English 5330: Major Authors (Cormac McCarthy)
Spring 2024

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

Instructor: Dr. Ken Untiedt, Professor
Department: Department of English and Creative Writing
Office: LAN 256
Office Phone: 468-5759
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Office Hours: M 10:00-12:00, T 1:00-2:00, W 10:00-12:00, Th 1:00-2:00, or by appointment

Schedule:
This class is Section 002, and it meets Tuesday from 6:00 to 8:30 via Zoom.

Telephone Partners:
Name 1:		Phone:		Email:
Name 2:		Phone:		Email:

Course Description:
Intensive study of the writings, life, and cultural context of major writers. May be repeated for credit with different topic.

Program Learning Outcomes:

- Critical Analysis: Students will demonstrate the ability to apply critical and/or creative theories and methods in the analysis of primary works and in their own original work.
- Research: Students will demonstrate the ability to effectively design and conduct comprehensive discipline-specific research.
- Writing: Students will demonstrate the ability to plan and write sophisticated and discipline-specific documents using clear and appropriate stylistic and syntactic conventions.

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.

Credit Hour Justification:
ENGL 5330 “Major Authors” (3 credits) typically meets once every week in 150-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination or seminar presentation. Students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments of primary, secondary, and tertiary materials. Completion and comprehension of the readings is assessed regularly through seminar style discussions, informal presentations, and a series of writing assignments, including response papers, critical summaries, and literature reviews. Students are required to conduct a significant literary research project, which typically includes a research plan, a major class presentation in which they contextualize their research within critical and cultural conversations, and a final research paper of 16-18 pages. Formal written work over the course of the semester ranges from 30-35 pages. These activities average at a minimum 10-12 hours of work each week to prepare outside of classroom hours.
Student Learning Outcomes:
Cormac McCarthy wrote only twelve novels, and he did little to promote any of them. However, he has gained much attention for his works—both good and bad; readers generally either love him or hate him. Why do some critics compare him to William Faulkner, Joseph Conrad, and even William Shakespeare? Why do others consider his work to be unreadable trash? Students will read ten of McCarthy’s novels and examine how he depicts an American landscape that is stark and oftentimes brutally violent, and consider how his style has evolved into one unlike any other American writer.

Required Texts and Materials:
*The Orchard Keeper*  
*Outer Dark*  
*Child of God*  
*Suttree*  
*Blood Meridian, or the Evening Redness in the West*  
*All the Pretty Horses*  
*The Crossing*  
*Cities of the Plain*  
*No Country for Old Men*  
*The Road*


Course Policies:
Attendance and Behavior: You are expected to be on time, thus minimizing disruptions, repeated instructions, and missed assignments. Being tardy three times counts as one absence. You may be counted absent even if you attend class, if you: do not bring your textbook or other required assignments, use electronic devices inappropriately, 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 (with adequate documentation), according to the University Policy and Procedures Manual. If you are absent, you are responsible for determining what you missed (preferably, from your phone partners). If you miss an excessive number 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 02-102.

If you cannot attend class due to illness or another exigent circumstance, I will make a Zoom link available so that you may attend class remotely—if you provide documentation showing the reason you are unable to attend in person. You must notify me via email in advance so that I can send you the link, and you must participate adequately (contributing to class discussion, with your camera on, etc.) for your attendance to count.

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 04-106.

Students wearing earbuds or headphones during class will be counted absent.
**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 day 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 headphone 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.

- 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. You will not be allowed to revise the Core Capstone Essay.

**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.
The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity (Policy 04-106) 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.

[Documented proof of cheating or plagiarism will be reported, according to policy.]

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, and they must be submitted via d2l. Papers will be graded for critical analysis and rhetorical soundness, as well as grammar and mechanics, according to the rubric.
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. This is a reading- and writing-intensive course. You must be diligent in completing the reading assignments on time. You will not only read great works of literature, but you will also be expected to demonstrate an understanding of those works through your own critical analysis, expressed by “informed discussion” and in writing. You will write analytical, interpretive, and articulate essays about your reactions to the texts and discussions, in the form of two Response Papers (3-5 pages each) on topics of your choosing. These papers will focus on genres, authors, themes, or movements we have covered, using the assigned text for references and support.

Your papers should reflect your thoughts, not those entirely of others. Relying on AI (such as ChatGPT) to write any of your papers may be considered plagiarism (see Policy 04-106 below).

To meet State requirements, this course must include instructional time that is delivered asynchronously. Examples of asynchronous instruction may include (but are not limited to): written content, video content, discussions, case studies, synthesis exercises, reflection activities, peer review, and skills practice. Periodically, you will be required to respond to a chosen reading in a Discussion Board on d2l. There will be three such discussions, each expected to require at least 50 minutes of reading and response time, thus equaling a total of 150 minutes of asynchronous instruction time for the semester.

**Grade Determination:**

- Classroom Interaction (Challenge Questions, Participation in Informed Discussion, etc.) (150)
- Ten Response Papers (20 points each) (200)
- Core Capstone Essay Abstract (50)
- Mid-term Exam (100)
- Annotated Bibliography (100)
- Student Instruction (100)
- Core Capstone Essay (200)
- Final Exam (100)
- Total (1000)

**Withheld Grades:** The following information on Withheld Grades is taken from the University Policy and Procedures Manual (online), Section 02-206:

At the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic unit head, 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 by the deadline set by the instructor of record, not to exceed one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F, except as allowed through policy [i.e., Military Service Activation (6.14)]. If students register for the same course in future semesters, the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

If a student has been found guilty of academic dishonesty, a grade of “WP” or “WH” may be changed to “WF” at the discretion of the faculty member. In the case of a grade change to “WF”, the course will not count towards the six course drop limit since the student is incurring an academic penalty.

**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.

**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 promptly may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

SFASU values students’ 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 and 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](http://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](http://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

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

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

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 listed novel; 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 structure of the novel, 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 McCarthy. What statement is being made? What is the overall purpose of the novel? This task—discovering his motivation or goal—will be a major point of discussion for each novel.

01-18  Introduction to course, review of syllabus
        Background on Cormac McCarthy

01-25  Review of Syllabus, Assignment Prompts
        Continued background on McCarthy

02-01  The Orchard Keeper

02-08  Outer Dark

02-15  Child of God

02-22  Suttree

02-29  The Mid-term

03-07  Blood Meridian

03-14  Spring Break

03-21  Core Capstone Essay Abstract due
       All the Pretty Horses
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<td>03-28</td>
<td>No class: University holiday</td>
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<td>04-04</td>
<td><strong>Annotated Bibliography due</strong></td>
<td><em>The Crossing</em></td>
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<td>05-02</td>
<td><strong>Core Capstone Essay due</strong></td>
<td><em>Wrap-up</em></td>
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