

**College of San Mateo**  
**Official Course Outline**

**1. COURSE ID:** LIT. 804    **TITLE:** Twentieth-Century Literature

**Units:** 3.0 units    **Hours/Semester:** 48.0-54.0 Lecture hours; and 96.0-108.0 Homework hours

**Method of Grading:** Pass/No Pass Only

**2. COURSE DESIGNATION:**

**Non-Degree Credit**

**Transfer credit:** none

**3. COURSE DESCRIPTIONS:**

**Catalog Description:**

Study of a representative selection of the 20th Century fiction, poetry, and drama. Authors may include T.S. Eliot, Pablo Neruda, Vladimir Nabokov, Samuel Beckett, Virginia Woolf, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Sylvia Plath, Eugene O'Neil, Toni Morrison, among others. Emphasis on innovations of the Century's major writers within the context of literary and cultural movements. Lectures, discussions, readings, and optional writing of critical papers.

**4. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOME(S) (SLO'S):**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will meet the following outcomes:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of major experiments with form made by writers of fiction, poetry, and/or drama in the twentieth century and of the ways in which those experiments interact with or reflect content;
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the connections among the century's major historical events and cultural changes and the forms and themes evident in the literature;
3. Demonstrate an awareness of canonical writers of the twentieth century, important literary movements, and the emergence of new literary theories.

**5. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONAL OBJECTIVES:**

Upon successful completion of this course, a student will be able to:

1. read and evaluate with understanding and appreciation major works of fiction, poetry, and drama of the twentieth century
2. appreciate critically the major technical experiments with form made by poets, dramatists, and writers of fiction in the twentieth century and understand the connection between these experiments in form and the works' content
3. apply critical thinking skills to see and analyze the connections between the forms and themes of twentieth-century literature and the century's major historical events and cultural changes
4. express an understanding of twentieth-century literature in class discussion
5. describe, evaluate, and apply selected literary theories to works of literature

**6. COURSE CONTENT:**

**Lecture Content:**

1. The historical development of twentieth-century literature will be discussed as students learn to interpret individual works by important writers and see those writers' influences on each other and on modern and postmodern literature.
2. Developments of keen importance that should form the basis for the course include movements and innovations that shaped the century's literature. Because of the vast subject matter of this course--literature from around the world during a century that saw fantastic growth in literary output--instructors will need to choose which of many pertinent topics to cover in the course. These various topics include:
  - A. literary studies/issues, such as the purpose and function of literature and the literary canon--i.e., how writers come to be considered "major" writers, what role race and ethnicity should play in devising the canon, why we have a literary canon, and what assumptions underlie our own aesthetic and critical judgments about literature;
  - B. literary movements, such as modernism, postmodernism, the Harlem Renaissance, existentialism, magical realism, the theater of the absurd, the beat generation--i.e., what shapes the literature of the twentieth century;
  - C. innovations and techniques, such as imagist poetry, minimalism, reflexivity, stream of consciousness, meta-fiction--i.e., what creates, defines, and becomes characteristic of the literature of the twentieth century;

- D. literary theories, such as formalism/new criticism, deconstruction, feminism, Marxism, reader-response theory, postcolonial theory--i.e., what creates the ongoing and constantly changing dialogue about literature and culture that reflects the growing trends, ideals, philosophies, and ideas about literature and society.
3. Faculty should make their own choices of the authors they consider most important, but their choices should reflect the consensus of modern criticism, and the three major genres--poetry, fiction, and drama--should be adequately represented. As an example, faculty may refer to the following list of possibilities:
- A. poems by such major poets as William Butler Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Robert Frost, W.H. Auden, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, e.e. cummings, Langston Hughes, Sylvia Plath, Pablo Neruda, Robert Bly, Adrienne Rich, Lucille Clifton;
  - B. fiction by writers such as James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, Ernest Hemingway, Zora Neale Hurston, William Faulkner, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, Herman Hesse, Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre, Jorge Luis Borges, James Baldwin, Vladimir Nabokov, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Margaret Atwood, Philip Roth, Toni Morrison;
  - C. plays by major dramatists such as George Bernard Shaw, Bertold Brecht, Luigi Pirandello
  - D. texts by more recent poets, dramatists, and fiction writers--Sharon Olds, Don DeLillo, Cynthia Ozick, Sam Shepard, Seamus Heaney, Tony Kushner, for example--whose importance is more difficult to evaluate but who reflect contemporary trends in literary studies;
  - E. critical works about literature by scholars and critics which reflect modern and contemporary scholarship and methods of literary analysis.
4. The writers chosen should come from various cultures and show differing attitudes and values in their works, but they should be chosen primarily for their established or probable importance in twentieth-century literature.
5. The basis of the course will be reading, discussion, and writing about literature. Other activities might include research, presentations, dramatic readings, attendance of live performances, etc. Students will engage in critical analysis not only of works studied and authors covered, but also of the events and movements of the century and their effects on twentieth-century writers.

## 7. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

Typical methods of instruction may include:

- A. Lecture
- B. Critique
- C. Discussion
- D. Field Trips
- E. Other (Specify): Out-of-class assignments: Students will prepare for class discussion by reading and perhaps writing informally about texts being studied. Reading assignments: Instructor will assign the careful and thoughtful reading of literary texts, ranging from a poem or poems to full-length works; the instructor might also require reading of background material, critical analyses, essays. Writing assignments: i) Students may write critical essays (totalling approximately 4000 words for the semester) requiring analysis of literature. ii) Students may keep a journal or write responses about their interpretations or reactions to the literature. Critical thinking: i) In written work and discussion, students will be asked to formulate interpretations of the literature with support for those interpretations as well as hypotheses about the nature, form, function, and value of literature, criticize the texts and their authors, and make connections between historical and cultural developments and innovations in literature over the century. Multi-media/Live Performance: i) Students may watch films of plays, representations of fictional texts, and/or documentaries about authors. ii) If possible, students may attend live productions of twentieth-century plays or discussions with or readings by contemporary authors. Group work: Students may discuss their interpretations and questions in small groups.

## 8. REPRESENTATIVE ASSIGNMENTS

Representative assignments in this course may include, but are not limited to the following:

### Writing Assignments:

- i) Students may write critical essays (totalling approximately 4000 words for the semester) requiring analysis of literature.
- ii) Students may keep a journal or write responses about their interpretations or reactions to the literature.

### Reading Assignments:

Instructor will assign the careful and thoughtful reading of literary texts, ranging from a poem or poems to full-length works; the instructor might also require reading of background material, critical analyses, essays.

### Other Outside Assignments:

Students will prepare for class discussion by reading and perhaps writing informally about texts being studied.

#### 9. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF EVALUATION

Representative methods of evaluation may include:

- A. Class Participation
- B. Class Work
- C. Exams/Tests
- D. Group Projects
- E. Homework
- F. Oral Presentation
- G. Papers
- H. Portfolios
- I. Projects
- J. Quizzes
- K. Research Projects
- L. Written examination
- M. Methods of evaluation include participation in class discussion, quizzes, or other measures of class preparedness, journal keeping, optional essays, a final examination, and perhaps a midterm examination.

#### 10. REPRESENTATIVE TEXT(S):

Other:

- A. Faculty will ordinarily choose an anthology such as the Norton Anthology of World Masterpieces (editor Maynard Mack, 1997) or the Bedford Anthology of World Literature (editor Paul Davis, 2003). Faculty may choose instead one or more appropriate anthologies of fiction, poetry, and drama--either specialized anthologies such as the Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry (editors Richard Ellman and Robert O'Clair, 2004), or an anthology of twentieth-century fiction or modern drama, or a general anthology such as Bedford Introduction to Literature (editor Michael Meyer, 2003)--provided that it contains an adequate representation of twentieth-century works. Faculty may choose, however, to require individual copies of novels or plays and one or more collections of poetry or fiction by a single author or school of writers, provided that a broad selection of major authors is covered in the course. Students will generally read at least one major twentieth-century novel, such as Fitzgerald, *Tender is the Night*; Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*; West, *Day of the Locust*; Forster, *A Passage to India*; Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom*; Camus, *The Plague*; Woolf, *To The Lighthouse*; Grass, *The Tin Drum*; Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; Morrison, *Beloved*.

**Origination Date:** February 2021

**Curriculum Committee Approval Date:** May 2022

**Effective Term:** Fall 2022

**Course Originator:** Daniel Keller