# American Experience in Literature III

**Instructor:** Dr. Carol Berkenkotter  
**Office:** Walker 328  
**Office Hours:** T 2-3:30  
**Text:** *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Fifth ed. Vol 2  
**Classroom:** Walker 108  
**Class time:** TTh. 8-9:30

**Course Goal:** 1) To become familiar with major American Twentieth Century authors, and 2.) to develop skill in explaining their contributions to our understanding of the diversity of American experience.

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<th>Month</th>
<th>Topics</th>
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| March | 7 Introduction to course; reading inventory; backgrounds (realism, naturalism)  
9 Introduction, pp. 1-15, also Texts and Contexts, pp. 16-17.  
Ambrose Bierce, read p. 269 + (all) "Incident at Owl Creek Bridge."  
14 Henry James, pp. 323-340, "The Real Thing."  
16 Booker T. Washington, 581+ (all) "Up from Slavery."  
21 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, pp. + (all) "The Yellow Wallpaper."  
23 Robert Frost, poems, pp. 1119-1129; 1134-1136.  
28 Black Elk and John G. Neihardt, pp. 924-37. "Black Elk Speaks"  
30 Wallace Stevens, poems, pp. 1166-1171; 1174-1178, 1184. |
| April | 4 T.S. Eliot, poems, 1370-1373; 1393-96  
6 William Carlos Williams, 1217-1228; 1230-1231  
H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), poems, 1251-58  
11 Mid-term exam (bring blue books and pens to class)  
13 F. Scott Fitzgerald, pp. 1496-1511, "Babylon Revisited"  
18 Jean Toomer, pp. 1490 + (all); William Faulkner, 1630-42, "Barn Burning."  
20 Ernest Hemingway, pp. 1687-1704, "Snows of... K"  
James Baldwin, pp. 2000-11, "Going to Meet the Man."  
27 Flannery O'Connor, pp. 2012-20, "The Live You Save... Own."  
Toni Morrison, pp. 2078-92, "Recitatif." |
| May | 2 Maxine Hong Kingston, pp. 2232 + (all), "Tripmaster Monkey."  
4 Allen Ginsburg, poems, pp. 2634 + (all).  
Adrienne Rich, poems, pp. 2713 + (all).  
9 Joy Harjo, poems, pp. 2802 + (all).  
Rita Dove, poems, pp. 2810 + (all).  
Alberto Rios, poems, pp. 2822-27.  
Cathy Song, poems, pp. 2838-45.  
11 Hand out take-home exam, due 5/15, 5 p.m. Course Evaluation. |
Attendance
Students are expected to attend all classes; the instructor will allow three class absences for illness, plant trips, personal reasons, etc. More than three absences will drop grades one level (B to C; C to D, etc. Missing five classes or more is grounds for failure.

Grading:
- Commentaries: 25%
- Mid-term: 25%
- Take-home Final: 30%
- Participation (in class, on e-mail list): 20%

Commentaries: A minimum of 225 words (one double-spaced typed page) on each day’s assigned reading. No hand written papers, please.

Your commentary is due on the day in which we discuss the material, but if you forget to bring it, you may turn in the commentary at the next class meeting, but no later.

You need not write more than one commentary per class, regardless of how many pieces are discussed on that day.

Be sure you are consistent with headings on your commentary so you receive proper credit. In the upper right hand corner of the first page, print your name, then under that print the author’s. For example,

Judy Smith
Henry James

The commentary will not be a polished essay but merely a collection of thoughts or ideas on the assigned reading. You may discuss any aspect of the material in your 225 words. For example you may evaluate, praise, critique the quality of the writing, the concepts in the material, the author’s way of addressing or expressing a common experience of the period, etc. You may also want to raise questions about the characters, the author’s themes, the dialogue, etc. Please, no plot summaries, but it’s O.K. to refer to parts of the plot in your discussion.

Grading will be pass/fail on individual commentaries, with the number of commentaries you submit providing the letter grade (e.g., if you submit all assigned commentaries, your grade will be an A; all but two, a B, all but 3-4 a C, etc.

Usually I read every commentary, but I won’t be likely to comment because there will be so many of them to read. If you have specific questions about the class, the assignments, e-mail is a more efficient method for communicating with me. If your question is of general interest, use our class listserv.

Examinations
Both the midterm and the final examination will consist of two parts. The first part will consist of 6-7 short answer questions- 3-4 sentences each. These questions will be about characters, about themes or topics in the poems, etc. The second section will be a longer essay question, answerable in 4-5 paragraphs. On the in-class midterm there will be one of these questions. On the final take home essay there will be two. To pass the course, everyone must take the final exam, seniors take note :-)

Class listserv
For students who wish to pursue issues in class discussion between class meetings, we have a computer discussion list. We take about a week for my request to be processed. Use the listserv to continue discussions to which you may not have had the chance to contribute. Since we have a very large class this term, not everyone will get a chance to participate in class; the listserv is an excellent way to raise your participation grade, if you are not a regular contributor to in-class discussions.

Americans with Disabilities Act
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 to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students. For other concerns about discrimination, contact your advisor, the department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (3310).