

COURSE SYLLABUS: Spring 2008  
English 484W: Studies in the American Novel: 3 credit hours

**MEETING LOCATION:** Evans Room #351

**MEETING TIMES:** Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 10:00-10:50am.

**PROFESSOR:** Dr. Linda Byrd Cook

**OFFICE LOCATION:** Evans 412

**PROFESSOR CONTACT INFORMATION:** Tel. # and Voice Mail: 294-1425  
E-mail: LindaCook@shsu.edu  
Eng. Dept. Fax #: 936/294-1408

**OFFICE HOURS:** MW: 8:00-9:00am.; 12:00-2:00pm.  
F: 8:00-9:00am.  
Others by appt. only

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will focus on the various forms and styles of the genre of the American Novel. We will cover a variety of topics and figures as we move chronologically from novels of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century to more contemporary works of the 20<sup>th</sup>. The hundred years of the American novel (1890s to 1990s) will be viewed as the crucial period, from the beginnings of modernism to the fading of postmodernism. American novels studied in this course attempt to construct a tradition, change the canon, define or obliterate the rules of genre, and imagine a past and cope with it.

Prerequisite: 15 hours of English

Class will be conducted primarily as a combination of lecture and class/group discussion. Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions and in small group discussion and presentation.

A detailed course calendar, announcing class assignments, activities, due dates, and reminders, will be distributed every four weeks. Dr. Cook reserves the right to make changes to this calendar at any time during the semester. These will be announced during class.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- \*\*\*Learn to *analyze and critically evaluate* ideas, arguments, and points of view
- \*\*Gain a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (music, science, *literature*, etc.)
- \*\*Gain factual knowledge (terminology, classification, methods, trends)

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** \*It is the student's responsibility to obtain the following texts at the beginning of the semester.\*\*

*Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Mark Twain

*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

*The Sound and the Fury* by William Faulkner

*Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

*Beloved* by Toni Morrison

*Ellen Foster* by Kaye Gibbons

*Packet for English 484W--Dr. Cook* from **Copy Time (Eagle Graphics)**: 1312 Sam Houston Ave.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** The university stresses the importance of punctuality and regular attendance. All students are expected to attend every class, and attendance will definitely be taken into consideration in final computation of a student's course grade. Attendance will be recorded each class day, so a student must notify the professor of a legitimate absence BEFORE class time on that day (via e-mail or phone message). With appropriate prior notification of a student's absence, the professor will work with the student to make up any missed work. A student who misses more than THREE classes during the semester is in danger of **failing the course**.

<b>GRADE DETERMINATION:</b>	Exam #1	20%	<b>GRADING SCALE:</b> 90-100=A	
	Exam #2	20%		80-89 =B
	Term Paper	30%		70-79 =C
	Final Exam	20%		60-69 =D
	Average of daily grades	10%		59 or below=F

All exams, term papers, and daily work will be returned to the student within a reasonable amount of time.

There will be **NO extra** credit offered in this course.

**EXAMS:** There will be 2 one-hour exams and a final two-hour exam. The first exam will be totally subjective (short answer and/or essay) and completed IN CLASS only. The second exam and the final exam will be 50% subjective and 50% objective (true/false, matching, multiple choice, etc.). The subjective portions will be completed outside of class and must be neatly typed (double-spaced).

A student must notify the professor of a **legitimate** absence, i.e., emergency, BEFORE class time on exam day (via e-mail or phone message). With appropriate **prior** notification of a student's absence, the professor will work with the student to make up the missed exam.

**TERM PAPER:** You will choose a paper topic from the list provided in your course packet and write a 9-12 page fully developed, insightful, critical analysis (text must be a minimum of 9 pp. w/o Works Cited page) using at least **five secondary sources** and carefully following **MLA format** for documentation and Works Cited page. The paper **must** be neatly typed and error-free and should comply with all **MLA guidelines** for spacing, etc. See information provided in the packet. Once you choose a topic, you should immediately notify the professor as only one student per topic will be allowed. ***Do NOT put this off until the week before the paper is due!*** This project will require much time, dedication, and preparation outside class. Students will be given at least two class days to work independently on their term papers. I expect an insightful discussion, so choose something that interests you. This paper will count 30% of your final grade for the course.

**TURN-IT-IN.COM:** All out-of-class essays and TERM PAPER will be submitted to Dr. Cook in hard copy and also through this site. Instructions will be provided in class.

**DAILY GRADES:** These grades may consist of quizzes (both announced and unannounced), questions over reading assignments and/or lecture notes, and credit for class preparation and participation. Any student who has all his/her daily grades at the end of the semester may drop his/her lowest grade. No grade will be dropped for anyone who misses a daily grade without notifying the professor ahead of time. (See ATTENDANCE POLICY above.) A student may only miss 2 daily quizzes without being penalized.

**WRITING-ENHANCED CREDIT:** This course is designated writing-enhanced. According to Sam Houston State University, you must take at least six courses that carry the designation writing-enhanced. The official definition of a writing-enhanced course is one in which 50% or more of the grade is based on written assignments. In this course, more than 50% of your semester grade is based directly on your writing.

**SHSU WRITING CENTER:** Sam Houston State University Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open daily. Specific hours will be announced and posted on Dr. Cook's office door. Writing tutors will work with you one-on-one to help you generate a draft, organize a draft, or revise a draft of any assignment. You can just drop by to work with a tutor or call 936/294-3680 to schedule an appointment.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** All students are expected to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and

integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action. The University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.

**PLAGIARISM:**

Plagiarism is defined as identifying someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. This can range from submitting a paper written by someone else as if it were your own work, to copying words or sentences from someone else without putting them in quotation marks and properly citing the source. Plagiarism can also mean using someone else's ideas without acknowledging that person as the source. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic and legal offense in our culture. Penalties for plagiarism can range from a failing grade on the assignment to expulsion from the university. The course instructor can determine the penalties of failure for the assignment to failure of the course. The university disciplinary committee determines penalties of suspension or expulsion.

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT:**

Requests for accommodations must be initiated by the student. It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. They should then make arrangements with their individual instructors so that appropriate strategies can be considered and helpful procedures can be developed to ensure that participation and achievement opportunities are not impaired.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that may affect adversely his/her work in this class, then the student is encouraged to register with the SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with the instructor about how best to deal with the situation. All disclosures of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. NOTE: no accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.

**RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS:**

Section 51.911(b) of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher learning excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. "Religious holy day" means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

**VISITORS IN THE CLASSROOM:**

Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted into the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom.

**INSTRUCTOR EVALUATIONS:**

All students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

**CLASSROOM RULES OF CONDUCT:** Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the University.

1. **Cellular telephones and pagers** must be turned off before class begins.
2. Students are prohibited from using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking in inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction.
3. Absolutely **NO LAPTOP computers** will be allowed in class.
4. Students should bring appropriate materials to class every day. The course packet and textbook or paperback novel should be with you at **every** class meeting.
5. Drinks (nonalcoholic) may be consumed during class. Snacking is also allowed if it does not distract other students or the professor.
6. Except in the rare case of an absolute emergency, leaving the classroom during class time is considered rude and inappropriate and will not be tolerated. Only when the professor dismisses class should students leave the room. In a special situation where a student needs to leave early on a particular day, he/she should discuss the matter with the professor **BEFORE** class.
7. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in a directive to leave class. Students who are especially disruptive also may be reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

**COURSE OUTLINE: GENERAL TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR SEMESTER'S ACTIVITIES**  
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A detailed course calendar, announcing class assignments, activities, due dates, and reminders, will be distributed every four weeks. Dr. Cook reserves the right to make changes to this calendar at any time during the semester. These will be announced during class.

Weeks 1-4: Intro. to course  
Jan 16-Feb 8 Mark Twain: *Pudd'nhead Wilson*  
Kate Chopin: *The Awakening*  
F.Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Weeks 5-8: Complete Fitzgerald  
Feb 11-Mar 7 EXAM #1: **Friday, Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury*

**\*\*SPRING BREAK: March 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>\*\***

Weeks 9-12: Complete Faulkner  
March 17-Apr 11 Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*  
EXAM #2: **Friday, April 11<sup>th</sup>**

Weeks 13-17: Toni Morrison: *Beloved*  
April 14-May 15 Kaye Gibbons: *Ellen Foster*  
TERM PAPER DUE: **Monday, May 5<sup>th</sup>**

**\*\*FINAL EXAMS: May 12<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>\*\***

**FINAL EXAM for this class: MONDAY, MAY 12<sup>th</sup>: 11:00am.-1:00pm.**

