

English 334: Literature and Film
American Literature and Film, “The 1940s”
Spring, 2008

Instructor: Ralph Pease, Professor of English
Office: Evans 414
Telephone: 294-1436
Office Hours: to be announced

Course Objectives:

I have three objectives: First, I hope to establish a relationship between the printed page and the moving picture—how they are similar and how they differ, how each is an art form distinctive from other art forms. Second, I hope to establish an awareness among my students that both mediums require carefully-crafted work by artists who are deliberate and exacting in their use of technique, characterization, and situation. Third, in this particular course of study I hope to acquaint my students with some of the artistic attitudes and themes prevalent in the United States between the years 1932-1952 when the people of the United States, just emerging from an economic depression which threatened to rob the economy and the government of their stability and the people of their optimism, were suddenly forced into a great world war. Although protected on the east and west coasts by two large oceans, the United States had to fight battles on practically every continent against clever, disciplined enemies. But American citizens were able to gather themselves together with a sense of nationalistic pride and resourcefulness and create a unified citizenry which, under the brilliant leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, would make the United States the greatest industrial and military power in the world. Perhaps Tom Brokaw was right when he called those who overcame both terrible depression and an even worse war “The Greatest Generation” of Americans.

Teacher’s Responsibilities:

It is my responsibility to choose appropriate readings and film selections; to comment upon the significance of the content and style of those selections; to clarify, as best as I am able, the intent of the artists and the relevance of their work to their age as well as to our own; to integrate the selections into a unified study of American literature and film of this time period; and to evaluate, through examinations and papers, should they be assigned, the academic proficiency of students in this course.

Student’s Responsibilities:

You are expected to attend classes diligently; to read assigned selections prior to their discussion in class; to think about what is being studied, viewed, and discussed and to evaluate its relevance to the objectives of this course; and to meet minimum academic standards on your examinations and written assignments.

Absences:

Your presence in class, while no guarantee of success, does indicate to me your interest in the course. I don't like for students to be absent for two more reasons: (a) generally speaking, those who miss the most classes are those who need the most help. The relationship between absence and failure is rather remarkable, at least in my classes, and you should keep that in mind. (b) Absences create additional work for me and I don't need any additional work. Therefore, I will not give a passing grade to any student who misses more than four class periods except under the most extraordinary circumstances.

Entering Late and Leaving Early:

Generally speaking, attendance will be taken at the first of the class period. If you enter after attendance has been taken, you must notify me of that fact in writing at the end of the class period. If you must leave early, you must notify me of that fact in writing at the first of the class period. The notification should include: 1) your name; 2) the course number and section; 3) the date; 4) the time you entered or intend to leave. No reason for being late or leaving early is necessary. Any combination of three (leaving early twice and entering late once, etc.) will constitute a class absence.

Examinations:

There will be no less than two and no more than six examinations, each of equal weight. These examinations will include a number of "objective" questions (such as identification of authors, directors, titles, background information, quotations, etc.) so you must memorize some information to do well. There may also be "short answer" and "essay" questions on these examinations. Examinations will be scored numerically; the numerical average of these examinations will constitute your semester grade. There will be no statistical adjustment (i.e. "curve") applied to examination scores. You will be given an opportunity to see all examinations in class after they are graded, but I will keep all examinations. I will announce the high, medium, and low grades of each examination so you can evaluate your progress in the class. There may be one outside paper in this class.

In addition to outside reading, you will be responsible for all materials, lectures, handouts and films covered during the regularly scheduled class periods. If you miss the screening of a film, you must collect any materials distributed and arrange to see the film on your own. Note: Final examinations will include essay questions over the films and discussions you have missed.

A very important note:

I do not like for students to be absent on a scheduled examination date and discourage such practices two ways: First, all make-up examinations will be taken at a time and place designated solely by me. Second, the make-up examination will be adjusted to allow for the extra time which the student has had; in other words, it will be more thorough than the first examination and will include an essay section. If you must miss an examination, notify me before the scheduled time by leaving a message at 294-1403. Failure to show up for an examination without prior notice will result in a grade of "F" on the examination.

Semester Grading Scale (by semester average):

91-100	A
81-90	B
71-80	C
65-70	D
Below 65	F

Movie Manners:

Watching a motion-picture in a classroom setting is not like watching television at home. I expect – and will demand – that students watch carefully, “studying” the film as they would a novel; that they avoid talking during the film; that they stay alert through the entire screening of the film; and that they are prepared to make relevant and interesting comments at the conclusion of the film should time allow.

If you must leave the room during a film, please press in slowly on the handle when leaving and re-entering. It is quite possible to leave or enter this room without making much noise. Remember to be courteous to those who are trying to watch the film with the careful attention required for its academic study.

Plagiarism and Other Forms of Cheating:

Any student who turns in work which is written by another student, copied from another student’s work, or plagiarized from another source, will receive a semester grade of “F” in the course. Please note: I will not pass any student in this class who fails to meet my minimum standards for written English.

Pease’s Final, Dogmatic House Rules:

No use of tobacco in class; no sleeping in class; no talking during lecture, during the viewing of films or during class discussion; excessive tardiness or early departures will be counted as hours absent (see above); all written work submitted for a grade must be done in dark ink or typed. Those opposed to any of these rules should not take this course. As discussed in the first two class meetings, the class time for Thursday is 2-4:50 p.m. Do not take this course if you cannot stay until 4:50 p.m. on Thursdays. Those who leave early will be penalized (see above); those who leave early repeatedly will be given a semester grade of “F”.

Assigned Readings:

The Moon is Down – John Steinbeck

Slaughterhouse Five – Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

Intruder in the Dust – William Faulkner

The Catcher in the Rye – J.D. Salinger

There may be, at times, the elimination of a previously scheduled work or the addition of short articles or stories or commentaries that will be distributed. Students are responsible for insuring that they get a copy of any materials distributed when they were absent.