

ENGL 4/805

Fiction: Literature of the American West

T-Th 11-12:15

Andrews 39



North Rim (c) John DePuy

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Texts

Jean Stafford, *The Mountain Lion*

Wallace Stegner, *Angle of Repose*

James Welch, *Fools Crow*

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian* and *The Crossing*

Aim This class will introduce students to six of the major novels of the past 50 years written in, and about, the intermountain American West. It is not a survey course, but an intensive reading of a small number of key texts. Students will learn to appreciate and analyze these works on the basis of their cultural, historical, and geographical contexts. Students will also become familiar with the application of a variety of modes of analysis to these works, in particular bioregionalism, ecocriticism, postcolonialism,

ethnocriticism, and myth criticism. Note: This is not a course on "The Western," per se, although the works we are reading borrow from, and comment upon, that genre, and there are plenty of cowboys, Indians, and horses.

Teaching Class will be largely discussion based, with, I hope, minimal lecturing.

Requirements All students: 6 reading response journals; 1 research paper (6-8 pages for 405 students, 12-15 pages for 805 students)

405 students: 3 short close reading assignments

805 students: 3 critical article summaries

805 students: 1 oral presentation of research paper

READING-RESPONSES: You will maintain an informal (but graded) series of responses to the readings. These will be due every few weeks, as indicated on the schedule. More details in "Assignments."

405 RESEARCH PAPER Students taking the class for 405 credit will write a 6-8 page research paper. Details will be posted in "Assignments" soon.

805 RESEARCH PAPER AND PRESENTATION Students taking the class for 805 credit will write a substantial research project, generally in the 15 page range. We will also do a conference-paper-style presentation of our research, with powerpoint, at the time of the final exam. Details will be posted in "Assignments" soon.

Approximate Grading Percentages

405 students

Attendance and participation: 15%

Reading Responses: 30%

Close readings: 30%

Research paper: 25%

805 students

Attendance and participation: 10%

Reading Responses: 20%

Article summaries: 30%

Research paper: 35%

Presentation: 5%

GRADING RUBRIC

100-97.5 = A+; 97-93 = A; 92.5-90 = A-; 89.5-87.5 = B+; 87-83 = B; 82.5-80 = B-; 79.5-77.5 = C+; 77-73 = C; 72.5-70 = C-;

69.5-67.5 = D+; 67-63 = D; 62.5-60 = D-; Below 60 = F.

Attendance and participation: The English Department policy statement on class attendance reads as follows: "Students who miss more than 20% of the scheduled class meetings of a course (for us that would be 6 classes) will ordinarily fail the course for that reason alone, except that (1) if the absences occur before the Withdrawal Passing period ends, the student may receive a "W" grade, and (2) if the absences are excused by the instructor or approved UNL policy and a large majority of them occur after the work of the course has been substantially completed, the student may receive an Incomplete ("I") grade."

That said, I expect you to attend all classes, to arrive on time, to be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, and to stay for the entire class period. More than three absences will result in a proportional grade penalty. NOTE: illness is not an "excused" absence, it is covered in the "3-freebies." Excused absences relate only to "[university sponsored activity](#)," or a religious observance not already supported by the University. If you stop coming to class, you must also officially drop it. This is YOUR responsibility.

Also, be aware, if you come to class but do not participate, your grade will be significantly impaired. Bring your books to class; we will refer to them frequently.

Truly, I expect that you want to come to class. That is why you are in college, you have a voracious curiosity and a passionate love of learning.

ELECTRONIC SUBMISSIONS: Most course assignments will be submitted electronically via Blackboard. When you submit an assignment you should be sure to do the following things: 1) use a common program, such as MSWord, 2) make sure your name is on the assignment itself, 3) always title your document this way: <yourlastname.assignment.doc>

That is, if I were submitting a close reading on McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, I would title the document something like: Lynch.McCarthyBloodCloseReading.doc. **PLEASE DO**

THIS. ASSIGNMENTS THAT DO NOT COMPLY WITH THIS REQUEST WILL BE DOCKED POINTS.

CELL PHONES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC GADGETS: Except for laptops used for note-taking or other class activities, all electronic devices such as cell phones and ipods must be turned off when you enter the classroom, and they should remain off. Please do not send text messages during class time. If you can't stop yourself, seek therapy.

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarism means representing the words or ideas of another as one's own. This includes quoting or paraphrasing from published sources (yes, including the internet) without acknowledging/citing the source of your information, or presenting quoted materials as your own words. You must be very clear about attribution of sources and you must know how to cite sources in a paper. Students who are unfamiliar with how to cite sources should purchase a style manual such as the MLA (Modern Language Association) Handbook ([or find similar material on the internet](#)). If I identify any plagiarized material in any of your work, I will FAIL YOU FOR THE SEMESTER, and you will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Neither ignorance nor extenuating circumstances justify plagiarism. (That is, I don't want to hear any excuses; tears will avail you not. Telling me you did it in high school and got away with it won't help either.) I will be glad to discuss any citation concerns you may have.

If you find yourself falling behind in your work due to extenuating circumstances, and feel tempted to plagiarize, DON'T. Instead, talk to me about your difficulties. We can arrange for projects to be turned in late, and, if circumstances warrant, we can even arrange for an incomplete grade in the class. I have a generous and flexible system for deadlines, and a very inflexible and draconian system for plagiarism: take your pick. Don't test me. I will, and nearly every semester I do, fail students for plagiarism. In such cases, appeals from parents will not be considered.

DEADLINES: Unless arranged with me otherwise, assignments are due at the times listed on the schedule. Except for reading response journals (which are partly designed to keep you current on the readings) late assignments will be accepted, but will suffer a proportional grade penalty. Unless otherwise arranged, no assignment will be accepted more than two weeks after the due date. Should you encounter unexpected difficulties, I am willing to work around the deadlines, but this should be arranged ahead of time

ACCOMMODATIONS: Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) provides individualized academic support for students with documented disabilities. Support services can include extended test time, textbooks and handouts in alternative formats (electronic texts, Braille, taped texts, etc), classroom notes, sign language interpreters, and transcriptionists. SSD not only accommodates students that have visible disabilities, but students with other varying types of disabilities that impact college life. If you have a documented disability that is impacting your academic progress, please call SSD at 472-3787 and schedule an appointment. If you do not have a documented disability but you are having difficulties with your coursework (such as receiving low grades even though

you study more than your classmates or find you run out of time for test questions when the majority of your peers finish their exams in the allotted time), you may schedule an appointment to discuss the challenges you are experiencing.



Ocotillo (c) John DePuy

Aug. 27 Introductions, thinking about literature of the American West
Aug. 29 *Blood Meridian*, I-V

Sept. 3 *Blood Meridian*, VI-XI [Close readings: Akins, Barlean, Cleary](#)
[Article summary: Bennitt, Clausen](#)

Sept. 5 *Blood Meridian*, XII-XVI [Close readings: Delp, Ellison, Finnegan](#)
[Article summary: Hiebner, Hill](#)

Sept. 10 *Blood Meridian*, XVII-XX [Close readings: Goll, Hildreth, Johnson](#)
[Article summary: Kim, Palma](#)

Sept. 12 *Blood Meridian*, XXI-Epilogue **Reading response due**

Sept. 17 *Fools Crow*, Part 1, chs. 1-6 [Close readings: Jones, Karloff, Larsen](#)
[Article summary: Regennitter](#)

Sept. 19 *Fools Crow*, Part 1, chs. 7-10 [Close readings: Matthews, Nordmeyer, Zima](#)
[Article summary: Rogers](#)

Sept. 24 *Fools Crow*, Part 2 [Close readings: Swearingin, Riggs](#)
[Article summary: White](#)

Sept. 26 *Fools Crow*, Part 3 [Close readings: Akins, Barlean, Cleary](#)
[Article summary: Bennitt](#)

Oct. 1 *Fools Crow*, Part 4 **Reading response due**

Oct. 3 *Angle of Repose*, Part I [Close readings: Delp, Ellison, Finnegan](#)
[Article summary: Clausen](#)

Oct. 8 *Angle of Repose*, Parts II, and III [Close readings: Goll, Hildreth, Johnson](#)
[Article summary: Hiebner, Hill](#)

Oct. 10 Video on Stegner

Oct. 15 *Angle of Repose*, Parts IV, V, VI, and VII [Close readings: Jones, Karloff, Larsen](#)

- Article summary: Kim, Palma
Oct. 17 *Angle of Repose*, Parts VIII and IX Reading response due
- Oct. 22 FALL BREAK
- Oct. 24 *Mountain Lion*, Chs. 1 and 2 Close readings: Matthews, Nordmeyer, Riggs
Article summary: Regennitter, Rogers
- Oct. 29 *Mountain Lion*, Chs. 3, 4, 5, and 6 Close readings: Swearingin, Zima
Article summary: White, Bennitt
- Oct. 31 *Mountain Lion*, Chs. 7, 8, and 9 Reading response due
- Nov. 5 *The Crossing*, Book I Close readings: Akins, Barlean, Cleary
Article summary: Clausen, Hiebner
- Nov. 7 *The Crossing*, Book I, cont.
- Nov. 12 *The Crossing*, Book II Close readings: Delp, Ellison, Finnegan
Article summary: Hill
- Nov. 14 *The Crossing*, Book III Close readings: Goll, Hildreth, Johnson
Article summary: Kim, Palma
- Nov. 15 (Last day to withdraw)
- Nov. 19 *The Crossing*, Book IV Close readings: Jones, Karloff, Larsen
Article summary: Regennitter
- Nov. 21 *The Crossing*, Book IV, cont. Reading response due
- Nov. 26 *Ceremony*, pp. 1-49 Close readings: Matthews, Nordmeyer, Riggs
Article summary: Rogers
- Nov. 28 THANKSGIVING
- Dec. 3 *Ceremony* pp. 49-100 Close readings: Swearingin, Zima
Article summary: White
- Dec. 5 *Ceremony*. pp. 100-151
- Dec. 10 *Ceremony*, pp. 151-201
- Dec. 12 *Ceremony*, pp. 201-262 Reading response due
- FINAL EXAM TIME Monday, Dec. 16 10:00 to noon, Oral presentations for 805 students
or by noon, papers due for 405 students.