TEXT: *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, shorter 5th Ed. Each of you is to have your own copy of the text and to bring it with you to every class.

Note the timelines in the text, and plan on regular visits to the website for the text at www.wwnorton.com/naal

APPROACH: Informal lecture, discussion, group work.

CONTENT: A study of major American literary works and authors concentrated mainly from the 1850s to the 1920s. We may go outside of that basic frame if time permits or interest directs. We will read and discuss a variety of works in poetry, fiction, and autobiography from that time period. The intent of the course is to introduce students to some major figures in the American cultural heritage as well as some major literary movements, and to learn some basic strategies for interpreting literary texts. An additional though probably subordinate aim will be to understand the notion of the literary canon and explore how gender, race, class, and power relations have affected the construction and revision of that canon.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS: 1) A Response Journal (more on this below) and 2) a group presentation. The journal is worth 300 points; the presentation is worth 100. I will assign the group presentations fairly soon and will provide a set of guidelines. Total points for the class = 400.

RESPONSE JOURNAL: Each Tuesday, beginning w/ week 2, you will have a typed journal entry to turn in. Each entry should be no shorter than one full single-spaced page, and it should be written with the understanding that the writing is primarily for learning rather than reporting or summarizing. I will give you a handout on the traits of such writing in the next day or so. Until that time, think about your first journal entry as an opportunity to raise questions, shape understanding, explore, and make personal connections. I will look at these entries each week as they come in, and return them quickly with a grade. You are to keep all of them in a folder which you will submit at the end of the term. I will assign a grade to the assembled collection of entries. The final entry (#10) will be a retrospective response in which you will have a chance to reflect on the learning experience during your ten weeks in HU 202. More on the retrospective as we approach the end of the term. It is crucial that you meet the deadline established for each of the entries. Entries submitted later than Thursday of the week in which they are due will not be accepted unless you have made arrangements in advance with me. This journal assignment constitutes the bulk of your final grade, so it is obviously crucial that you take the journal seriously and do the work on time.

READINGS/READING: I will assign the reading as we go, and you should always know prior to the next class what the assigned reading is. If all goes as I intend, we should read work by 10 to 12 major American writers. Because this is a 200-level class, I will stress a sampler approach over in-depth study of any particular author. But we will explore most assigned readings as carefully and thoughtfully as time allows and your interest dictates. Some of the readings will be rather long, others reasonably short. Overall, however, there will be a fair amount of reading assigned during the term. It’s important to note that reading a literary text is in certain ways different from reading textbook prose or other daily reading material. You must read
carefully (and often more than once). You must also make allowances for the conventions of both time period and genre, for often the language will differ from contemporary conversational or written American English. **It is crucial for you to complete the assigned reading prior to the class period during which it is to be discussed.** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what the assignment for the next class period is. I will give pop quizzes if I determine that, as a class, you are not keeping up with the assigned reading.

**ATTENDANCE:** You are entitled to **no more than two unexcused absences.** More than two absences will result in a reduction of your point total, **fifteen points per miss beyond the allotted two.**

**PARTICIPATION:** I will expect you to participate in class discussion and will feel free to call on you for interpretations, opinions, etc. Be prepared for such impromptu recitations. Those who distinguish themselves in discussion by their willingness to participate and by the quality of their comments will receive bonus points when I calculate the final grade.

**GRADE:** The grade will be based pretty much on a percentage of the total points for the class: 92% or above for an A, 88%-91% for an AB, 82%-87% for a B, 78%-81% for a BC, 70%-77% for a C, etc.

**NOTE:** MTU’s Affirmative Action Officer has asked that all faculty include the following statement on each course syllabus:

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (3310).