

Syllabus for  
**English 436 Modern American Fiction**  
3 Credit Hours  
Fall 2022

Coronavirus: All faculty members and students are expected to be face-to-face in the classroom except under conditions provided in the ORU Coronavirus Response Plan, which can be found at <https://oru.edu/campus-health/>.

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

A study of American literature with emphasis on American fiction from the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present.

Prerequisite: None

II. COURSE GOALS

This course enables the student to

- a. trace the development of American fiction from post-World War II to the present,
- b. understand the cultural, intellectual, and aesthetic trends of this period,
- c. understand major authors' responses to these influences.

III. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

A. Terminal Objectives

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

- a. trace the development of American fiction from post-WWII to the present,
- b. explain the cultural and intellectual background of this period,
- c. identify influences of modernism, postmodernism, and realism in modern American fiction,
- d. understand evolving definitions of America what it means to be an American.

B. Unit Objectives

As a result of successfully completing this course, the student will be able to do the following:

1. 1950s: Outsiders in an Age of Conformity
  1. Identify social, cultural, intellectual influences of this period.
  2. Identify major authors writing in this period.
  3. Trace the major themes and concerns of these writers.
  4. Understand changing perceptions of America and what it means to be an American.

2. 1960s-1980s: Rebels in a Postmodern World
  1. Identify the social, cultural, intellectual influences of this period.
  2. Understand the influence of postmodernism on American writers.
  3. Trace the major themes and styles of these writers.
  4. Understand new concerns of culture, gender, and ethnicity.
  5. Understand changing perceptions of America and what it means to be an American.
  
3. 1990s to Present: Contemporary Writers and The Long Modernism
  1. Identify the cultural, intellectual influences of this period.
  2. Understand lingering influence of postmodernism.
  3. Explain the return to the "long modernism."
  4. Trace major themes and styles of contemporary writers.
  5. Understand changing perceptions of America and what it means to be an American.

### III. ASSOCIATED PROGRAMS

This course meets degree completion requirements for the Writing program.

- A. Outcome 1 – Student integrates his or her faith into learning experiences and demonstrates concepts that constitute a Christian Worldview.
- B. Outcome 2 – Student is able to think critically, analyze linguistic structures, synthesize information, and evaluate information critically.
- C. Outcome 3 – Student can write with clarity and skill, can write original works avoiding formulaic writing, and can employ various literary devices.
- D. Outcome 5 – Student can write correct and effective academic papers, evaluating information and using it ethically and appropriately with correct grammar, mechanics, and presentation.
- E. Outcome 7 – Student demonstrates understanding of literary genres and characteristics of literature from various time periods.

### III. TEXTBOOKS AND OTHER LEARNING RESOURCES

#### Required textbooks:

*Norton Anthology of American Literature: 1945 to the Present*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed., Robert S. Levine, ed.  
 Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. ISBN 9780679732761  
 Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451*. ISBN 9781451673319  
 MacLean, Norman. *A River Runs through It and Other Stories*. ISBN 0226500667  
 McCarthy, Cormac. *The Road*. ISBN 9780307387899  
 Robinson, Marilynne. *Gilead*. ISBN 031242440  
 Salinger, J. D. *The Catcher in the Rye*. 9780316769174

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

- A. University Policies and Procedures
  1. Students and faculty at Oral Roberts University must adhere to all laws addressing the ethical use of others' materials, whether it is in the form of print,

electronic, video, multimedia, or computer software. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating involve both lying and stealing and are violations of ORU's Honor Code: "I will not cheat or plagiarize; I will do my own academic work and will not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments." Plagiarism is usually defined as copying someone else's ideas, words, or sentence structure and submitting them as one's own. Other forms of academic dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Submitting another's work as one's own or colluding with someone else and submitting that work as though it were his or hers;
- b. Failing to meet group assignment or project requirements while claiming to have done so;
- c. Failing to cite sources used in a paper;
- d. Creating results for experiments, observations, interviews, or projects that were not done;
- e. Receiving or giving unauthorized help on assignments.

By submitting an assignment in any form, the student gives permission for the assignment to be checked for plagiarism, either by submitting the work for electronic verification or by other means. Penalties for any of the above infractions may result in disciplinary action including failing the assignment or failing the course or expulsion from the University, as determined by department and University guidelines.

2. Final exams cannot be given before their scheduled times. Students need to check the final exam schedule before planning return flights or other events at the end of the semester.
3. Students are to be in compliance with university, school, and departmental policies regarding Whole Person Assessment requirements. Students should consult the Whole Person Assessment handbooks for requirements regarding general education and the students' majors.
  - a. The penalty for not submitting electronically or for incorrectly submitting an artifact is a zero for that assignment.
  - b. By submitting an assignment, the student gives permission for the assignment to be assessed electronically.

B. Department Policies and Procedures

1. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
2. Students taking a late exam because of an unauthorized absence are charged a late exam fee.
3. **Class Assignments**
  - a. Students need to come to class with the appropriate textbooks, course materials, and other supplies as designated by the professor.
  - b. Professors may refuse to accept an assignment if it has inappropriate content, does not meet the assignment's criteria (e.g., not typed, incorrectly documented), is incomplete, is suspected of plagiarism, or is turned in too late.
4. **Tardiness**—Tardiness is an inconvenience to the other class members and the professor, and they prevent the late student from obtaining maximum value from the class. Therefore, excessive tardiness may adversely affect the semester

grade. It is to the student's advantage to make sure that the professor is informed immediately following the close of the class that the student was tardy and not absent. It is not the professor's responsibility to stop the class to mark the tardiness; the student is the one responsible for conveying that information immediately following that class, not at a later time.

2. **Late Work**

- a. The student is responsible for obtaining class assignments and material covered during an absence, and all work is expected to be completed as scheduled. Late work may result in a lower grade. An absence is not an excuse for turning in late work or for being unprepared with assignments for the class following the absence. Computer or printer malfunction does not constitute an excuse for late work; students should have their work prepared in time to ensure that they can get it proofread, edited, and printed prior to the instructor's due date. These responsibilities assist the student in professional development.
- b. Any test taken late (except if the absence is administratively excused) incurs the ORU late exam fee (\$15), which must be paid before the late test can be taken. It may also incur a letter grade reduction.
- c. Assignments missed because of administratively excused absences are accepted with no penalty. Generally, assignments missed from an excused absence, such as sickness or family crises, can be made up and the instructor should be notified as soon as possible to reach an agreement on due dates and possible penalties. Each instructor has his or her own late-work policy that is given to students at the beginning of a course, so a teacher may decide that work missed because of an unexcused absence cannot be made up. Instructors use their own judgment in accepting late work resulting from all other absences. In cases where absences can be anticipated, such as for non-University sponsored mission trips, the work should normally be submitted prior to the absence.

3. **Attendance**

- a. **Excused and Unexcused Absences—**  
Because unavoidable circumstances can prevent perfect attendance, each student is allowed to miss class the number of times per week a class meets. This allowance is intended for illness or injury resulting in hospitalization, loss of a loved one, and other emergencies. Work missed because of an excused absence (e.g., illness, family emergency) can be made up; however, it is up to the teacher's discretion whether or not to accept work missed due to an unexcused absence (e.g., oversleeping, skipping class). If a student exceeds this number of absences, the student may lose points due to late work or for excessive absences, which may affect the semester grade. Extended illnesses are handled on an individual basis and require verification from a doctor.
- b. **Administratively Excused Absences—**Only absences that are required by approved University activities are given administrative excuses. Students who must miss class for University-sponsored activities must follow these procedures:
  - (1) Inform the professor before the event and make arrangement for

the work to be submitted prior to the absence or at a mutually agreed upon deadline.

- (2) Present an administrative excuse form with appropriate signatures when he or she returns to class. Doctors' or nurses' notes, or letters from groups sponsoring mission trips or activities do not qualify a student for an administratively excused absence.
  - (3) Obtain information covered during an absence. All work must be completed as scheduled.
  - (4) Not commit to class presentation (oral reports, speeches, group presentations, etc.) on a date that the student will be gone. Makeup work is not permitted if the student voluntarily committed to a performance on the date of an administratively excused absence.
5. **Plagiarism**—Each student attending Oral Roberts University is required to do his or her own academic work and must not inappropriately collaborate with other students on assignments.
- a. Students must document all sources and ideas that are not their own original information by following correct MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation procedures. Failure to do this produces a plagiarized paper, which results in an F for the paper. Flagrant cheating results in an F for the course.
  - b. Students may be asked to submit their assignments to Turnitin.com (an online anti-plagiarism program) or have their work submitted to D2L, which also submits work to Turnitin.com.
6. **Incompletes**—As stated in the University catalog, incompletes are granted only for "good cause," such as extended hospitalization, long-term illness, or a death in the family. Students must petition for an incomplete using the form available in the English and Modern Languages Department. Very few incompletes are granted.

## C. Course Policies and Procedures

### Evaluation Procedures

1. **Grading system**—The final grade is determined chiefly on the basis of the quality of the critical essays required of all students. The final examination will count approximately 20% toward the final grade. Oral Presentations and short essays will also figure into the grade.
2. **Theme Evaluations**—The term grade is determined by the students' performance in the examination of their essays. The following is a general guide to writing the brief essays:
  - a. **Content.** The essay should be the result of careful reading and thinking. The first and last steps should be the forming and testing of a thesis sentence that guides and controls the argument. The thesis should be well thought out, soundly supported by the text and, therefore, not eccentric.
    - (1) **Validity.** I will question the thesis: Is the argument in general and specifically to be found inherent in the text? Has the student, by omission of important points (or by distortion) seriously misinterpreted? Is the thesis supported by a logical and a clearly stated progression of ideas? While no one interpretation may be the correct one, not all are equally valid—so a carefully reasoned and

expressed argument will support the validity of the thesis.

- (2) **Focus.** Is the thesis limited enough so that the student can deal with it satisfactorily in about 450 words? On the other hand, is it significant enough to suggest the meaning within the whole of the work being analyzed? Does each sentence lend itself to the progression of the thesis; is each paragraph a crucial development?
- (3) **Unity.** Does the essay convey the one thesis statement? Do the parts cohere to form a whole? Is any part unnecessary?
- (4) **Development.** Are the steps of analysis or argumentation following a clear pattern? Does the student shift strategies or structuring plans? Does the student achieve a clear introduction, solid body, and convincing conclusion?
- (5) **Proportion.** Are the various aspects of the thesis presented in accordance to their proportionate importance? Does the student spend too much time on one point, neglecting another of equal importance?
- (6) **Support.** The points should be supported by the text. Often quotations of varying length are needed. Effective introduction and incorporation of such material may be difficult. Observe how critics have dealt with this problem in their own essays and emulate them to avoid an awkward "cut and paste" tone.
- (7) **Organization.** Some principle by which the student structures and presents ideas should be apparent from the opening of the essay. This principle, once established, should not be violated except for a very good (and clearly explained) reason.
- (8) **Coherence.** Do the statements lead to a firm grasp upon the thesis? Is any argument or example misplaced, illogical, irrelevant? Are transitions made smoothly?

**b. Style**

- (1) **Diction.** Avoid jargon and slang. The vocabulary ought not call attention to itself; it should be, as far as possible, a transparent medium of the subject. The essay should convey a sense of the student's voice, involved and convinced. The level should be formal, however, except for occasional use of other levels (e.g., the colloquial) for a special effect. Use of first person point of view and the personal pronoun "I" is acceptable (but avoid overuse of "I"). The words should be clear, functional, and not ostentatious.
- (2) **Rhythm.** Try to vary sentence length. Avoid using a monotonous sentence or phrase pattern. Paragraph length should also vary somewhat—a collection of one-sentence paragraphs is not acceptable.
- (3) **Audience.** The student should write for his/her peers. Think of the reader as one who is literate, interested, but not overly familiar with the work being discussed. A brief orientation to the work, with some paraphrase or description, is usually necessary, but avoid writing an entire essay that simply paraphrases the work being discussed.
- (4) **Tone.** If the student is bored with the subject, or confused by it, the tone of the essay will reflect that, and the reader will respond with boredom or confusion. The student cannot write well about nothing,

so work on the topic until there is something to say. Communication, incorporating all the aspects covered above, will result rather naturally from the student's own degree of involvement. The student should not affect a tone that is condescending to the reader; likewise, do not affect a tone assuming "chumminess" or "cuteness."

3. **WPC Requirement**

There is no WPC requirement for this class.

**Primary Program: B.A. Writing**  
**English 436 Modern American Fiction**  
**Fall 2022**

This course contributes to the University and program outcomes as indicated below:

**Significant Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly and includes targeted assessment.

**Moderate Contribution** – Addresses the outcome directly or indirectly and includes some assessment.

**Minimal Contribution** – Addresses the outcome indirectly and includes little or no assessment.

OUTCOMES	Significant Contribution	Moderate Contribution	Minimal Contribution
<b>Spiritual Integrity</b>			

<b>Personal Resilience</b>			
ENG 421 Outcome 1 – Student integrates his or her faith into learning experiences and demonstrates concepts that constitute a Christian Worldview.		<b>X</b>	

<b>Intellectual Pursuit</b>			
ENG 421 Outcome 2 – Student is able to think critically, analyze linguistic structures, synthesize information, and evaluate information critically.	<b>X</b>		
ENG 421 Outcome 3 – Student can write with clarity and skill, can write original works avoiding formulaic writing, and can employ various literary devices.	<b>X</b>		
ENG 421 Outcome 5 – Student can write correct and effective academic papers, evaluating information and using it ethically and appropriately with correct grammar, mechanics, and presentation.	<b>X</b>		
ENG 421 Outcome 7 – Student demonstrates understanding of literary genres and characteristics of literature from various time periods.	<b>X</b>		

<b>Global Engagement</b>			

<b>Bold Vision</b>			