“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” William Butler Yeats

Instructor: Dr. Ken Untiedt, Professor, Interim Chair Department of English and Creative Writing
Office: LAN 204
Office Phone: 468-2319
Email: untiedtkl@sfasu.edu
Office Hours: T 9:00-10:00, W 9:00-10:00, or by appointment

Schedule:
This class is Section 001, and it meets Tuesday from 6:00 to 8:30 in Ferguson 292.

Telephone Partners:
Name 1: 
Phone: 
Email: 

Name 2: 
Phone: 
Email: 

Course Description:
Intensive Study of American literature from the Colonial period to the present, focusing on a theme, literary movement, period, or other unifying emphasis. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Program Learning Outcomes:

• Students will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately;
• Students 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. (Demonstration includes the student’s ability to add to meaningful discourse, in oral communication and written communication.);
• Students will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of American literature; students will further understand how human interactions, decisions, and actions carry with them consequences. (Knowledge of literary history entails competence in cultural considerations as well as an understanding of how social and civic responsibilities impact diverse communications.);
• Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively conduct literary research; and,
• Students will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

General Education Core Curriculum Objectives/Outcomes for Communication:
This is not a general education core curriculum course and no specific exemplary educational outcomes are addressed in this course.

Student Learning Outcomes:
The Academic Novel is a relatively new form of literature. Its primary audience—scholars—is rather limited. Soon, you will enter into a profession that is known not only for intellectual study and literary achievement, but also for politics, competition, love, betrayal, and even crime. In the world of ivory towers, some pretty dubious things take place. We will examine several novels to get an overview of the sometimes wild world of academe.
Credit Hour Justification:
“American Literary Topics” (3 credits) typically meets once a week for 150 minutes or twice a week for 75-minute sessions, for 15 weeks. The class also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students are expected to complete a significant amount of weekly reading of primary, secondary, and tertiary source material. The weekly reading will be accompanied by such assignments as in-class and out-of-class writings, independent research projects, class presentations, and teaching demonstrations. The amount of writing will average between 30-40 pages over the semester and will require substantial research. The required outside of class workload will average 9 hours per week.

Required Texts and Materials:
Willa Cather *The Professor’s House*  
Randall Jarrell *Pictures from an Institution: A Comedy*  
Amanda Cross *Death in a Tenured Position*  
Jane Smiley *Moo*  
Jon Hassler *The Dean’s List*  
Mary McCarthy *The Groves of Academe*  
Bernard Malamud *A New Life*  
Don Keith *The Forever Season*  
Richard Russo *Straight Man*  
Mitch Albom *Tuesdays With Morrie*  

Course Policies:
Attendance: This course will rely heavily on classroom discussion. Therefore, you are expected to attend each class and be on time, thus facilitating “informed discussion” and minimizing disruptions. Being tardy three times counts as one absence. You may be counted absent even if you attend class, if you: do not bring your book or other required assignments, or are otherwise disruptive to the classroom environment. After two unexcused absences, five percent of your final grade (50 points) will be deducted for each additional absence. Absences will be excused at my discretion, according to the University Policy and Procedures Manual (and only with adequate documentation). If you are absent, you are responsible for keeping up with the reading assignments, as well as determining what you missed (preferably, from your phone partners). If you miss an excessive amount of classes—or fail to turn in assignments—I may refer you to the Early Alert Program, which provides students with recommendations for resources or other assistance available to help SFA students succeed. For specific information regarding attendance and excused absences, see policy 6.7.

Masks (cloth face coverings) must be worn over the nose and mouth at all times in this class, and appropriate physical distancing must be observed. Students not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be asked to leave the class. All incidents of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing will be reported to the Office of Community Standards. Students who are reported for multiple infractions of not wearing a mask and/or not observing appropriate physical distancing may be subject to disciplinary actions.


I will not allow any disruptive behavior to interfere with my ability to teach or conduct class, or with the ability of your classmates to learn from the instructional program. Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated, and if you interfere with the learning environment I will insist that you leave the class; you will also be subject to judicial, academic, or other penalties. I have full discretion over what is considered unacceptable or inappropriate behavior, but a simple rule of thumb is to use common sense about language, attire, and showing respect and courtesy to others. At the very least, turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during the scheduled class time. If you repeatedly use your cell phone or other electronic devices improperly during class time, I will take the device until after the class. For further reference, see the Student Code of Conduct, policy 10.4.
Class meetings on Zoom (including video, audio, and chat text) will be recorded. Any behavior violations are subject to the Stephen F. Austin Student Code of Conduct. **Please note:** if you are not in the face-to-face classroom on a regularly scheduled class day, the only way to earn a participation grade is to login to Zoom during class and participate actively by following the guidelines below:

General Zoom Guidelines:

- Sign in using the Zoom link shared with you on the course announcement page. This is a recurring meeting that will be at the same time on the same days every week. You must use your full first name and last name as listed on the class roster. Do not use a nickname or other pseudonym when you log in. It makes it impossible to know who is in attendance. Users who do not provide their full names will NOT be admitted to class.
- Stay focused. Please stay engaged during all class activities. Close any apps on your device that are not relevant and turn off notifications. Don’t use this as a time to “check in and check out.” Rather, if you want to earn a participation grade for the Zoom class, turn on your video, mute the microphone unless called on or raise your hand (in the toolbar on the bottom of the screen when you have Zoom running) if you have something relevant to say or a question to ask.
- Turn on your video when possible. It is helpful to be able to see each other, just as in an in-person class. Pointing your camera at the ceiling is not helpful.
- Mute your microphone when you are not talking. This helps eliminate background noise.
- Use a headset when possible. If you own headphones with a microphone, please use them. This improves audio quality.
- Be in a quiet place when possible. Find a quiet, distraction-free spot to log in. Turn off any music, videos, etc. in the background.
- Stay on topic. Use the chat window for questions and comments that are relevant to class. The chat window is not a place for socializing or posting comments that distract from the course activities. If you fill it up with random comments, I will be unable to sort through the information quickly to address students' real questions/concerns about the course.
- No disrespect or hate speech. Just like in our in-person class, respectful behavior is expected. Don’t share anything you wouldn't put up on the projector in class. Consider Zoom a professional environment, and act like you're at a job interview, even when you're typing in the chat.

Grammar and Mechanics: This is a college English course, and your work must evidence college-level work. If I discover five (5) or more simple, unique, sentence-level grammatical and/or mechanical errors on a single page of any formal written assignment, I will draw a line across the paper and stop grading for such errors, and give the assignment a 50%. I will continue to read the assignment so that I can offer comments on content, organization, or basic structure, and I will return it to you with the opportunity to revise the work for an averaged grade.

An example is a 50 the first time (for an assignment worth 100 points), and a 90 for the revised work; the combined total is 140, and the averaged grade would be a 70. **However, if you revise the paper and I still must “draw the line,” I will lower the grade to a zero.** You will be given only two opportunities to revise work of that quality. Any subsequent assignments with five or more errors on a page will simply receive 50% with no opportunity for revision.

Difficulties: If you need critical advice on the writing assignments, or if you are having severe difficulty keeping up with the reading schedule, please contact me as soon as possible. I will provide individual tutoring (for this course) during my office hours to any student who asks for assistance. I am very understanding (and more considerate than most people assume), but you must make your individual concerns known to me.
Deadlines: Late papers can receive no higher than 70%. All reading assignments must be completed on time.

Academic Integrity: Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. In part, the following is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 4.1:

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.

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.

[Documented proof of cheating or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course.]

Course Requirements:
This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. You will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the assigned texts through critical analysis, expressed through informed discussion and written assignments. You will be required to lead discussion (a Student Instruction) once during the semester. This assignment will involve presenting significant facts related to one of the authors or texts. You will write ten Response Papers (one for each novel) on topics of your choosing. These papers will be no more than three pages each and will focus on authors, themes, characters, or some other relevant issue, using only the assigned texts as references and support.

You will write one research paper (10-12 pages); this paper (the Core Capstone Essay) will include criticism from secondary sources in addition to the primary texts, and it is expected to be analytical, interpretive, and articulate. You are encouraged to expand one of your Response Papers (or combine more than one) into the research paper, although the topic must be significantly developed in scope and content. You will also write an Abstract for the Core Capstone Essay, as well as an Annotated Bibliography. Specific instructions and examples for each of these assignments will be provided early in the course. All papers must adhere to correct MLA format, using 12 point font in Times New Roman. Papers will be graded for critical analysis and rhetorical soundness, as well as grammar and mechanics.

I have established a high standard for excellence in this course, and I expect you to meet that standard in order to excel academically. Your final grade is entirely up to you. This class should be fun, but you must take the assignments seriously—they are intended to challenge you and encourage you to think critically.

Grade Determination:
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Interaction</td>
<td>(150)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Response Papers (20 points each)</td>
<td>(200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Core Capstone Essay Abstract</td>
<td>(50)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Exam</td>
<td>(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>(100)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Instruction</td>
<td>(100)</td>
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<td>Core Capstone Essay</td>
<td>(200)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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Withheld Grades: The following information on Withheld Grades is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section A-54:

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.

Statement Regarding 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/.

Grading Rubric

These are the standards for an A:
Conception and Thesis: The main point is clearly stated, and it contains some new, perhaps surprising element, some angle that is uncommonly thoughtful and insightful. The writer is not simply restating other people’s ideas; he or she presents more critical analysis and commentary than an average intelligent person might. The explicit and implicit assumptions of the topic are exposed and challenged. If research is included, the sources have not merely been cited—they have been analyzed, using what supports the argument, and acknowledging and addressing what challenges it.
Organization: The organization flows smoothly. Opposition to the argument is addressed and worked through at the beginning, and the rest of the time is spent building a strong case, supported with evidence that moves from weaker points to stronger ones.
Style: The argument is not only clearly stated and supported well, but it is done in an impressive way. The language used is sophisticated but not unnecessarily showy. The presentation style matches the content of the paper, perhaps through a sustained metaphor, or a particularly apt example that is carried through the entire paper.
Format: The paper adheres to the standard format for that type of document (memo, business letter, proposal, etc.). If visuals are incorporated, they enhance the text and look professional. Documentation of sources adheres to some recognizable style guide (MLA, APA, Chicago, or an equivalent).
Grammar and Mechanics: The paper is relatively clean and free (3 or fewer) of grammatical and mechanical errors.

These are the standards for a B:
Conception and Thesis: The idea is better than average and is still clearly stated, but the writer may have overlooked, or not acknowledged or challenged the assumptions that inform it.
Organization: The organization is strong, but the signaling might be a bit clunky—there may be a lot of directional phrases used to force transition points (“As I said earlier...” “Firstly, secondly, thirdly...”).
Style: It’s clean and readable, there is a consistent sense of voice, and there aren’t any places where a reader has to go back and reread a sentence just to understand its structure.
Format: The paper adheres to the basic standards for that type of document. If visuals are incorporated, they are used for filler only, or do not look professional. There may be minor errors or inconsistencies in documentation mechanics.
Grammar and Mechanics: There are very few (5 or fewer) errors.
These are the standards for a C:

**Conception and Thesis:** The main idea for the paper shows that the writer understands the topic and has thought about it, but the argument is either overly simplistic or one that is commonly stated. The main point may be clearly stated and defended with appropriate evidence, but the analysis is not very deep.

**Organization:** The paper uses a simple “5 Paragraph Essay” approach, perhaps even having only five paragraphs—an introduction, three supporting points, and a conclusion which merely restates the introduction. Transitions between paragraphs are competently handled but do not “flow.”

**Style:** The style is simple, and there may be some word choice errors, especially where the writer uses “big” words incorrectly because he or she is trying to sound more impressive than necessary.

**Format:** Rules for that particular type of document are not closely followed: page numbers are missing or incorrect, margins are inconsistent, font size is too small or difficult to read, etc. Visuals look “cheap” or are badly integrated into the text. Sources are documented inconsistently or unclearly.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** The paper contains several distracting grammatical or mechanical errors, but they are repetitive (multiple comma splices) or are uncommon errors of a more complicated nature (and have not yet been discussed during the course).

These are the standards for a D:

**Conception and Thesis:** The main point of the paper is not clear at all, and very little evidence is used to support any kind of argument.

**Organization:** The focus shifts from one point to another, with little transition in between.

**Style:** The paper reads like a casual chat with friends, rather than a smart, academic paper.

**Format:** The document format is recognizable but clearly not correct. Visuals are not included when necessary, or they are not clear or otherwise inappropriate for the document. Documentation of sources does not adhere to a recognizable style guide.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** The paper contains multiple grammatical and mechanical errors (over 10), with consistent problems in sentence structure. There is little evidence of proofreading.

These are the standards for an F:

The writer fails to adequately fulfill the minimum requirements of the assignment: research or page requirements are not met, format is not correct, sources are inadequately documented, etc.

**Conception and Thesis:** No clear idea governs the words on the page.

**Organization:** No plan is evident, much less achieved.

**Style:** The paper contains many inappropriate or incorrect word choices, and does not read like a college-level paper.

**Format:** The basic format for that type of document is unrecognizable. There is no correct documentation of sources.

**Grammar and Mechanics:** There are multiple grammatical and mechanical errors on each page, as well as consistent problems in sentence structure. There is apparently no attempt at proofreading.

**Schedule:**

We will begin study of each work on the class date indicated, at which time the Response Paper for that novel will be due. All reading assignments must be done prior to the day we begin study of the work. Exams and major assignments are in **bold**. Student Instructions can be done during any of the assigned class periods related to the subject matter; they will be scheduled on an individual basis early in the semester.

For your Student Instruction, choose a topic on which you would like to do concentrated research, and be prepared to present at least a 15–20 minute lecture on that topic, leading classroom discussion with intelligent commentary during your assigned class period. Topics can include one of the listed authors or texts,
characters, plots or specific topics, movements or themes, or related topics that I approve. Consider how you might incorporate any of these topics in your Response Papers or Research Paper.

As you read each work, try to identify the underlying theme expressed by the author. What statement is being made? What is the overall purpose of the novel? This task—discovering the author’s motivation or goal—will be a major point of discussion for each novel.

Please note that our final class meeting, after the Thanksgiving break, will be via Zoom.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>08-25</td>
<td>Introduction to course, review of syllabus</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Background of higher education</td>
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<td>09-01</td>
<td>Review of syllabus</td>
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<td>Review of background of higher education</td>
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<tr>
<td>09-08</td>
<td>Willa Cather <em>The Professor’s House</em></td>
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<td>09-15</td>
<td>Mary McCarthy <em>The Groves of Academe</em></td>
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<td>09-29</td>
<td>Bernard Malamud <em>A New Life</em></td>
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<td>10-13</td>
<td><strong>The Mid-term</strong></td>
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<td>11-17</td>
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<td>11-24</td>
<td>Mitch Albom <em>Tuesdays with Morrie</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>12-01</td>
<td><strong>Core Capstone Essay due</strong></td>
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<td>Wrap-up</td>
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