ENGL 4321.001: 19th and 20th Century American Poetry  
Department of English and Creative Writing  
Tuesday and Thursday: 1230-1455  
Ferguson Room 183  
Fall 203

Instructor: Dr. Michael Martin  
Office: Liberal Arts North 212  

Office Hours:  
Monday: 830-10, 130-3  
Tuesday: 2-330  
Wednesday: 830-10, 130-3  
Thursday: 2-330  
Or by scheduled appointment

E-Mail: martinmj@sfasu.edu  
Phone: 936-468-2007

Catalog Description:  Advanced study and research in American literature, which may focus on particular periods, genres and/or authors.

Course Justification:  ENGL 4321 “Topics in American Literature” (3 credits) typically meets three times each week in 50-minute segments or twice each week in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students are expected to complete a significant amount of weekly reading of primary and secondary source material. The weekly reading will be accompanied by such assignments as in-class and out-of-class writings, class presentations, and research assignments. The amount of writing will average between 22-32 pages over the semester and will require substantial research. The required out-of-class work will average 6 hours per week.

Delivery Format: This class has been designated as a standard face-to-face course. However, during this semester, we will also be required to meet asynchronously (this is required out of class meetings) for a total of 150 minutes in order to comply with state and federal regulations on minimum contact hours in for-credit courses. This asynchronous class time will not include the standard out-of-class homework assignments, but will, instead, be in addition to that work. I
have done all that I can to make this as seamless and valuable as possible.

**Course Description:** This course will be an exploration of American poetry from the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. To a certain degree, our study will be chronological, but we will also be looking at how particular poets and movements are responding to past works and movements; how particular poets and movements are more focused on the “general” notion of poetry and art and are interested in pushing the form/genre forward; and how particular poets and movements are responding socially and culturally to the idea of America. While there will be “dictated” readings that carry us through the 19th and into the end of the 20th century, the final weeks of our study will be guided by class made decisions.

**Program Learning Outcomes:**

Objective 1: The student will demonstrate the ability to analyze works accurately through close reading.
Objective 2: The student will demonstrate the ability to conduct and apply effective textual research.
Objective 3: The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes.

**Required Texts:**
All of our texts will be made available in electronic form, mainly through OERs.

**Course Requirements:**
--Weekly Reading Journals: 10%
--Two Short Papers: 25%
--Seminar Project: 40%
--Final Exam: 25%

*Weekly Reading Journals:* Each week, you will be responsible to complete a reading journal that you will load into a D2L discussion board. These reading journals/discussion board posts must be around 300 words. In order to complete each journal, you must first head to the internet or library shelves and find a relatively “newish” poet—this means that the individual should be writing no earlier than, let’s say, 1995. Once you have found a poet, find a poem. Reproduce the poem for your class—you can copy and paste the poem into your post—and then write a response (again, looking for 300 words). These responses do not have to be academic in nature but can be more responsive. However, as the semester progresses and as we explore more poems and ideas and learn new terms, I will look for you to begin to make connections and employ terms. These postings will be due each Monday by 5:00 PM and will be averaged together and count as 10% of your final grade.

*Two Short Essays:* These essays will be academic in nature. During the semester, we will read a number of poets, and you will choose to write a short, 4-page analytic paper of two of these poets. These papers will not be due on the day we discuss the poet, but one week after we have
discussed the poet. The steps you will take: (1) You will come to class on a particular day and have decided that you would like to write a paper on that poet. So, you will turn in a typed/printed document that informs me that you would like to write on that poet. You will then have one week from that day to go home and write a critical four-page paper analyzing that poet and specifically chosen works. When writing this essay, you are required to make use of at least one ACADEMIC (this means database found) source. You cannot work backwards. For example, if you choose to write on Emily Dickinson (our first poet), you would have to let me know that decision on September 7th—the day that we discuss Dickinson. If you do not inform me on the 7th, you cannot make a decision later to write on Dickinson. Once you have informed me, you would have one week to complete your essay; so, your essay would be due on Thursday, Sept 14th. These essays will be averaged together and count for 25% of your final grade.

**Seminar Project:** See separate handout. This will count for 40% of your final grade.

**Final Exam:** We will have a cumulative final exam. This exam will be essay driven and will count for 25% of your final grade.

**General Grading Standard:**

**A:** 90-100: Students earning the grade of an A on any assignment will have completed work that obviously demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and fulfills all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of an A is reserved for that work which expertly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors.

**B:** 80-89: Students earning the grade of a B on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a more than average understanding of the course material and fulfills all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a B is reserved for that work which adeptly displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand, recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. However, the level of thought, while still above average, may fluctuate in terms of analytic abilities and expression.

**C:** 70-79: Students earning the grade of a C on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates an average understanding of the course material and fulfills all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a C is reserved for that work which displays one’s ability to engage the ideas at hand (more so through summary and response rather than analysis), recognize and dialogue about the complications of such ideas (however, the complications recognized will focus more on surface level issues rather than the greater whole), and translate such dialogue into clear, academic prose that is free of stigmatized errors. As can be seen from this description, the level of thought will be acceptable and display that a student has read the assignment, but his/her analytic abilities and level of expression will not be nearly as complicated nor developed. Instead, C work will display a student’s hold to traditional methods of expression (simpler construction of sentence and paragraph development) and a struggle to display complex, critical thinking skills.
D: 60-69: Students earning the grade of a D on any assignment will have completed work that demonstrates a below average understanding of course material and may not fulfill all aspects and requirements of the assignment. The grade of a D is reserved for that work which displays one’s struggle or refusal to engage the ideas at hand, simply summarizes the work under study with no actual recognition of or dialogue about the complications of such ideas, and the translation of ideas into writing is completed in such a convoluted manner that the audience will have difficulty following the conversation.

F: 0-59: Students earning the grade of a F on any assignment will either (a) not have completed the assignment, (b) will have completed the assignment but not followed the guidelines, or (c) will have completed the assignment and demonstrated a total misunderstanding of the course material. In this case, it will be obvious that the student has either not completed the required reading and/or given him/herself enough time to develop the work. The grade of a F is reserved for that work which does not engage the issues at hand, offers a base (not complete) summary of the work at hand with no critical engagement, and the translation of ideas into writing is either incomplete or the audience will be unable to follow the conversation. It is important to remember that a student can receive 0 out of 100 points. In the case that a student only partially completes an assignment (in terms of page length, but not purpose), s/he may receive 0 points.

Course Policies and Procedures:

Attendance and Late Work:
I have found, and studies have shown, that students who attend class and are regular participants in activities will show improvement in the areas of critical thinking and writing and thus are more likely to earn better grades. As such, I do hold to an attendance policy. This being said, you will be allowed four absences without penalty. An absence will be counted on any day that you are not in class.

If you miss more than four class meetings, your final grade may be impacted in the following manner: if you miss 5 class meetings, your final grade may be no higher than a C; if you miss 6 class periods, you may fail the course (this is three weeks of the course). Again, remember that while your final grade will not be directly penalized for any early absence, the fact that you have missed the exploration of certain essays and ideas may ultimately impact your understanding of course material and thus impact your own work. Also, if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get the notes missed from a peer or to meet with me during office hours. I will not “re-teach” an entire period to anyone through e-mail messages, nor will I run through an entire lecture or presentation during office hours. I will gladly help to clarify and explore ideas, but I will not re-teach an entire period.

As for late work, I do my best to return all work in a prompt manner. To do so, I must have all assignments turned in on time. This being said, any assignment that is turned in late will be dropped 5 points for each day that it is late. Assignments will be turned in at the start of class. An assignment will be considered late if it is turned in more than 15 minutes after class has begun. As you will know of due dates in advance, I will not accept such excuses as my printer broke, the library printer did not work, something happened to my computer, etc. Plan ahead!

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, personal illness (a cold, the flu, etc.), 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 unless you have contacted me in advance and I have agreed to other arrangements.

Academic Integrity:

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

Chat GPT/AI Programs:
What is the rule on Chat GPT or another AI program for this course?

I understand that CHAT GPT can be used as a sort of tutor to help break down complex readings and ideas, and thus use of the program for tutorial purposes to help prepare you for class MAY be acceptable, ONLY if you acknowledge said use to myself and peers. However, in terms of your written assignments, all formal writing assignments will be centered on your own interactions with the poems—whether these are confusing or not—and thus use of CHAT GPT or other AI program is not allowed when completing formal written assignments (specifically your two outside papers).

Cell Phones:
Unless instructed otherwise, all cell phones will be put up in your bag at the start of class. They will remain there for the period unless you are instructed otherwise. Please, remember, we are adults and I SHOULD NOT need to keep reminding you to put a phone away.

Class Discussion and Class Conduct:
In order to help improve our critical thinking and writing skills, we will regularly engage in class discussions and writings. The purpose of such work will be to recognize that while many of the students in the class may be similar in terms of age or year, there are different academic 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, students should come to class ready to engage in discussion and debate. Our goal is not to “win” an argument or roll over our peers, but to critically engage the texts and our own responses to these texts. This is a space where one must feel comfortable to express his/her ideas and be willing to question those same ideas. During any discussion, I will encourage debate, but I will not allow any student to employ sexist, racist, or homophobic speech, to commit a threatening action toward any peer, or to purposely work to silence or roll over peer.

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 10.4). Unacceptable or disruptive behavior will not be tolerated.

In the case of this course, disruptive behavior will include the following: consistent use of cell phones/texting during class, consistent side discussions that are not part of classroom dialogue, referring to your teacher or peers in an inappropriate way, physically threatening your teacher or peers, and/or 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.”

Student Wellness and Well-Being

SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

On-campus Resources:
The Dean of Students Office (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby) www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic Human Services, Room 202
www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

The Health and Wellness Hub “The Hub” Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body, and spirit. Services include:

• Health Services
• Counseling Services
• Student Outreach and Support
• Food Pantry
• Wellness Coaching
• Alcohol and Other Drug Education
Crisis Resources:

- Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
- National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255) • johCrisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741