Beth Flynn
HU2502, The American Experience in Literature II
Fisher 125
T,R 12:35-1:50 p.m.
Spring, 2008
Office: 310 Walker
Office phone: 487-3227
E-mail: [office hours]
Office Hours: T,R 2-3:20 and by appointment

Texts:


Supplies:
You'll need a file folder to hold your portfolio of responses, drafts, critique sheets, and graded papers. I'll bring in some used ones if you'd prefer not to buy a new one. I will be collecting response statements on the days they are due. I will collect drafts and critique sheets on the day formal essays are due and graded essays shortly after they are returned. Please have the file folder by Thursday of week one.

Purpose:
The course is described in the catalog as follows:

A historical survey of American Literature from about 1850 to the present, focusing on such themes as nature, the individual, democracy, race, optimism, and science. Discussions may be supplemented with films.

Writing Assignments:

Response Journal:
For selected readings indicated on the syllabus, you should submit in-class or out-of-class response statements of at least 125 words.

Portfolio Analysis
Please prepare a portfolio analysis (at least a page long) that provides a commentary on responses, drafts and critique sheets, and final papers. What are some strengths of your performance on these assignments? What are some limitations?

Formal Writing:
Three formal papers will be required.
The first is an essay of at least three pages (approximately 750 words) in which you:

Compare and/or contrast a character in one of the readings in section I to yourself or someone you know, attending especially to the theme of love, loss of love, or failed love. Describe the characters/people in terms of the theme of love. How are they similar to or different from each other? Why do you think they are similar or different?
Briefly describe one of the critical essays in the Norton critical edition of The Awakening and discuss its strengths and/or limitations, especially in its treatment of Edna's romantic relationships.

Or

Compare the treatment of love in one (or more) of the works we discussed in section I to the treatment of love in one (or more) of the unassigned works in the 1865-1914 section of the Norton anthology.

The second is an essay of at least three pages (approximately 750 words) in which you discuss the treatment of the themes of gender, race, and/or class in one or more unassigned works in section II of the Norton anthology.

Or

Compare the treatment of gender, race, and/or class in an assigned work with an unassigned work in section II of the Norton anthology.

Or

Provide background information about an author (or authors) of an assigned or unassigned work (or works) in the 1914-1945 section of the Norton anthology and explain how this information helps us interpret the themes of gender, race, and/or class in the work or works. Be sure to provide citations for sources you used to obtain your information.

The third is an essay of at least three pages (approximately 750 words) in which you define the characteristics of coming of age works and explain how two or more works in section III of the Norton anthology (1945 to the present), either assigned or unassigned, have coming of age themes.

Or

Define the characteristics of coming of age works and then compare the treatment of the theme of coming of age in the novel and film version of Vonnegut's Slaughterhouse-Five.

Or

Provide background information about Kurt Vonnegut's life as a young soldier and then explain how this information illuminates the novel, especially in terms of the theme of coming of age. Be sure to provide citations for sources you used to obtain your information.

You will need to submit proposals for and drafts of these essays. The proposal is a brief, tentative description of what you intend to write about in the essay. One paragraph is sufficient, though it could be longer. You are free to change your topic after you have submitted the proposal. The draft should be your best effort rather than a first draft. The feedback you receive on it from a classmate will be more valuable if you think the essay is close to being ready to submit.

Please use MLA format if you are citing sources. One website that describes it can be found at owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/. There are other sites as well.

Presentations:

You will have an opportunity to present essays # 1, 2, and 3 in four-minute presentations. The presentation should be based on the paper you have submitted but should be tailored for oral delivery. Please use at least
one overhead that provides an outline of your paper and a thesis statement. Please include a paper copy of
the outline and thesis statement with your paper. Make sure to put a complete heading on the outline
including your name, my name, the date, the course number, and the assignment number.

Reports/Discussions:

Once during the term make a five-minute report on background material that informs the reading assignment
for that day or start the class discussion for that day's reading. If you prepare a report, be sure to submit an
outline of it. If you start the discussion, submit the question or questions that you use to stimulate discussion.
The question or questions should invite discussion of all assigned reading for that day. On Thursdays, these
questions will be used for the in-class response.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory. Much of the course involves conversation about course readings. If you miss
those conversations, you will have missed a good deal of the course content. More than three unexcused
absences will affect your grade.

Late Papers:

Since the course emphasizes the revision process and since it is important that presentations be based on
finished essays, drafts and final essays must be submitted on time. Late papers will affect your grade.

Grades:

Your grade will be based on the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio (responses, e-mail(s), critiques, outlines/questions)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation # 1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation # 2</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation # 3</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal essay # 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal essay # 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal essay # 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Criteria for Evaluation:

A Papers and Presentations:

The author makes an original contribution so that the reader becomes involved and learns from the piece or
presentation.

The central point of the essay is clear, and the parts of the essay have been connected effectively. The
outline for the presentation is correct in form and effective.

Support for the point is appropriate for the intended audience and convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration.

There are few if any errors.

B Papers and Presentations:

The writing or speaking is clear, but the contribution does not seem especially original or new.

The central point is clear, but the parts of the essay or talk could be connected more effectively.

Support for the point is adequate for the intended audience and fairly convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration to an extent.

There are some errors.
C Papers and Presentations:

Takes some effort on the part of the reader or listener to get through the essay or talk. The paper or talk does not have a strong focus, and it is not always clear how the parts support the thesis. Support for the point is not especially appropriate for the intended audience and not especially convincing. The reader's or listener's needs have not always been taken into consideration. There are a number of errors.

D Papers and Presentations:

The reader or listener cannot figure out what point the writer or speaker is trying to make. The central point is not at all clear, and the parts do not support it. Support for the point is inappropriate for the intended audience and not convincing. The reader's or listener's needs have not been taken into consideration. There are many errors.

F Papers and Presentations:

The paper or talk does not respond to the assignment at all or has not been handed in or presented.

Other:

When papers are returned, most papers will have a letter grade on them. If you receive a grade lower than A, you may revise the essay and submit it no later than two weeks after it is returned. A few papers, though, will have an "R" on them. This means that the paper must be revised within two weeks of the time the paper was returned, and only the revision will be graded. I will usually suggest that individuals who receive Rs see me before revising. Please include the original paper with the revision!

Remember that formal essays should have titles. Please leave at least an inch margin on the sides and top and bottom of the paper and remember to number the pages on papers. Label all work including presentation outlines. Include your name, my name, the course number and time, the date, and the course assignment. Be sure to indicate if the paper is a draft, a formal paper, or a revision. Please do NOT submit drafts and formal essays electronically.

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities 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, Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

It may be necessary to alter the syllabus as the semester proceeds in order to better meet the instructional needs of the class.

Plagiarism—using the ideas or words of others without acknowledging the source—is unethical and a violation of University policy. Plagiarism cases will be handled by the Dean of Students. Some consequences of plagiarism could be failure of a paper or course. The University has subscribed to an anti-plagiarism service that can detect plagiarized material. If you have questions about the proper way to cite the ideas of someone else, please see me.

Course Schedule:

I: American Literature 1965-1914 (love)

Week 1 (January 15-17)

T Introduction

Week 2 (January 22-24)

Week 3 (January 29-31)
R Chopin, The Awakening, pp. 3-30 (Chs. I-X). Response # 5 due (in-class).

Week 4 (February 5)

Week 5 (February 12-14)

Week 6 (February 19-21)
T Essay # 1 due. Presentations.
R Presentations.

II: American Literature 1914-1945 (gender, race, and class)
Week 7 (February 26-28)

Week 8 (March 4-6)

Week 9 (March 18-20)

Week 10 (March 25-27)
T Essay # 2 due. Presentations.
R Presentations.

III: American Literature since 1945 (coming of age)
Week 11 (April 1-3)

T  Vonnegut, pp. 1-71 (Chs. 1-3). Response # 11 due (out-of-class).
R  Vonnegut, pp. 72-153 (Chs. 4-6). Response # 12 due (in-class).

Week 12 (April 8-10)

T  Proposal for essay # 3 due. Vonnegut, pp. 154-215 (Chs. 7-10).

Week 13 (April 15-17)


Week 14 (April 22-24)

T  Essay # 3 due. Presentations.