhood*(D2L)

**"...This Same Flower That Smiles Today / Tomorrow Will Be Dying."**

W 5/1 Cather, *O Pioneers!* (1913) Parts I and II

M 5/6 Cather, *O Pioneers!* Parts III and IV

W 5/8 Modernism, 1922  
Cather, *One of Ours*  
Eliot, *The Waste Land*  
Joyce, *Ulysses*  
Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*

**Final Exam: Monday, May 13 from 3:15 to 5:15 in Heide 214**