

Professor Cummings  
304-724-7645 After 6 p.m.  
Office hours – KN G21 TTH – by appointment

English 204 – Survey of American Literature  
Spring, 2005 – TTH  
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**COURSE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE:** Through discussion, critical thinking, and writing about significant literary works, you will be exposed to the rich diversity of writers and traditions that constitute the American experience, from the Colonial through the Modern periods. By using persuasive techniques learned during class discussions, you will learn to write clear, logical, well-structured formal critical essays about literature, free from serious errors in usage and mechanics.

**ESSENTIAL SKILLS TO BE ACQUIRED:**

1. An ability to render close textual analysis;
2. An ability to synthesize information from multiple texts;
3. An ability to render clear, cogent ideas;
4. An ability to structure well-developed essays, with thesis, textual support, and analysis;
5. An ability to correctly employ standard written English usage;
6. An ability to utilize effective research methodology and research paper skills;
7. An understanding of ethnic/cultural diversity;
8. An aesthetic and critical judgment for literature;
9. A concept of chronology associated with literary periods;
10. An understanding of the inter-relationship of the arts, history, and philosophy
11. An ability to utilize basic technology to improve writing and thinking skills.

**REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

*Norton Anthology of American Literature*  
Morrison, Toni. *The Bluest Eye*

**RECOMMENDED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

Harbrace College Handbook  
A recent college-level dictionary

**THE COLLEGE WRITING CENTER:** To receive individual instruction and feedback on writing in progress, students should use the services of the Knutti Writing Center ( K207). Visits are by appointment or through ShepOwl: <http://www.shepherd.wvnet.edu/scwcweb>

**CLASS ATTENDANCE:** You are expected to attend class, on time, fully prepared. Please contact me as soon as possible if you will be absent from class. **YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY WORK YOU MISS IF ABSENT!**

**CLASS PARTICIPATION:** Your final grade depends on active participation in class. Always bring your texts with you. Always read your assignments as listed in the syllabus, **before** you come to class! In this class, your participation is vital to the success of the course – both to you and to the class as a whole. For those of you who may hover between one grade and another, active participation can raise your final grade. Therefore, read and think critically and thoughtfully. Assess the assignments, compare and contrast them, question them, and come prepared to discuss them fully.

**WRITING ASSIGNMENTS:** Four (4) **researched** written essays are required. Assignments will be generated by me, but you will be able to tailor them to your own interests. MLA documentation style (found in Harbrace) must be used for all out-of-class essays and the research paper. All out-of-class essays must be computer drafted and submitted via a Microsoft Word attachment to an e-mail. Additional writing assignments will be required through WebCT (See below).

**THE SEMESTER RESEARCH PAPER:** Your research paper is a formal researched essay of at least 1500 words. You will choose the topic from a list I generate – and the topic will be discussed in a short conference before you begin your research. Since this essay will count more than any other work you do this semester, I strongly encourage you to seek help from one of the consultants in the Knutti 207 Writing Center. You will know well in advance the due date for this research paper, and can make appointments with the same consultant, thus giving yourself a continuity you would not receive any other way. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE SUBMISSIONS OF YOUR FINAL SEMESTER RESEARCH PAPER. IF YOU FAIL TO TURN IT IN ON TIME, YOU WILL RECEIVE A GRADE OF “F” ON THE PAPER.**

**WebCT :**

1. Some of the work in this class will be done via WebCT. Each Friday I will post questions about the present and previous week’s work. You will post your answers to these questions in a discussion group. I will grade your responses. **If you do not post to WebCT, you cannot make it up, and will receive a 0 as a grade.** However, at the end of the semester, the lowest WebCT discussion grade will be eliminated before calculating your final grade.
2. You may contact me anytime by email, but if it is a question that the rest of the class might help with, post it to the discussion group on WebCT.

**CONCERNING PLAGIARISM: DON’T!!!!** I expect academic honesty from my students. However, students don’t always see this the way the faculty does. Heads up! *Academic honesty means that all the work you do is your own work.* You should not borrow, copy, or buy any paper from another student, a publishing house, or an Internet site. Although guides to literature proliferate today, you should NEVER borrow passages or words from the introductory summaries in your anthology, a study guide, an internet site, or other sources, including another student’s work – UNLESS you give the author(s) credit, using parenthetical notation. **If you DO use another writer’s words or ideas in your paper without correct citation, you will receive a zero on the paper, and could fail this course.** One last thing: I am scanning papers to be certain you do not use work that is not yours. **Any papers I find that are plagiarized will be turned over to the department chairman and the disciplinary committee of this college.**

**STUDY GUIDES:** There are various study guides that can help you understand these assignments. The bookstore stocks acceptable and departmentally sanctioned study guides from Twayne publishing. Sparknotes.com also has well-written, academically accurate study guides. But these are GUIDES, not acceptable research sources. **Study Guides may not be listed in your Works Cited bibliography. They may not be used in your papers. If you try to do so and I discover it, you may receive a failing grade on your paper.**

**GRADING:** Grading scale: 90-100 = A; 80-89 = B; 70-79 = C; 60-69 = D; 0-59 = F.

WebCT participation	10%
1 Essay – Colonial Literature	10%
1 Essay – Literature before 1900	10%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	15%
1 Essay – Literature before WWII	20%
Research Paper – Literature after WWII	25%
	100%



Jacobs – “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” ALL – pp. 813 to end  
Cooper – The Pioneers; Chapter III – p. 462  
Irving – Rip Van Winkle – ALL – p. 448  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Essay Assignment Given – Literature Before 1900**

Feb 3 Emerson – “Self-Reliance” ALL – p. 539

Feb 8 Hawthorne – “The Minister’s Black Veil” – p. 626  
“Young Goodman Brown” – p. 610

Feb 10 Thoreau – Walden – 3 Sections  
“Where I Lived. . .” – p. 895  
“Sounds” – p. 905  
“Solitude” – p. 915

Feb 15 Whitman – “Song of Myself” ALL – p. 1003

Feb 17 Douglass – Narrative. . . (ALL) – p. 939 to end  
Cochise – “I am alone” – p. 1462

**Introduction to Emily Dickinson – READ AHEAD!**

Feb 22 Dickinson – “This is my letter to the World” – p. 1178  
“I cannot live with you – ” – p. 1182  
“My life closed twice before its close;” – p. 1187  
“Because I could not stop for Death – ” – p. 1184  
“The world is not Conclusion” – p. 1180

Feb 24 Fern – “Male Criticism on Ladies Books” – p. 808  
“A Law More Nice Than Just” – p. 810  
James – “Daisy Miller: A Study” – p. 1501

Mar 1 **2<sup>nd</sup> ESSAY DUE – approximately 750 words – Literature before 1900**

Frost – “The Death of the Hired Man” – p. 1881  
“Fire and Ice” – p. 1890  
“Nothing Gold Can Stay” – p. 1890  
“Mending Wall” – p. 1880  
“The Road Not Taken” – p. 1887  
“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” – p. 1891

**3<sup>rd</sup> Essay Assignment Given – Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Literature**

Mar 3 **Field trip to the National Museum of the American Indian. I’m trying to arrange it!**

Black Elk – “Black Elk Speaks: The Great Vision” – p. 1824  
The Navajo Night Chant – “The Sacred Mountains” – p. 1774  
Chippewa Songs – “The Sioux Women Gather Up . . .” – p. 1784  
Zitkala Sa – “Impressions of an Indian Childhood” – p. 1794

Mar 8 Sandburg – “Fog” – p. 1918  
“Grass” – p. 1918  
Williams – “The Young Housewife” – p. 1935  
Pound – “In a Station of the Metro” – p. 1949



## **EVALUATIVE CRITERIA FOR ALL ESSAYS IN ENGL204**

### **“A” Paper (90-100) - Superior:**

- Originality of thought and effectiveness
- Logical, emphatic development of a central idea
- Sophisticated, lively, and precise diction
- Well-developed, effectively organized essay and paragraphs
- Clear, engaging illustrative support
- Mature and diversified sentence structure
- Absence of errors in punctuation, usage, and spelling

### **“B” Paper (80-89) - Good**

- Convincing and engaging expression
- Logical development of a central idea
- Appropriate, lively, acceptable diction
- Effectively organized essay and paragraphs
- Detailed support of ideas
- Correct, clear, and varied sentence structure
- Absence of major errors in punctuation, usage, and spelling

### **“C” Paper (70-79) - Competent**

- Clear Communication
- Satisfactory development of a central idea
- Appropriate diction
- Satisfactory organization of essay and paragraphs
- Adequate support of ideas
- Some variety of sentence structure
- Relative absence of major errors in punctuation, sentence structure, usage, and spelling

### **“D” Paper (60-69) - Deficient**

- Superficial, unclear, or repetitious content
- Some instances of illogical thinking
- Immature, simplistic diction
- Poor organization of essay and paragraphs
- Weak support of ideas
- Awkward, monotonous sentence structure
- Some \*gross errors in punctuation, structure, usage, and spelling

### **“F” Paper (0-59) - Unacceptable**

- Confusing content
- Flawed central idea
- Inappropriate, unclear diction
- Random organization of paragraphs
- Unsupported generalizations
- Awkward, wordy, or simplistic sentence structure
- \*Gross errors in punctuation, structure, usage, and spelling

\*Gross errors include awkward/unclear sentence structure, fragments, fused (run-on) sentences and comma splices, agreement mistakes, vague/unclear pronoun reference, faulty verb forms, unjustified tense shifts, faulty parallelism, and dangling and misplaced modifiers. All of these errors are explained in detail in your Harbrace Handbook. Use it!