

ENGL 2326.401, 450

American Literature, American Dreams American Nightmares Spring 2026

Instructor Information

Dr. Carly Susser

Email: Message through Canvas, or email carly.susser@unt.edu

Office Hours: Thursday from 8 AM - 12 PM (CT), & by appointment

NOTE: I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays.

I will return feedback on written assignments within 2 weeks of the due date. Please check your Canvas Announcements regularly for updates on when feedback can be expected.

Course Description: What You'll Be Learning

"I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare." (Malcolm X, "Ballot or Bullet," 1964).

This course will survey American Literature from the nineteenth century to the present that interrogates key features of the American Dream--employment, housing, family, freedom, education. While some of the texts that we read will focus on those dreams, others will focus on how those dreams are so long delayed that they become living nightmares. Our readings and discussions will explore the historical, political and social conditions that give rise to the multiple literatures and articulations of American dreams and American nightmares. We will focus on developing the interdisciplinary skills of close reading in this course.

Course Structure: How We'll Learn Together

Since this is an entirely online course, your interactions with me and with your fellow students will take place in Canvas. In addition to my Zoom Office Hours, I am also available by appointment for individual Zoom meetings. This class is composed of 14 modules; each module is equivalent to a week in a traditional face-to-face course. Although the course is technically asynchronous since there is no recurring simultaneous class meeting time (as in a traditional face-to-face course), you will be required to complete the activities and assessments in each module by a specified time. Overall, late work is not accepted. In order to help foster a community of practice, a new module will open each week.

*F1 Visa holders, please be aware of the regulations and policies found here regarding online courses.

Course Objectives: How to Demonstrate Your Learning

1. Identify the main characters and major plot points in each of the literary works that we will read.
2. Match the titles of the assigned readings with their authors' names.
3. Recognize important aspects of a number of keywords drawn from literary studies, history, and theory that apply to our readings and are relevant to other humanities and social science courses and to contemporary cultural and political phenomena.
4. Discuss the topics and themes presented in our readings in relation to the course theme.
5. Analyze some of our readings for the thinking they mobilize about American identity.

6. Contrast two of our readings that share a similar topic to more effectively develop an interpretation of each work.
7. Integrate or synthesize your interpretive claims.
8. Compose effective literary and textual analyses.

Required Materials: What Book You Need

- John Okada. *No No Boy*. (1978) ISBN: 978-0295955254
- Lorraine Hansberry. *A Raisin in the Sun*. (1959) ISBN: 978-0679755333
- Jesmyn Ward. *Sing Unburied Sing*. (2017) ISBN: 978-1501126062
- Readings and Videos on Canvas

This course has digital components. To fully participate in this class, you will need internet access to reference content on the Canvas Learning Management System. If anything changes, you will be informed of other technical needs to access course content. Information on how to be successful in a digital learning environment can be found at [Learn Anywhere](#).

Tips for Success

Get Connected! Research has shown that connectedness is an important factor in academic success. It can feel uncomfortable to reach out for help and ask questions, but it is a good skill to develop. You can always email me your questions for a fast response, and you can also stop by during Zoom office hours (link on Canvas), or email me so we can set up a different time.

Use Your Resources!

We all need additional support from time to time. Don't suffer in silence or feel you have to go at this alone. University life is filled with challenges! UNT has so many great resources to support you.

Office of Disability Access

The Office of Disability Access (ODA) can work with you on academic accommodations if needed. The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. You must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation each semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information, refer to the Office of Disability Access website. You may also contact ODA by phone at (940) 565-4323 or visit their website to begin the registration process for additional support.

Additional Resources

- UNT's Counseling and Testing Services can provide psychological counseling and academic testing
- UNTWell provides FREE individual and group counseling as well as a vocational assessment
- UNT Food Pantry is a great resource if you or someone you know experiences food insecurity
- Academic Success Center can support you in your academics

Our Learning Community

It is my goal to create an inclusive learning environment. Every student should feel supported in sharing their unique perspective and be treated with respect. You are an integral part of our learning community and your viewpoint and perspective are valuable to your fellow learners. Through our group discussions, you'll have opportunities for collaboration so your participation is essential to not only your learning but your fellow team members. In order for you and your teammates to get the most out of the course, please do your part by participating fully, sharing your insights and doing so by the deadlines provided.

When connecting with me and your fellow students, please keep an open mind and communicate in a respectful manner. We don't all have to agree, but we can learn from one another's unique perspectives. I encourage you to review UNT's student code of conduct so that we can all start with the same baseline of understanding (Code of Student Conduct).

Grading: How Your Learning and Participation Will Be Assessed

A: 90-100%
B: 80-89.5%
C: 70-79.5%
D: 60-69.5%
F: 59.5 and below

Grades

Quizzes: 25%
Close Reading Activities: 50%
Final Comparative Essay: 25

Late Work

There is a 24-hour grace period for work in this course. As a general rule, no quizzes or activities can be made up once the grace period for that assessment has passed and the assignment locks. Late essays will receive a full letter grade deduction the day after the grace period end date. If you are unable to submit your work before the grace period ends, please contact me A.S.A.P. (carly.susser@unt.edu or via Canvas) so I can decide—on a case-by-case basis—whether to allow you further time to complete the assignment or assessment.

Policy: If a student qualifies for university-excused absence please notify your instructor within 48 hours of a missed deadline.

Technical Difficulties?

If you have any technical issues submitting your assignments in Canvas, please do the following:

- Check that you are using a compatible browser, like Google Chrome.
- Contact the Help Desk for [technology support](#).
- Email your instructor your assignment along with a screenshot of your [chat with the Help Desk](#) if they are unable to assist you with the submission issue. This will show me that you did complete it on time. Then, resubmit to Canvas once you are able (occasionally, there are temporary glitches).

Schedule: Canvas Course Summary

For deadlines, please see the Canvas Course Summary

NOTE: Students will be notified by Eagle Alert if there is a campus closing that will impact a class and describe that the calendar is subject to change, citing the [Campus Closures Policy](https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006) (<https://policy.unt.edu/policy/15-006>).