

ENGL 402: AMERICAN LITERATURE 2

Cr. 3

Feaster:

How is what Americans think about their nation related to the way that nation is represented in the various forms of literature? To what extent do those representations not simply reflect reality but shape, organize, perhaps even limit, our perceptions of that reality? In what ways have literary works in some cases served to construct an ideal American cultural mythos and in other cases functioned as the main avenue of cultural critique? These and other related questions of a more purely literary nature will organize our survey of American literature written from about the end of the Civil War. Students will write several short papers on assigned topics and take a mid-term and a final examination.

Uehling:

This course will focus on close readings of major American writers from the Civil War to the present. Beginning with the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson, we will also study the works of such figures as Twain, James, Wharton, Chopin, Frost, Hemingway, Faulkner, Welty, O'Connor, Baldwin, W.C. Williams, Stevens, Brooks, T. Williams, O'Neill, Cheever, and Updike. Special attention will be given to works by women and minorities. The historical and cultural context of these writers will be provided by lecture and oral reports; however, the themes and styles of their literature will be the primary focus of our discussions.

Beyond an oral report, students should expect two unit exams and a comprehensive final exam. Students will write two relatively compact critical essays of five to seven pages.

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