HU3541—Major American Authors  
Spring 2013

Instructor Information

Instructor: Stephanie Carpenter, PhD  
Office Location: Walker 342  
E-mail: stcarpe@mtu.edu  
Office Hours: TR 3:30-4:45 and by appointment

Course Identification

Course Number: 14741-HU2501-R01  
Course Name: Major American Authors  
Course Location: Fisher Hall 0231  
Class Times: TR 2:05-3:20  
Prerequisites: None

Course Description/Overview

In this course we will undertake in-depth study of two major North American writers: Margaret Atwood (Canadian; b. 1939) and Cormac McCarthy (American; b. 1933). These two prolific writers are both known for their experiments with “genre” fiction: they bring the sensibilities of what is termed literary fiction to popular genres like the Western or speculative fiction. In addition to reading several major works by both Atwood and McCarthy, we’ll also read interviews with our authors, examine contextual materials, and read a sampling of critical responses to their works.

Course Learning Goals

In this course, students will . . .

- Develop analytical questions about literary works;
- Build original interpretations of the works we read, through close reading and evidence-based analyses
- Incorporate secondary sources into written and oral discussions.
- Participate actively in class discussions of the works we read.

Course Resources

Course Website:
- Canvas [http://www.courses.mtu.edu]
**Required Course Texts:**

- *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Margaret Atwood. ISBN 038549081X
- *The Blind Assassin*, Margaret Atwood. ISBN 0385720955
- *The Road*, Cormac McCarthy. ISBN 0307387895

Additional readings to be distributed through Canvas.

**Course Work**

**Presentation/Discussion Leading (1)**

With a partner, you will be responsible for leading class for 20-30 minutes. You can work together or coordinate so that your contributions complement each other’s.

You’ll be responsible for guiding us through particular passage(s) or specific features from the day’s reading that struck you as interesting or difficult. Include supplemental material that relates to/illuminates the assigned reading (e.g., video clips, music, background or contextual readings).

You will also prepare and lead us through 5-10 thoughtful discussion questions that a) relate to specific moments or features of *that day’s reading* and b) allow for open discussion.

You may incorporate the ideas from your discussion leading into your paper for that novel.

**Papers (4)**

You will write a paper in response to each of the four novels we’ll be reading. The first two of these (on *The Handmaid’s Tale* and *Blood Meridian*) will focus on interpretive skills: close reading, and developing analytical claims about a literary text. The second two will ask you to consider additional texts: responding to secondary sources (in writing about *The Blind Assassin*); responding to a film adaptation (in writing about *The Road*).

I will provide you with detailed instructions for these writing assignments in the weeks to come!

**Late work:** I deduct 5% per day for late work. Thus, if you turn in an assignment two days late, the maximum you can possibly get on it is an A- (90%). Extensions and exceptions will be made in rare circumstances; please TALK TO ME if you foresee a problem completing your work on time.

**Formatting:** All work submitted for this class must be typed, double-spaced, in Times Roman 12-point font or an equivalent, with 1-inch margins on all sides and no extra spaces between lines or letters. (Make sure you’ve set up your word processing program according to these guidelines; do not just turn in your work in the default format of your word processing program).

Your papers and creative imitations should have original titles reflecting their content and aims.
Michigan Tech Multiliteracies Center (MTMC): It’s your responsibility to submit your work in as polished a state as possible. If you would like feedback on your work before the due date, please consider visiting the Multiliteracies Center. This free resource exists to help you with writing projects for any course on campus. For more information about the MTMC or to schedule an appointment, go to the MTMC website at http://www.mtu.edu/humanities/resources/mtmc/ or call (906) 487-2007. The MTMC is located in 107 Walker.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation will be critical to your success in this course. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from one of your classmates.

Two tardies of five minutes or more will count as an absence; leaving class more than 15 minutes early also counts as an absence.

If you are using your electronic devices for recreational purposes, working on non-course related projects, or texting during class I will count you as absent for the day. (If you have a personal emergency, let me know. Please also let me know if you use your phone as an e-reader).

Three absences will bring your overall grade down by half a letter (50 points); five will bring it down by a full letter (100 points); if you miss six or more class meetings, you will not pass this class.

Your level of engagement in the class also affects this part of your grade.

- **Always bring the readings to class!** If you don’t have the materials necessary for the day’s work, I may ask you to leave (and mark you as absent for the day).
- Be respectful of me and of your classmates.
- Speak in class. I’d be happy to talk with you about ways to increase your involvement!

I expect you to participate actively and thoughtfully in our class discussions. I will determine participation grades at the midterm and end of the semester. Here’s how I evaluate participation:

Meets attendance requirements; participates thoughtfully and respectfully in every class discussion 100%

Meets attendance requirements; participates thoughtfully and respectfully in many class discussions: 90%

Meets attendance requirements; occasionally participates or participates superficially: 80%

Meets attendance requirements; rarely participates or participates without seeming to have completed the reading assignments: 70%

And so on…

Under some circumstances, with proper notification and documentation, an absence may be excused (see http://www.mtu.edu/dean/conduct/policy/attendance/ for guidelines).
**Grading Scheme**

Your semester grade in this course will be determined as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Leading</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper 4</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>87% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>82% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>76% – 81%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% – 75%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 69%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| I             | Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student's control. |
| X             | Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up by the close of the next semester or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade. |

**University Policies**

Academic integrity:

Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student's education, and ethical conduct fostered in an academic context will be carried into a student's professional career. Academic integrity is essential in a community of scholars searching and learning to search for truth. Anything less than total commitment to integrity undermines the efforts of the academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for insuring the academic integrity of the University.

This policy applies to the academic conduct of all persons at Michigan Technological University who have ever matriculated at the University, whether or not the person is enrolled at the time an allegation of academic misconduct is made.

This policy addresses academic misconduct in course work. Allegations of misconduct in research or publication are addressed under the Misconduct in Research, Scholarly and Creative Endeavors (http://www.mtu.edu/research/administration/integrity-compliance/pdf/Misconduct_in_Research_Scholarly_Creative_Endeavors_Policy.pdf) and its

Of these policies, the university’s position on plagiarism is most relevant to HU 3541. Plagiarism or other appropriation of the work of another individual and presenting it as if it were one's own or without credit to the originator as is required by commonly accepted practices in the community of one’s discipline; plagiarism also includes self-plagiarism, for example excerpting or reusing papers written for another class.

Student disability services:
Michigan Tech complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at (906) 487-2212 or go to http://www.mtu.edu/dean/disability/policies/

Assessment:
Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment—the institution’s efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of its programming. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.
Course Schedule

Note: The readings listed beside each date should be completed by that date.

Week One
1/14  Introductions
1/16  *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 1-66

Week Two: Atwood, 1986
1/21  *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 69-106 and supplemental reading
1/23  *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 109-147 and supplemental reading

Week Three: Atwood, 1986
1/28  *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 151-195     DL1
1/30  *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 199-255 and supplemental reading

Week Four: Atwood, 1986
2/4   *The Handmaid's Tale*, pp. 259-311     DL 2
2/6   NO CLASS—Winter Carnival

Week Five: McCarthy, 1985
2/11  **Paper 1 due in class**; intro to *Blood Meridian*
2/13  *Blood Meridian*, pp. 1-54

Week Six: McCarthy, 1985
2/18  *Blood Meridian*, pp. 55-121 and supplemental reading
2/20  *Blood Meridian*, pp. 122-165     DL 3

Week Seven: McCarthy, 1985
2/25  *Blood Meridian*, pp. 166-222 and supplemental reading     DLA
2/27  NO CLASS

Week Eight: McCarthy, 1985
3/4   *Blood Meridian*, pp. 223-294     DL5
3/6   *Blood Meridian*, pp. 295-335

**Paper 2 due by Friday, 3/7 at 5PM**

Spring Break—No Class

Week Nine: Atwood, 2000
3/18  *The Blind Assassin*, pp. 1-102
3/20  *The Blind Assassin*, pp. 105-168     DL6

Week Ten: Atwood, 2000
3/27  *The Blind Assassin*, pp. 283-361     DL7
**Week Eleven: Atwood, 2000**

4/1  *The Blind Assassin*, pp. 365-451  
4/3  *The Blind Assassin*, pp. 455-521  

**Paper 3 due Friday by 5PM**

**Week Twelve: McCarthy, 2006**

4/8  *The Road*, pp. 3-82  
4/10  *The Road*, pp. 83-156  

**Week Thirteen: McCarthy, 2006**

4/15  *The Road*, pp. 156-233  
4/17  *The Road*, pp. 233-287  

**Week Fourteen: McCarthy, 2006**

4/22  Screening of *The Road*  
4/24  Screening of *The Road*  

**Paper 4 due Tuesday, 4/29 by 5PM**