

ENGLISH 3062
American Literature 1865 - 1914

Dr. Jason Haslam

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Office: McCain 1193; Office Hours: Friday 1:30-3:30

Course Description:

This course will focus on works written by US authors from the end of the Civil War to the beginning of the World War I. These decades saw immense social, philosophical and literary fluctuations not only in the US but around the world. In the US, this time period also includes the abolition of slavery, Southern Reconstruction, the building of the railroads, late nineteenth-century "conspicuous consumption," through to the beginning of what Henry Luce called the "American Century." Tied to this, the struggles for rights for women, African Americans, and the poor, among other traditionally disenfranchised groups, continued throughout this period, calling into question many dominant assumptions about the nation. From Mark Twain's and Bret Harte's narratives of the "settling" of the West, to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's and Henry James' gothic narratives, to W. E. B. DuBois' and Jack London's early modernist explorations, American literature from this period confronts all of these issues and more.

Required Texts

The Norton Anthology of American Literature. 8th ed. Vol. C.
 Henry James, *Turn of the Screw*

Course Requirements

Assignments

Shorter Essay (900-1200 words; approx 3-4 pages, double spaced): 15% **Due January 20**

Midterm: 15% In-class **February 12**

Research Essay, (1500-1800 words; approx. 5-6 pages, double spaced): 30% **Due March 24**

Final exam: 35% TBA (during University exam period).

Attendance and Participation: 5%

Assignment Descriptions

Shorter Essay: This will be a short essay on a topic chosen by the instructor (the topics will be handed out well in advance of the due date). This assignment involves NO secondary reading. Basically, the essay will involve a close reading of one of the works that we will be studying during the term. Proper MLA-style documentation is required for the essay.

Midterm: The midterm will consist of close readings and interpretations of some short passages chosen from the works studied.

Research Essay: In the essay, you will analyse two of the primary texts we have studied during

the term. You will construct a cohesive argument about the texts and use at least two critical/theoretical texts to help to support your argument. Topics will be handed out in class. Proper research techniques will be discussed in class. Proper MLA-style documentation is required for the essay.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of two sections. The first section will follow the format of the midterm, but passages will be from works covered after the midterm. The second section will consist of an essay, in which you will have to cover material from both before and after the midterm.

PLEASE NOTE: The final exam will be held during the official university examination period. Students **must** keep their schedules clear during those dates. Travel plans will **not** be accepted as an excuse for missing the exam.

Attendance and Participation: Each of these will be worth half of the 5%. The attendance mark will be based on attending each class and signing the sign-in sheet. The participation mark will be based on activity in class discussions and group work, and on the level of engagement with the text that is demonstrated (i.e. you must demonstrate that you have read *and* thought seriously about the text before class).

Other Course and University Policies:

Late Penalties

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date indicated, or at the time and date indicated. Late assignments will be docked 5% for each 24 hours that they are late. For example, a paper due at 12:00 pm on Day 1 will drop 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 1, another 5% starting at 12:01 pm on Day 2, etc. Only properly documented medical problems or other documented severe circumstances which are out of your control will be accepted as excuses for late or missed assignments.

Plagiarism

All students in this class are to read and understand the policies on academic integrity and plagiarism referenced in the Policies and Student Resources sections of the academicintegrity.dal.ca website. Ignorance of such policies is no excuse for violations. Any paper submitted by a student at Dalhousie University may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized from other sources. Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offence which may lead to loss of credit, suspension or expulsion from the University, or even to the revocation of a degree. It is essential that there be correct attribution of authorities from which facts and opinions have been derived. At Dalhousie there are University Regulations which deal with plagiarism and, prior to submitting any paper in a course, students should read the Policy on Intellectual Honesty contained in the Calendar or on the Online Dalhousie website. The Senate has affirmed the right of any instructor to require that student papers be submitted in both written and computer-readable format, and to submit any paper to be checked electronically for originality. As a student in this class, you are to keep an electronic copy of any paper you

submit, and the course instructor may require you to submit that electronic copy on demand.

AASC Statement on Accessibility

Students may request accommodation as a result of barriers related to disability, religious obligation, or any characteristic under the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act. Students who require academic accommodation for either classroom participation or the writing of tests and exams should make their request to the Advising and Access Services Center (AASC) prior to or at the outset of the regular academic year. Please visit www.dal.ca/access for more information and to obtain the Request for Accommodation – Form A.

A note taker may be required as part of a student's accommodation. There is an honorarium of \$75/course/term (with some exceptions). If you are interested, please contact AASC at 494-2836 for more information.

Please note that your classroom may contain specialized accessible furniture and equipment. It is important that these items remain in the classroom, untouched, so that students who require their usage will be able to participate in the class.

Netiquette

Sometimes, students may want to continue a discussion from class outside of the classroom itself. Until recently, such discussions were limited to face-to-face interactions with other students, friends, and/or the professor during office hours. Now, however, we have the digital tools to continue that conversation with the whole class, and even people not enrolled in the course. In this course, we have available to us discussion boards on the BbLearn/OWL page, as well as Twitter (where we can use the #DalEngl3062 hashtag to group our conversations). Posting to these forums is not required; they are merely one of several means of communication (**please note: email is still the official and only way you should contact your instructor or tutorial leader with questions about assignments, to arrange meetings, etc.**).

These technologies can offer an exciting way to engage in meaningful conversation outside of the class, but they do come with certain risks: the nature of online interaction can remove certain social cues many people rely on to judge how others are reacting to their comments, which can cause problems, and even shut down—rather than open up—dialogue. This problem is exacerbated on such platforms as Twitter, which by nature are open to the public, extending beyond the people directly involved in the class.

In order to avoid problems of this sort, students are asked to follow the guidelines below, as well as use their common sense, regarding what they post:

- *follow the guidelines of the Student Code of Conduct*
 - rude or abusive behaviour will result in an official complaint being filed, as per the Student Code of Conduct; see http://www.dal.ca/campus_life/student_services/student-rights-and-responsibilities/student-life-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html;
- *don't be condescending*
 - even when you disagree with someone, if you strive to find common ground then you can make your case to them more strongly than if you act

- like a know-it-all;
- *don't be creepy*
 - don't make overly personal comments, or discuss things you wouldn't bring up in a general classroom setting; statements that come across as clearly sarcastic or as jokes in person—because of context, verbal or facial cues, etc.— can register much differently online;
- *don't use profanity*
 - “swears” can sound much harsher online than in person, especially if they seem directed at a person (this is one rule that your professor may himself on occasion break, but he’s had many more decades of practice...);
- *disengage*
 - if a conversation takes an unpleasant turn, disengage, inform the professor, and remember that twitter has a block feature.
- *be helpful, be informative*
 - some good behaviour: stick to discussions that relate to class; provide informative, on-point links; ask questions! These are what such forums are for!

Readings and Class Schedule:

Note: Items marked “*” can be found in the “Extra Course Readings” Folder on BbLearn/Owl

- Jan
- I. Introduction: Civil War and the End(s) of Romanticism**
 6: Introduction
 8: Walt Whitman, “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed”; Emily Dickinson, 124 [Safe in their Alabaster Chambers -]
- II. Frontiers and the “New” America**
 13: Brett Harte, “Miggles,” “The Luck of Roaring Camp”
 15: Mark Twain, “The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County,” from *Roughing It* [“The Story of the Old Ram”]*
 20: Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; **First Essay Due**
 22: *Huckleberry Finn*, cont.
 27: *Huckleberry Finn*, cont.
- III. “The Problem of the Twentieth Century”**
 29: Booker T. Washington, from *Up from Slavery*
- Feb
- 3: W. E. B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk* (sel. in Norton, and on BbLearn/OWL*); Paul Laurence Dunbar, “We Wear the Mask,”
 5: Charles Chesnutt, “The Goophered Grapevine,” “The Passing of Grandison”

10: Research Lecture; Midterm prep
12: **MIDTERM**

17-21: **READING WEEK**

IV. Old Traditions, New Women

24: Henry Adams, Chapter XXV, “The Dynamo and the Virgin” (from *The Education of Henry Adams*)

26: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*

Mar. 3: *The Awakening*, continued
5: Research Lecture

10: Edith Wharton, “Roman Fever”
12: Sui Sin Far, “Mrs. Spring Fragrance”

V. Realism, Naturalism, and Their Discontents

17: Frank Norris, “Fantaisie Printanière”

19: Stephen Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*

24: Henry James, “The Beast in the Jungle”; **Research Essay Due**
26: Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*

April 31: *Turn of the Screw*, continued
2: *Deadwood* viewing and discussion

7: Review

Grading Scale

Mark Range (/100)	Grade	Range	Grade
90-100	A+	67-69	C+
85-89	A	63-66	C
80-84	A-	60-62	C-
77-79	B+	57-59	D+
73-76	B	53-56	D
70-72	B-	50-52	D-
		0-49	F

Please note: the D- and D+ grades are used for information purposes only; the University transcript does not include D- or D+ grades, so any final grade in the D range will appear as a simple “D”.