

English 262  
Survey of American Lit. II  
Spring, 2010

Professor ShaunAnne Tangney  
HH 138; 858-3180  
Office Hours: MWF 8:00-9:00,  
11:00-12:00, 1:00-3:00 and by appointment.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

*Winesburg Ohio*, Sherwood Anderson  
*The Grapes of Wrath*, John Steinbeck  
*The Wild God of the World*, Robinson Jeffers  
*The Martian Chronicles*, Ray Bradbury  
*Revolutionary Road*, Richard Yates  
“On the Three Races,” Alexis deTocqueville\*  
“The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” Frederick Jackson Turner\*  
*True West*, Sam Shepard\*  
Selections from *In the Middle of The Middle West* and *Imagining Home*\*  
Other essays\*  
“The Sixties Project,” various authors\*\*

All texts except those followed by an asterisk or a double asterisk are available at the MSU bookstore. Those followed by an asterisk will be available for you to photocopy on reserve in the GBO Library. You will need your student i.d. card to check the materials out, and then you will need to immediately photocopy them as the materials are on 2-hour reserve. I also have copies of these materials in my office and you can borrow them from me, following the same procedure.

Those followed by a double asterisk are available on eRes. To access eRes materials follow the following procedure:

Go to the GBO library homepage at [www.minotstateu.edu/library](http://www.minotstateu.edu/library)  
Click on eRes  
Click on Electronic Reserves and Reserve Pages  
Click on Course Reserve Pages by Instructor  
Scroll down to Tangney and click on search  
Click on English 262  
Course password: eng262 (no capitals, no space)  
Open The Sixties Project document, and print the article(s) that are germane to your presentation.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

The theme of this course is “Space/Race.” The word “space” is perhaps a little misleading, and perhaps “place” would be a better choice...but then I don’t get the pun. In this course, following the above theme, we will pursue the question: is place or race the dominant factor in shaping an American (literary) character? Issues of place—the physical environment, the size of the United States, regionalism, sense of place, use of land and landscape are, all major concerns of American literature and culture. So are issues of race—issues of equality, liberty, oppression, stereotype, sense of self and belonging. In studying American literature through the lens of “Space/Race” we will attempt to come up with theories as to what it means to be an American, what it means to write about being an American, what it means to construct a national literary tradition, and how and why the issues of place and race color and drive each of those things.

The format of this course is lecture and discussion. There will be times when I will need to lecture—to give historical or literary background, for example—but I want a large portion of the class to be dedicated to discussion. I already know what I think; I want to know what you think—and if we put our questions, concerns, ideas, and theories together we will likely come up with something new and startling.

**COURSE GOALS:**

In this course you will be able to gain a better understanding of twentieth century American literature and culture. You will be exposed to the practice of critical reading, and to various critical theories. You will

practice argumentative writing, and have the opportunity to hone creative skills as well. It is hoped that upon completion of the course you will be able to make critical assertions about American culture and literature, and that you will have gained reading and writing skills that will serve you well in upper-division English courses, or any other course that requires reading and writing at the college level.

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams: There will be two (2) exams in this course, a mid-term and a final. The mid-term will be in-class and is designed to elicit specific and informational answers from you about American literature and culture, as covered to that date in class. The final will be take-home and is speculative in nature, asking you to discuss your take on the course.

**NO MAKE-UP EXAMS WILL BE GIVEN!**

Papers: You are required to write two (2) papers. The papers must be argumentative research papers; that is to say, they must pose an interesting problem or question and then provide analysis of that problem or question. Another way to say this is that each paper must make a major claim (put forth in a thesis statement) and then use evidence from primary and secondary research sources to support or demonstrate that claim (see also handout). For your papers you can either choose to write about a text from this class or you may choose to write on a text other than those we read in class. If you write about a text from class, you must push beyond the way(s) we discussed it in class. In other words, your paper cannot be a regurgitation of what we did in class; it must still attend to the course theme, but in a way other than we did in class. If you write on a text other than one discussed in class, be sure to get it approved by me before you write even your proposal. Make sure as well that you use the outside text to explore the course theme. The paper must be at least seven (7) pages long, use at least three (3) outside scholarly sources (sources other than the primary text), and follow MLA style. It must be typed or word-processed, double-spaced, in a plain, 10- or 12-point font, have one-inch margins, and have a title.

Creative Option: If you choose, one (1) of your two papers can be a creative project of some kind (but only one; you must write at least one (1) argumentative research paper). Creative projects can run the gamut from a series of poems, a musical interpretation, a video presentation, a dramatic reading or presentation, an artistic (painting, sculpture, diorama) presentation, etc. Creative projects do, of course, have to be connected to the course and its theme. Creative projects are simply another way of discussing or analyzing the material or themes presented in the course. You do not have to do a creative project; it is perfectly fine to do a second research paper. If you do a creative project: BEWARE! It is not easy! If you decide to write poetry, for example, they have to be good poems! If you decide to make art in relation to the course these, it has to be god art! You will be graded on the merit of the poetry, or the art, or the whatever, not the fact that you chose a creative project. All creative projects must be accompanied by a narrative that explains why you chose the project or medium you did, how the creative project connects to the course, its themes and its texts, and how doing the creative project helped you better understand the course, its themes and its texts.

For both the paper(s) and the project, you will be required to turn a written proposal into me so that I can help steer you in the right direction, give advice, stop you from going in a wrong direction, etc.

**ALL PAPERS/PROJECTS AND PROPOSALS ARE DUE IN CLASS!**

**NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED!**

Group Presentations: The Sixties Project: We will explore the 1960s in some depth, by using group presentations—see in-depth hand-out, “The Sixties Project.” Each group will cover some crucial yet often misunderstood aspect of the sixties (racial tensions, e.g., or campus protest, or psychedelic culture). Suggestions for presentation topics and preliminary reading sources are outlined on the hand-out, “The Sixties Project.” Presentations should be from 25-30 minutes long, and every member of the group must participate. The remainder of each class period will be devoted to questions from the audience.

**NO MAKE-UP PRESENTATIONS WILL BE ALLOWED!**

#### COURSE POLICIES

Attendance Policy: I don't like attendance policies, and for the most part don't enforce them. However, I find it incredibly irresponsible when students do not bother to come to class when there are presentations going on. That said, I have found that I cannot shame students into attending, and so I do make the following attendance requirement: All students are required to attend class on presentation days. If you do not attend on presentation days, you will lose three points from your semester total for each day you miss.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism is unacceptable in this (or any) course. The Minot State University Academic Integrity Code states:

Incidents of academic dishonesty may be documented by the faculty member with a copy of the documentation maintained by the department/division chair. A letter of explanation will be sent to the student. Cheating may affect the student in accordance with the faculty member's grading policy. The student may appeal the faculty member's penalty to the department chair. Student disciplinary action may result in accordance with the Student Conduct Policy. Academic dishonesty would include, but is not limited to, the following types of behaviors:

- Misrepresenting another individual's work as one's own, e.g. plagiarism from hard copy or the Internet.
- Copying from another student during an exam.
- Altering one's exam after grading for the purpose of enhancing one's grade.
- Submitting the same paper to more than one class without prior approval of the instructors.
- Use of any material or device not approved by the faculty during an exam.
- Turning in reports intended to be based on field collection data but, which are, in fact, not.
- Failure to respect the confidentiality of persons served or studies and to maintain the professional standards for ethical conduct as set forth in *The Handbook of School Psychology* published by the national Association of School Psychologists.

Plagiarism is our main focus here. There are various forms of plagiarism, beyond the obvious one of misrepresenting another person's work as your own. Failing to cite sources in your work is one. Incorporating large sections of other people's work—including material from the Internet—into your own without acknowledging the source or author is another. And downloading or purchasing whole papers from the Internet is a third. The penalty for plagiarism in this course is failure of the course. The offending student will be sent a letter notifying him/her of the offense and the penalty. In addition, a letter will be to the Vice President of Student Affairs, asking him to consider academic probation for a first offense, suspension for a second offense, and expulsion for a third offense. This letter will also be kept on file in the Division of Humanities office.

Late Work Policy: *I do not accept late work. Period. End of discussion.* When something is due, it is due in class, at the beginning of class. If you do not put the finished assignment in my hands, at the beginning of class, it is late and will not be accepted. Do not slide things under my office door. Do not leave things in my mailbox. Do not give things to me after class—even 5 minutes after class. On *very, very* rare occasions, under *extremely extraordinary* circumstances, I *might* make an exception (note italics). Do not kill off your grandparents over the course of the semester. Don't tell me about athletic events, trips with the drama club, or your car broken down in Fargo. Do not invent sick children, grumpy husbands, or flaky computers. Here's the deal: assignments are due in class at the beginning of class. I do not accept late work. If you do not put your finished assignment in my hands, at the beginning of class, it is late and will not be accepted. Any questions?

Technology: I do not allow technology of any kind in the classroom. No lap-tops. No cell phones. No MP3 players. No electronic/digital/technological devices of any kind. I know how helpful and enjoyable these devices are, but I need your full attention in class. You also need to be taking notes in class—this is imperative to your doing well in the course! Some people may prefer to take notes on a lap-top, but the problem here is that I don't know if you're taking notes or surfing the 'net—use the old fashioned way of actually writing things down. If I see a lap-top up at the beginning of class I will ask you to shut it down. If I see your ear-buds in at the beginning of class I will ask you to take them out and shut off the player. If you are unwilling to comply, I will ask you to leave class for the day. If your cell-phone rings, I will ask you to leave class, and not return for the rest of the day. Class time is class time and I need your full attention. Furthermore, as Maggie Jackson points out in her book *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*, our near-religious allegiance to a constant state of motion and addiction to multitasking are eroding our capacity for deep, sustained, perceptive attention—a crucial building block of intimacy, wisdom and cultural progress—and stunting society's ability to comprehend what's relevant and permanent. Reading and studying literature have much to do with intimacy, wisdom, and cultural progress, and this class requires your deep, sustained attention and perception. Towards those ends: no technology allowed during class.

**GRADING:**

Exams are worth 15% (7.5% each) of your final grade

In-Class Presentation is worth 25% of your final grade.

Papers are worth 60% (30% each) of your final grade

America is the world's living myth. There's no sense of wrong when you kill an American or blame America for some local disaster. This is our function, to be character types, to embody recurring themes that people can use to comfort themselves, justify themselves and so on. We're here to accommodate. Whatever people need, we provide. A myth is a useful thing. –Don DeLillo