Course Description: “A close study of American literature from 1945 to the present. The course will cover literary schools, schools of the period and major authors such as Salinger, Vonnegut, Ellison, Carver, Ginsberg, O’Connor, Morrison, Barth and Williams.”

For this semester, we will—to a certain degree—be centering our study around a theme: the American century. We will start the semester looking at Henry Luce’s famous essay that contributed to the “naming” the second half of the twentieth century as the American century. Then, we will move into a number of “units” of study. In each unit, we will be looking at literature that, in some way, responds to Luce’s ideas. For example, we will look at the idea of the suburb, race, war, rebellion, and reality, all in the context of how the literature of this past 73 years has participated in or complicated notions of the American century. Finally, we will end the semester on an extended study of one particular issue (in this case, an issue driven by an image). The overall goal of this study will be to introduce you to important names (some very well known, others less known) in the most recent decades of American literature. Each unit can be seen as a tip of the iceberg—in other words, we will be beginning conversations that go much deeper and get much larger.

As you can imagine, this will be an intensive, discussion based course. Our class discussions will center around primary texts and our avenue for discussing those texts will come from our own critical insights and those provided by secondary and tertiary source materials that we will read alongside certain authors. The expectation that I have is that students will stay on top of our readings and come to class not only having completed the readings for that period but with questions and points of discussion. While there will be periods and times when I lecture and introduce broader concepts, the greater amount of time will be spent in critical conversation with the class.

PLOs: As this course may be taken to fulfill a requirement within the English major, the following Program Learning Outcomes will be achieved:
1. The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of American literature.
4. The student will demonstrate ability to effectively conduct literary research.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

**Learning Outcomes:** Specifically, the above goals will be met through the more specific/class centered outcomes:

1) Students will be reintroduced to the concepts of American Modernism, but will focus more on the theoretical and literary aspects associated with post-WWII American Fiction.
2) Beyond being introduced to these writers, and the theory heavy school of Postmodern American fiction, students will display their ability to engage these complex ideas and still be able to analyze the works at hand, connect these works to their literary and cultural moment, and, finally, judge the success/failure of said works/theories. This will be accomplished through the completion of essay assignments.
3) Students will display their ability to conduct primary and secondary research through the completion of a seminar project. This research will require that students are able to make use of the library catalog and on-line indexes. Furthermore, it will be expected that these papers are clean of stigmatized errors, show correct use of MLA citation, and, finally, provide a coherent and original argument that is supported with developed literary analysis.

**Required Texts:**
Barth, John. *Lost in the Funhouse.*
Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*
Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*
Allen Ginsberg, *Howl and Other Poems*
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road*
Tim O’Brien, *The Things They Carried*
Chester Himes, *Rage in Harlem*
Don DeLillo, *Falling Man*

Finally, throughout the semester, I will supply students with copies of secondary readings and short works. It is expected that you do not lose these handouts, and that you bring these handouts to class so that we can refer to them throughout the semester. At times, these handouts
will be provided electronically and you will be expected to print them out or bring them to class on an electronic device (other than your phone).

**Grade Determination:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment Grades</th>
<th>Semester Grades</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A: 100-90</td>
<td>A: 500-445</td>
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<tr>
<td>B: 89-80</td>
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<td>C: 79-70</td>
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<td>F: 59-0</td>
<td>F: 295-0</td>
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**Major Course Assignments:**

*Short Essay One: Source Analysis*

During the first half of the semester, you will write a Source Analysis Paper. As you can see from the calendar and the attached list, I have broken the class into three groups. While I will assign secondary and tertiary readings to texts throughout the semester, I will assign one specific secondary/tertiary essay to each book that will serve as the basis for your source analysis. For this source analysis paper, each student in the assigned group will read this additional outside source and individually write an essay on this source. This essay will be a source analysis. The requirement is that you, first, summarize the overall argument being made by the critic and, second, develop an objective analysis of his/her argument. In this objective analysis you will analyze the thesis, point of support, use of resources, etc., and thus decide whether or not the author’s end argument is strong and well developed. This Source Analysis Paper will be due on the class period when we conclude our discussion of the primary text.

As I hope is clear, this is meant to be a clearly objective essay; you are not making your own argument over the primary text but are summarizing and evaluating the argument made by another. In working with this outside source, you should read the work several times, study the argument being made, and study how and when the author employs outside resources to support his/her and when s/he depends on a close reading of the text. After taking all this into consideration, you will develop your paper. First, summarize the overall argument, then provide your analysis (supporting your conclusions by clearly breaking down the critic’s construction of his/her own essay). This paper will be no more than four pages in length; you will include a fifth page that will be a Works Cited page. Finally, you will attach to your Source Analysis Paper the copy of the source that I provided; I am asking you to do this so I can follow along your reading and marking strategies.

*Short Essay Two: Critical Lens Paper*

During the second part of the semester, every student will complete his/her second short essay, the Lens Paper. In the case of the Lens Paper, we will begin the unit on Postmodernism and the unit on War Poetry with a tertiary source that sets up a cultural/historical/theoretical discussion of a particular type of writing (in our case, postmodern fiction and war literature). Then, each group will be assigned to write an essay on a particular text (two groups will be assigned to write on Barth’s *Lost in the Funhouse* and one group will be assigned to *The Things They Carried*).
Unlike with the Source Analysis Paper that will be completed at the end of our discussion of a particular text, the Lens Paper will be turned in at the start of our discussion of a particular primary text. In this paper, you will be responsible for using that tertiary source as the lens through which you read and interpret the set primary text. In the case of this paper, again unlike in the Source Analysis Paper, you will be making your own argument. The paper will be no more than four pages (again with a 5th page that is your Works Cited) in length and make use ONLY of the source that is provided in class.

Seminar Paper: At the end of the semester, every student will be required to turn in a seminar paper that is 7-9 pages in length. This paper will be due on Monday, April 16th. I will provide a list of guided topics on Friday, January 26th. You will then have 10 days to look over the topics, meet with me to ask questions, look into the texts/topics, and make an informed decision as to which topic you will choose. You must email which topic you have chosen by 5:00 PM on Monday, February 5th. Once you have chosen your topic and sent me the email, you cannot change topics. If I do not receive an email from you on February 5th, I will assign you one of the topics. Then, you will spend time throughout the semester reading the additional text, conducting your research, and outlining your argument. On Monday, April 2nd, every student will bring to class a developed outline of his/her paper. This outline should recognize your thesis and your supporting arguments. You will have 10 minutes to pitch your paper to your peer. Then, your peer will ask questions and offer suggestions. Next, on Friday, April 13th, every student will bring to class a 5 page draft of his/her paper; we will workshop papers in class. Finally, you will turn in the full seminar paper on Monday, April 16th.

As noted, this paper will be 7-9 pages in length. The 7-page minimum does not include the Works Cited. The paper will be formal and argumentative; you will have a clear thesis and your paper will make use of outside research. In completing this paper, you are required to make use of at least 5 academic sources beyond your primary text(s). You will make of MLA 8th edition for in-text citation and quoting and your Works Cited page. Overall, this paper will count twice; so, whatever grade you earn, it will be earned twice.

Final Exam:
This class will include a final exam. As you can see from the Course Calendar, different students will be completing essays on each unit except for the last two. As no student will be assigned to write on texts (primary, secondary, or tertiary) that we will read during our units on race and 9/11. As such, the final exam for this class will be short answer in format and you will be required to answer a series of questions that will focus on the texts and issues of these last two units.

Course Policies:
Attendance and Late Work:
While attendance may not be mandatory in all of your classes, I do hold to a strict attendance policy. As much of your success will depend on the deepening of your critical thinking and
writing skills, attendance is imperative. This being said, you will be allowed three absences without receiving any penalty. However, with four absences, your final grade may be no higher than a B; with five absences, your final grade may be no higher than a C; with six absences, you will fail the course.

As for late work, I do my best to return all work in a prompt manner. In order to do so, though, I must have all assignments turned in on time. This being said, any assignment that is turned in late will be dropped one full letter grade for each day that it is late. Also, any work that is turned in late will take longer for me to return. Assignments will be turned in at the start of class, and any student turning in the assignment more than fifteen minutes after the class has begun will incur the penalty of one day late.

The only absences that will count as excused absences will be DOCUMENTED family emergencies, university sanctioned events (this only includes sport/team events and will only count if I have documentation from the “coach”), and extreme medical issues. An excused absence does not include absences due to doctor appointments, absences due to cold/flu, absences for work, etc. In the case of any excused absence, you must remember that any work that is due that day is still due that day. The only exception for late work will be if the student has contacted me in advance and I have agreed to other arrangements.

*Academic Integrity (A-9.1):*
Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Stephen F. Austin State University defines academic dishonesty as:

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty**
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at: [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

In terms of this class, any student caught blatantly and purposely plagiarizing or cheating will automatically receive 0 points for the assignment. Furthermore, the incident may be reported.

*Free Speech and Class Conduct:*
In order to help improve our critical thinking and writing skills, we will regularly engage in class discussions. The purpose of these discussions will be to recognize that while many of the students in the class may be on the same level in terms of age or year, there are different abilities
in the classroom and different ways to look at an issue or piece of writing. In other words, one can always learn from his/her peers. In order for this to happen, we must respect one another. Therefore, while I will encourage students to share different opinions and will not stop individuals from disagreeing with one another, I will not allow any student to engage in the use of sexist, racist, or homophobic speech. Also, I will not allow any student to simply try to roll over or silence his/her peers.

**Acceptable Student Behavior**
Classroom behavior should not interfere with the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or the ability of other students to learn from the instructional program (see the Student Conduct Code, policy D-34.1). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students who disrupt the learning environment may be asked to leave class and may be subject to judicial, academic or other penalties. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including electronic, classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The instructor shall have full discretion over what behavior is appropriate/inappropriate in the classroom.

In the case of this course, disruptive behavior will include the following: consistent use of cell phones/texting during class, consistent participation in side discussions that are not part of classroom dialogue, consistent problems with attending class on time and thus interrupting class proceedings, referring to your teacher or peers in an inappropriate way, physically threatening your teacher or peers, and completing homework assignments for another class. Students participating in such activities can be asked to leave the class and will be counted as absent.

**Withheld Grades:**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.”
For the complete policy, http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/semester_grds.asp

**Students with Disabilities:**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building Room 325, 468-3004/468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices

**Homework and Written Assignments:**
During the semester, you will be expected to complete essays outside of the classroom environment. Each of these essays is to be typed, use 12-point font, and ONLY the essay should be double-spaced (DO NOT DOUBLE SPACE THE HEADER). The header of your essay must
include your name, my name, the date, and the class number.

In the case of certain essays, you will be expected to make use of outside resources. When writing your essay, you are to display correct citation of any and all sources that are used. This means, you are to recognize outside sources when either using direct quotes or summarizing the ideas of another. Furthermore, since you will show in-text citation, your essays must also include a Works Cited page.

Finally, each of your essays should be viewed as academic writing. As such, it should be written in the academic voice (avoid the use of the first person unless instructed otherwise, avoid contractions, colloquialisms, text speak, etc.), be clean of stigmatized errors, display a clear thesis/supporting paragraphs/conclusion, and recognize all sources. Essays that do not comply with such standards will be graded accordingly.