

California Dreaming

ENGL 260: Concepts of Place

Professor: Dr. Bev Hogue

Office: 206 Legacy Library

Office Hours: Monday 11 to 11:50 and 2:00 to 4:00

Tuesday 9:00 to noon

Wednesday 11:00 to 11: 50 and 2:00 to 4:00

Thursday 2:00 to 4:00

Friday 11:00 to 11:50

Other hours available by appointment

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Course Description: The idea of California existed long before Europeans encountered the actual place, and California has appeared in literature in a variety of modes: from virgin land to dystopian metropolis, from Gold Rush bonanza to the Gold Mountain of immigrants' dreams. This course will examine cultural notions of place as they inform literature of California and literary construction of California as place.

General Education: This course fulfills the Literature (L) and Writing Proficiency (W) General Education requirements and requires satisfactory completion (C- or better) of WRIT 101.

Course Objectives: At the conclusion of the course, students will

- Demonstrate understanding of selected literary works, genres, and movements.
- Demonstrate understanding of theories of the relationship between place and literature.
- Demonstrate ability to analyze literary devices and techniques and their relationship to the portrayal of place.
- Demonstrate substantial improvement in writing skills.

Expectations: This course depends upon class participation; therefore, students should

- Attend every class session promptly. Each class session counts for one week of class; therefore, missing more than one class session will result in a reduction in your final grade.
- Complete every assignment and hand it in on time. Late papers will not be accepted.
- Read every assignment thoroughly BEFORE the class session in which it will be covered.
- Participate in class discussion, contributing to an open and supporting learning environment by respecting others.
- Avoid distracting others. Anything with the ability to ring, beep, buzz, or otherwise distract others must be silenced during class. Electronic devices that persist in disturbing the class will be confiscated for the duration of the class. Students whose electronic devices repeatedly disturb the class will be asked to leave.
- Be able to use a Marietta College e-mail address and Moodle. Technical difficulty is no excuse for late work.

Required Texts:

Gerald W. Haslam, ed. *Many Californias: Literature from the Golden State*. University of Nevada Press. ISBN 0-87417-325-6

Maxine Hong Kingston. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. Vantage. ISBN 978-0679721888.

Frank Norris. *McTeague*. Oxford UP. ISBN 978-0199554898.

John Steinbeck. *Cannery Row*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0142000687.

Readings on electronic reserve:

McPhee, John. *Assembling California*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993. 3-11 and 285-304.

Lutwack, Leonard. *The Role of Place in Literature*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 1984. 27-37.

Kolodny, Annette. "Unearthing Herstory: An Introduction." *The Ecocriticism Reader*. Ed. Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: U Georgia P, 1996. 170-81.

Evaluation:

Five mini-themes, 20 points each	100 points
Two presentations, 50 points each	100 points
Proposal and annotated bibliography	100 points
Researched essay	100 points

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+ = 88-89 B = 83-87 B- = 80-82
 C+ = 78-79 C = 73-77 C- = 70-72 D+ = 68-69 D = 63-67 D- = 60-62
 The A+ grade does not affect gpa and will be given only for extraordinary work.

All written work must be typed/word processed, double-spaced, in black ink on white paper, with attention paid to spelling, grammar, and style. **Late work will not be accepted** except in rare unavoidable cases. Students are expected to produce original work for this course; papers written for other courses here or elsewhere are not acceptable.

Plagiarism occurs when a student represents someone else's work as his or her own; it includes:

- Copying another person's paper
- Copying another person's words without putting quotation marks around them or citing them as a source
- Copying entire sentences and paragraphs from a print or electronic source without providing proper documentation and credit
- Allowing another person to write your paper or make major revisions to your paper

Any student who plagiarizes, whether from published material (such as a web site, book, or magazine) or from unpublished material (such as another student's writing), **will receive an F on the assignment**. Any student who submits someone else's work as if it were his or her own will **receive an F on the assignment and may fail the class**. Copying information from an online source directly into a paper will result in an automatic F for the assignment and possible failure of the course.

All work produced in this course is considered public and is used for the purposes of teaching and evaluation. This may include the use of your work as a model for future students and the submission of your work to an online plagiarism detection service.

Co-Curricular Probation: Students placed on academic probation at the end of the semester will be barred from most co-curricular activities the following semester. See the college catalog for further details.

Accommodations: Any student requiring accommodations because of a documented disability should notify the instructor AND the Academic Resource Center (Andrews Hall, third floor, 376-4700) at the beginning of the semester for further instructions.

Reading and Writing Assignments

January 12 Come to class prepared to discuss the following works from Haslam:
Haslam, "Native Voices" (5-10), "Hispanic California" (11-14), "American Incursion and the Gold Rush" (15-17)
Dana, "Californios" (18-21)
Clapp, "Life at the Mines" (22-23)
Ridge, "Joaquin" (24-26)
Clemens, "Baker's Blue-Jay Yarn" (31-35)
Bierce, "The Bubble Reputation" (36-39)
Montalvo, "An Island Called California" (131-32)

Also, read the excerpts from *Assembling California* by John McPhee (on electronic reserve through the library website)

January 19 Minitheme 1 due
Come to class prepared to discuss the following works from Haslam:
Coolbrith, "The California Poppy" (69)
Muir, "The Range of Light" (118-20)
Miller, "Dead in the Sierras" (70)
Markham, "The Man with the Hoe" (72-73)
Austin, "My Neighbor's Field" (121-25)
Jeffers, poems (126-28)
Nathan, poems (218-20)

January 26 Minitheme 2 due

Come to class prepared to discuss the first half of Frank Norris's *McTeague*.

February 2 Come to class prepared to discuss the second half of Frank Norris's *McTeague*.

February 9 **Minitheme 3 due**

Come to class prepared to discuss John Steinbeck's *Cannery Row*.

February 16 **Minitheme 4 due**

Come to class prepared to discuss Kingston's *A Woman Warrior*

February 23 **Minitheme 5 due**

Come to class prepared to discuss the following works from Haslam:

Whitman, "Facing West from California's Shores" (133-34)

Ginsberg, "A Supermarket in California" (150-51)

Kerouac, "Dharma Bums" (152-55)

Ferlighetti, "Dog" (156-58)

Rexroth, "Spring Rain" (159-60)

Duncan, "My Mother Would Be a Falconess" (161-63)

Kaufman, "I Have Folded My Sorrows" (164)

Bukowski, poems (300-305)

Snyder, poems (172-75)

Hass, poems (180-86)

March 2 Come to class prepared to discuss the following works from Haslam:

McDaniel, poems (227-30)

Soto, poems (265-70)

Young, poems (281-85)

Spear, "Graffiti" (368)

Valdez, "Soldado Razo" (240-51)

Rodriguez, "America's Wild Child" (356-60)

Salazar, "Scars" (364)

Salinas, "My Fifty-Plus Years" (370-71)

Divakaruni, "Grocery Shopping with Aunt Geeta" (277-80)

Yamamoto, "Seventeen Syllables" (on electronic reserve)

March 5-11 Visit California

Be prepared to discuss "South of the Slot" by Jack London (47-61 in Haslam)

Presentation 1

March 16 Come to class prepared to discuss the Lutwack and Kolodny readings on electronic reserve.

March 23 No class; **proposal and annotated bibliography** due no later than 7 p.m.

March 30 No class; required conferences on researched essay

April 6 **Researched essay** draft due for peer review

April 13 **Presentation 2**

April 20 **Researched essay** due no later than 7 p.m.

Minithemes

Objectives: students will engage with texts, exercise literary analysis skills, and develop writing skills.

Process: Five times during the first half of the semester, you will write a very brief paper analyzing some aspect of the portrayal of place in a work on the syllabus. Each minitheme must

- be no more than 500 words long (excluding the Works Cited and heading)
- focus on a clear thesis
- provide evidence from texts to support the thesis
- cite sources appropriately
- follow MLA format in every regard
- analyze texts that have not yet been discussed in class

Because you are working with a very limited number of words, you will need to make your point succinctly, excluding excess verbiage and filler. However, brevity does not excuse superficiality of analysis. Pick one interesting idea and examine it as deeply as possible within the space available.

Each minitheme is worth 20 points, for a total of 100 points. You may wish to use the minithemes to work out ideas you will later expand on in your researched essay. There will be no formal peer review for minithemes, but you may wish to set up informal peer review groups.

A sample grading rubric is available on Moodle.

Presentation in Place

Objectives: students will demonstrate understanding of particular works and their relationship to places and will exercise communication skills.

During the class trip to California, you will be responsible for presenting information about a particular author associated with a place we will visit. This will be an informal presentation; you may use notes or provide handouts, but do not count on having any technology available. Depending on circumstances, you might present your material outdoors.

Your presentation must

- be brief (no more than 20 minutes)
- cover literature not discussed in class (see suggestions below)
- help classmates understand the relationship between the work and the place
- include a brief reading from the work under discussion

Some authors and suggested works:

Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*

Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"

Robinson Jeffers, "To the Stone-Cutters", "Shine, Perishing Republic," "Continent's End," "Tor House," "Winged Rock," "The Purse-Seine," "Carmel Point," "Birds and Fishes"

Jack Kerouac, *Big Sur*

Maxing Hong Kingston, *China Men* or *Tripmaster Monkey: His Fake Book*

John Muir, "A Wind-Storm in the Forest"

John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath*

If you are familiar with another author associated with any of the places we will visit, feel free to make suggestions.

This presentation is worth 50 points and will be evaluated according to a rubric available on Moodle.

Research Project: Explorations of Place

Objectives: students will demonstrate in-depth understanding of literary constructions of place in the works of one author and will demonstrate excellence in critical thinking, research, and writing skills as well as the ability to write in a series of stages including drafting and revision.

During the first half of the semester, you will read and write briefly about a variety of authors and works; this project challenges you to do in-depth research about one author's literary constructions of place in one or more works. You may choose any author on the reading list or get permission to choose an author not on the list. Your paper may examine any aspect of the relationship between literature and place in your author's work(s). You will complete the paper in several steps:

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography

Write a brief proposal (no more than 500 words) explaining the focus and scope of your research project and how you hope to add to readers' understanding of the topic. The proposal will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography of at least eight reputable sources. For each source, you will provide an MLA-style Works Cited listing followed by a brief summary of the source and an evaluation of its value for your project.

A sample proposal and annotated bibliography are available on Moodle, along with a grading rubric.

Together, the proposal and bibliography are worth 50 points and are due no later than 7 p.m. March 23.

Presentation

This is your opportunity to share your results with classmates and others you may invite to the April 13 class session. This formal presentation will help your audience understand something about your author's literary constructions of place. Your presentation will be no more than 20 minutes and must include visual elements. The presentation is worth 50 points and will be evaluated according to a rubric available on Moodle.

Researched essay

Write an in-depth analysis of one or more works by an author of your choice, saying something new and interesting about the works' relationship to place. Your essay must be at least 1000 words long and include evidence from at least six sources (in addition to the texts you are analyzing).

You will meet with me on March 30 for a conference on your project. This is your opportunity to provide a status update, ask questions, and try out ideas.

On April 6, bring to class a readable draft of your essay for peer review. Failure to provide a draft will result in a failing grade on the paper.

The final paper is due no later than 7 p.m. April 20.