

ENGLISH 860: GREAT PLAINS LITERATURE

Spring 1999
Wednesday Night 7:05- 9:50
Line #2034
12;
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Dr. Diane Quantic
Office LH 608B
Office Hours: Mon. and Fri., 9-12;
Tues and Thurs 11-12; 1:30-3:00;
Wed. 2:00-4:30

Texts:

Cather, Willa. A Lost Lady*

---. My Antonia*

---. Great Short Works

Erdrich, Louise. Love Medicine, Revised and Expanded Edition*

Garland, Hamlin. Main Travelled Roads, University of Nebraska Press*

Hansen, Ron. Nebraska: Stories

Ise, John. Sod and Stubble, Annotated Edition, University Press of Kansas

Norris, Kathleen. Dakota: A Spiritual Geography

Quantic, Diane. The Nature of the Place: A Study of Great Plains Fiction**

Morris, Wright. Plains Song

Rølvaag, O.E. Giants in the Earth

Sandoz, Mari. Slogum House

NOTE: Where a specific edition is listed, it is important that you have that edition.

*- loaner available from professor

**-available for purchase from author

Course Description:

This course focuses on both classics and contemporary works of Great Plains literature. While the course focuses on the ways writers have presented a particular place, we will also read the works in the context of developments in American literature, history and popular culture in the last century. The class is designed for a wide range of graduate students: creative writers interested in the relationship between literary conventions and place; 7-12 teachers; students interested in American literature and history and students in other disciplines interested in the Great Plains.

Course requirements:

Attendance is essential in a course that meets only once a week. Attendance and participation will be factored into your final grade.

This semester, you will be the beneficiaries of some ideas I gathered recently at a conference on writing and technology. I hope these assignments will prove relevant to the course and allow you to investigate some research areas you might not have explored fully:

Microthemes: These will consist of very specific assignments that you can answer in

one or two pages. These will occur at approximately two-week intervals.

NetSearches: Each week different students will accept assignments to search the web for information relevant to the work(s) we are discussing. You will report briefly to the class--either orally or with a handout--regarding what you found (quantity) and whether or not it is valuable (quality). If you are not familiar with web searches, the instructor will offer free one-on-one instruction in her office.

Oral and written report. Your presentation to the class should be one that would be appropriate for a scholarly conference presentation. This means that it cannot exceed twenty minutes (8-10 double-spaced pages). This time limit will be strictly enforced. Your paper should be in a form that could be submitted to a journal for consideration--longer, with necessary notes, fully documented, with a full bibliography of works consulted and so on.

Final Exam: This will be an essay exam, given at the regularly scheduled time. The questions will follow the model for the comprehensive masters exam.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week One: Introducing. . .The Great Plains

Jan. 20. Course syllabus: various handouts

Instructor (that's me!) will provide some web search results.

Week Two: Plain(s) Stories

Jan. 27: Garland, "A Branch Road," through "The Return of a Private"

Hansen, "True Romance," "Sleepless"

Quantic, Chapters 1-2

NetSearch: _____

Microtheme assignment

Week Three: More Plain and Not-So-Plain Stories

Feb. 3: Garland, "Under the Lion's Paw," "A Day's Pleasure," "Mrs. Ripley's Trip"

Cather, Great Short Works, "The Sculptor's Funeral," "A Wagner Matinee"

Quantic, chapter 3

NetSearch: _____

First microtheme due

Week Four: Settlement

Feb. 10: Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth, "The Land-Taking"

Cather, Great Short Works, "Eric Hermansson's Soul"

NetSearch: _____

Microtheme assignment

Research topic/proposal due ("What I'm Going to Do, I Think")

Week Five: Survival

Feb. 17: Rølvaag, Giants in the Earth, "Founding the Kingdom"
Hansen, "Wickedness" and "Playland" (for contrast!)

NetSearch: _____
Microtheme due

Week Six: Hard Times

Feb. 24: Ise, Sod and Stubble
Quantic, chapter 5

NetSearch: _____
Microtheme assignment

NOTE: In March and April, sign up for a 20-minute presentation time slot:

Week Seven: Even Harder Times

March 3: Sandoz, Slogum House, to chapter seven (page 135)
video: Mari Sandoz

Report: _____
Microtheme due

Week Eight: Things Get Worse--and Then Better

March 10: Sandoz, Slogum House, chapter seven to end
Hansen: "Red Letter Days" (much better?)

NetSearch: _____

Report: _____
Microtheme assignment

Week Nine: Immigration

March 17, Cather, My Antonia, Books 1-3
Cather, Great Short Works, "The Bohemian Girl"

NetSearch: _____

Report: _____
Microtheme due

SPRING BREAK

Week Ten: Acculturation

March 31: Cather, My Antonia, Books 4-5
Cather, Great Short Works, "Neighbour Rosicky"
Cather video

Report: -----

Week Eleven: Community

April 7: Cather, A Lost Lady

Cather, Great Short Works, "The Novel D meubl "

NetSearch: -----

Report: -----

Microtheme assignment

Week Twelve: Native Americans in Community

April 14: Ehrdrich, Love Medicine,

Zitkala-Sa, American Indian Stories (handout)

Quantic, chapter 6

NetSearch: -----

Report: -----

Microtheme due

Week Thirteen: Re-visioning the Great Plains: Fiction

April 21: Morris, Plains Song

Quantic, chapter 6

NetSearch: -----

Report: -----

Microtheme assignment

Week Fourteen: Re-Visioning the Great Plains: Non-Fiction

April 28: Norris, Dakota: A Spiritual Geography

Quantic, chapter 7

NetSearch: -----

Report: -----

Microtheme due

Week Fifteen: Cleaning Up (On) the Plains

May 5: Finish up, catch up, Review introductions

Report: -----

Report: -----

FINAL EXAM, WEDNESDAY, MAY 12-- 7:40 - 9:30