

ENGLISH 200: LITERARY STUDIES--INNOCENCE AND EXPERIENCE

Professor Byrne, fall 2009, section EV. MW 6:30-7:45 p.m.

In the late-18th century at the beginning of the Romantic period, William Blake divided individuals' existence into two categories, "Innocence" and "Experience," contrasting the two states of the human spirit. At the same time, the American Revolution gave birth to a new nation, and much of the young country's social or political history similarly can be seen as a journey from innocence to experience. This course will help develop an understanding of how the significant transitions from innocence to experience by individual characters or by the society of the United States and its institutions have been evident in American literature written during the past two centuries. Reading Assignments: Students will investigate various works (poems, short stories, a play, and a novel) available in the class anthology and commentary found on the Internet. Authors whose writings may be examined include the following: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, Robert Hayden, Flannery O'Connor, Theodore Roethke, Ralph Ellison, Arthur Miller, Elizabeth Bishop, William Stafford, John Updike, Joyce Carol Oates, Raymond Carver, Rita Dove, Gary Gildner, Yusef Komunyakaa, T.C. Boyle, Daisy Fried, and Patricia Smith. Written Assignments: Course requirements include a brief essay, a term paper, midterm and final exams, as well as regular participation on the class discussion board.

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