



ENGL 2410

Division: Humanities

Department: English

Course: ENGL 2410

Title: Western American Literature

Catalog Description:

This course is a regional study of literature of the American West. Areas of emphasis include Native Americans, the mountain man, the settlers, the cowboy myth hero, and the American frontier.

General Education Requirements: Humanities

Semesters Offered: TBA

Credit/Time Requirement: Credit: 3; Lecture: 3; Lab: 0

Clock/Hour Requirements: 0

Offered for Non-Credit: No

Prerequisites: None

Corequisites: None

Justification:

English 2410 allows students to read, discuss, and write about literature written about the region west of the Mississippi River. The idea of the American frontier as a unique influence on the character of individuals, on a sense of community, and on exploitation of the land in the past and in contemporary times is explored. Literary texts are placed in a historical context and viewed as a way of coming to a better understanding of self through universal themes expressed in a regional context.

This course offers a General Education opportunity to students who are not attracted to the traditional canon of literature written in English.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Students will know representative authors, works, and themes of Western American literature.

Students will be able to discuss representative works in Western American literature in historical and thematic contexts.

Students will believe that western American literature is an important aspect of contemporary and traditional culture.

Content:

English 2410 covers a historically representative selection of the best of the genre, including whole works or excerpts by 6-10 of the following authors:

Owen Wister. *The Virginian*.

A.B. Guthrie. *The Big Sky*.

James Welch. *Fools Crow*.

Wallace Stegner. *Collected Short Stories*.

Frank Waters. *The Man Who Killed the Deer*.

Cormac McCarthy. *All the Pretty Horses*.

Oliver La Farge. *Laughing Boy*.

Conrad Richter. *The Sea of Grass*.

N. Scott Momaday. *House Made of Dawn*.

Willa Cather. *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.

Zane Grey. *Riders of the Purple Sage*.

Leslie Marmon Silko. *Ceremony*.

Tony Hillerman. *Sacred Clowns*.

Norman Maclean. *A River Runs Through It*.

General Education Outcomes:

1) Read effectively, constructively, and critically.

Students read a variety of primary texts and are quizzed on their basic content. Discussion questions are designed to elicit more constructive and critical responses (e.g., "Why do you suppose the author chose to say it this way instead of that way?" "Does this text have anything to say about problems we face today?")

2) Write clearly, informatively, and persuasively.

Students will write on a regular basis demonstrating the validity of various theses in various writing assignments. Written assignments will be returned with suggestions for improving the student's writing skills.

5) Apply a cultural and historical awareness to a variety of phenomena.

Quizzes, writing assignments, examinations, special projects, and class discussions will ask students to consider the readings in a variety of contexts. E.g., *The Virginian* (1902) can be discussed as the prototype for the American western romance novel. *The Big Sky* (1947) can be discussed as an internal and external conflict between frontier and civilization. *The Man Who Killed the Deer* (1942) can be discussed as a portrayal of the Native American struggle for identity in modern times.

9) Respond with informed sensitivity to an artistic work or experience.

An important goal of this course is to foster an appreciation of Western American literature. Students will be able to recognize common themes, literary devices employed by an author, and beauty in language.

Key Performance Indicators:

Regular content quizzes: 20%-30% of the final grade

Exams: 25%-35% of the final grade

Writing assignments: 30%-40% of the final grade

Representative Text and/or Supplies:

See Content above.

Optimum Class Size: 20

Maximum Class Size: 30

Signatures:

I hereby submit this course syllabus:

Ron Lamb, MS, Assistant Professor

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the English Department:

Melanie Jenkins, MA, Associate Professor, Chair

I hereby find this course consistent with the goals and resources of the Humanities Division:

Sheryl James Bodrero, PhD, Associate Professor, Dean

I have discussed the need for library resources related to this class with the person submitting the syllabus:

Lynn Anderson, MLIS, Technical Services Librarian (Main Campus)

Michelle Olsen, MLS, Campus Librarian (Richfield Campus)