### English 2326.003

**American Literature**

**9:00 MWF Language 216**

**Fall 2025**

**Instructor:** Dr. Robin Coffelt

**Office:** Language Building 409J

**Office Hours:**

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 1:00-1:50 in person in LANG 408L.

Via Zoom Tuesdays 10:30-11:30 and Thursdays 1:30-2:30 (<https://unt.zoom.us/j/81509678128>)

**English Department Main Office:** (940) 565-2050

**E-mail address:** [Janie.Coffelt@unt.edu](mailto:Janie.Coffelt@unt.edu)

**Why you’re here:** The purpose of this course is to introduce you to some North American texts that wrestle with the ideas of the American Dream and the American Nightmare. We’ll talk about what the Dream entails for Americans and Canadians in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries, what it means to realize or not realize this Dream, and whether pursuit of the Dream itself or outside forces assist in the Dream becoming a Nightmare. We’ll examine various genres including poetry, drama, and fiction. In this course, you’ll learn to interpret literature more skillfully, write about literature more fluently, and become a more sophisticated American and global citizen.

**Textbooks**

Required:

* Poetry course packet (provided)
* Miller, Arthur. *Death of a Salesman*.
* Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God.*
* Hansberry, Lorraine. *A Raisin in the Sun.*
* Bradbury, Ray. *Fahrenheit 451.*
* Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid’s Tale.*
* Mandel, Emily St. John. *Station Eleven.*

\*Do shop around. Barnes and Noble on campus advertises that they will match prices from Amazon and elsewhere. Do take them up on this.

**Course Objectives** To read and analyze a variety of works of North American literature

To write effective literary analysis

To improve your ability to analyze literature in multiple genres

**Evaluation** Essay #1--Shorter 15%

Essay #2--Longer 25%

Exam 1 10%

Exam 2 15%

Final Exam 25%

Participation and Attendance 10%

**Policies and** **Procedures**

**Attendance** **● If you miss ten or more classes for any reason, you may fail the course**. This is in alignment with English Department policy. It is your responsibility to keep a record of how many absences you have, although you may ask me to confirm.

● If you must miss class, you are responsible for getting all material covered, including lecture notes, handouts, and assignments, from a fellow student before contacting me.

● Per university and department policy, I do not differentiate between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, except for absences as required by state law (Title IX, Religious Holy Days, and Military Service) and university-sponsored absences. If you will be absent due to a legally excused absence or a school-sponsored event, please bring the proper paperwork to me as they occur, then **send me an email during the last week of the semester** to remind me about your sponsored or allowed absences.

● Be on time for class. If you miss roll, you will be counted absent unless you check in with me after class. Two tardies equal one absence. Repeated cell phone use without permission may count as a tardy.

● Plan to remain in class for the entire 50 minutes, except for emergencies—in general, take care of personal needs before or after class. However, in the event of an emergency, you need not ask to be excused.

● Your attendance grade will be calculated as follows: any student who has four or fewer absences and has participated regularly and positively in class will earn a grade between 90 and 100%. The grade will then decrease by ten percent per absence for absences 5-9. Students with ten or more absences (except for excused absences as defined above or substantial extenuating circumstances) will earn a grade of zero for participation, and may also fail the course for nonattendance/ low attendance.

● Please use absence “freebies” with care—they’re meant for when

you’re ill, have car trouble, or some other exigency. If you use them

all for non-essential reasons early in the semester, then, yes, the

subsequent absences when you have an emergency still “count.”

● Regardless of how many absences you have, please do not come to

class if you have symptoms of a contagious illness such as flu or

COVID.

**Participation ●** This course includes substantial discussion. Participation in discussion helps you learn more and makes the class better. Therefore, as you are preparing for each class meeting, make a list of discussion points and questions in your notes. Active learning such as this is a key to success. Plan on making at least one comment nearly every day. If it’s hard for you to speak up in class, this is a skill you’ll need to practice. This class is a good opportunity for such practice.

**●** An important part of our course and of your participation grade is discussion questions. Prepare at least one thoughtful, open-ended question about the day’s reading, and be prepared to write it on the board to share with the class if selected to do so. We’ll typically have three or four questions on the board each day. I keep track of how many discussion questions each person shares, and factor that number into your participation grade. (The total number of shared questions depends on the size of the class.) My teaching philosophy is that an organic class is a more interesting class. So I’ll typically prepare some things to share with you and discuss about each text, and then we’ll proceed to generate discussion together, usually via your questions.

**Appointments** ● I strongly encourage you to make appointments to discuss your progress in this course, or to discuss any relevant concerns or interests. Individual conferences are one of the best ways for students to learn, and frankly, those students who occasionally come in to discuss their work one-on-one tend to show more improvement than those who do not. If you wish to discuss a graded assignment, however, you must make your appointment for at least 24 hours after I have returned the document to you.

**Your** **●** Be awesome. Talent is a little bit of natural aptitude combined with a

**Responsibilities** lot of practice and hard work. No one acquires a skill set by magic. Even Spiderman needed science.

● Ours is a low-technology classroom. Use class time as an opportunity for a tech break. Silence phones and **put them away**, out of sight, for the entire class unless I specify otherwise. Let me know if you have a special circumstance. Otherwise, I expect that your phones will be out of your sight for the entire 50 minute class.

● Please take notes by hand rather than on a laptop, in order to best maximize your own learning and the learning of people around you. If you need or strongly prefer to use a laptop, let me know, and I’m happy to work with you. But please do not use a laptop in class unless we have discussed it. Do, however, take notes—you’ll perform far better on the exams if you have class notes to study.

● Unless you have an accommodation or we have otherwise discussed it, please remove earbuds and headphones as class begins.

● Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a

class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.  The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)

**Readings ●** Much of our class discussion will concern each day’s readings. I may also provide you with supplemental readings throughout the semester. You are required to complete each reading by the date indicated on the syllabus. Keeping up with the readings is absolutely essential to your success in the course. It’s a literature course. You have to read literature.

**Essay Guidelines** ● Since students should have taken two semesters of First Year Writing prior to this course, it is assumed that you have basic communication skills adequate to write a clear literary analysis. If you are concerned about your grammar, mechanics or other basic writing skills, come see me, and we can discuss ways to enhance your chances for success in this class. (See “be awesome,” above.)

● You will turn in essays on Canvas. All essays are due on time. Essays

not submitted on time will be docked ten points for each calendar day

(including weekend days) that an essay is late. The ten-point deduction

may begin as soon as the essay is late.

● I very occasionally grant extensions due to personal illness, a death in the family, or other serious life circumstances. However, I will almost always grant those extensions BEFORE an assignment is due, not after the fact. You must request such an extension via e-mail.

● Any essay that does not adhere to the instructions for the assignment regarding content, length, or other factors may receive a grade of F.

● Prepare essays using standard MLA format for heading and title placement. Double-space your essays, using 12 point Times New Roman font and 1" margins. If you’re not sure about the conventions for essay formatting, go here for a sample essay: <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_sample_paper.html>

● It may take up to two weeks for me to grade your essays and other assignments. After two weeks, pestering and badgering are absolutely allowed. Before that, not so much. I know how much grading I have to do. Oh, believe me. I know.

**Exams ●** The three exams in this course will be designed to test your mastery of the course objectives. They will require higher-level critical thinking skills such as literary analysis, not just rote memorization. They will include a mix of matching, fill in the blank, short answer, and essay questions.

**Plagiarism** “The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, the use, by

## And Other paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of

## Academic another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes

## Dishonesty the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or

## agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials” (UNT Undergraduate Catalog).

If you turn in a piece of writing all or part of which you have plagiarized, you may be penalized up to being dismissed with an “F” in the course. If you use unauthorized assistance of any kind in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, you may be penalized up to being dismissed with an “F” in the course. Further action within the context of university guidelines may be considered. **Be aware that plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty are grounds for expulsion from the university**.

The use of generative AI writing tools (such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, Claude, Gemini, or any others) is prohibited in this class. Assignments for the course have been designed to help you develop as a writer without the use of these technologies. Reading and writing thoughtfully, especially long-form reading and writing, is perhaps the best way to develop intellectually. This course provides you with that opportunity. You will generate ideas, read, revise, and write on your own and/or in consultation with peers, me, or Writing Center tutors, and you will not use AI at any stage of your writing process. You are the author of your work for the course and authorship means you take responsibility for your words and claims. Any use of AI technologies in your work will be considered an [violation of UNT's academic integrity policy](https://policy.unt.edu/sites/default/files/06.003%20Student%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf) and addressed accordingly.

Dual submission, or turning in the same or substantively similar work in two classes without permission from both instructors, or turning in the same or substantively similar work when retaking a course, is a form of plagiarism and is expressly forbidden.

**Essential** In accordance with the terms and spirit of the Americans with Disabilities

**Competencies** Act and Section 504, Rehabilitation Act, I will cooperate with the office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you have a disability for which you require accommodation, please advise me of your needs in writing no later than the second week of class.

Essential competencies for the course include the ability

● to read and analyze works of literature

● to write clear, concise prose in response to a prompt

● to discuss literature in class and in small groups

# Schedule of Readings and Assignments

**Please complete each reading and be prepared to discuss it on the day listed on the syllabus. I expect you to read the biographical headnotes for each author.**

**Week One—**

**Begin Unit 1: Poetry**

***Mon., Aug. 18*** ● Introduction to Course

***Wed., Aug. 20*** ● *Death of A Salesman,* Arthur Miller, Act One

***Fri., Aug. 22*** ● *Death of A Salesman,* con’t.

**Week Two**

***Mon., Aug. 25*** ● *Death of a Salesman,* Act Two and Requiem

***Wed., Aug. 27*** ● *Death of a Salesman,* con’t.

***Fri., Aug. 29*** ●*Death of a Salesman,* wrap-up

**●** Introduce Poetry Unit (from provided packet)

**Week Three**

***Mon., Sept. 1*** Labor Day Holiday. Classes Do Not Meet.

***Wed., Sept. 3*** ● Poems as assigned

***Fri., Sept. 5*** ●Poems as assigned

**Week Four**

***Mon., Sept. 8*** ● Poems as assigned

***Wed., Sept. 10* ●** Poems as assigned

***Fri., Sept. 12* ● Exam #1**

**Week Five**

***Mon., Sept. 15*** **●** Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Chapters 1-5

***Wed., Sept. 17*** **●** *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* Chapters 6-10

***Fri., Sept. 19*** ● *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* Chapters 11-18

**Week Six**

***Mon., Sept. 22 ●*** *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* continued

***Wed., Sept. 24***  ● *Their Eyes Were Watching God,* Chapters 19-20

***Fri., Sept. 26* ●** *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

● **Essay #1 Due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.**

**Week Seven**

***Mon., Sept. 29*** ● Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun,* Act I

***Wed., Oct. 1*** ●*A Raisin in the Sun,* Act II

***Fri., Oct. 3*** ● *A Raisin in the Sun*, Act III

**Week Eight**

***Mon., Oct. 6*** ● *A Raisin in the Sun,* con’t.

***Wed., Oct. 8*** ● **Exam #2 (Cumulative)**

***Fri., Oct. 10*** ● Ray Bradbury, *Fahrenheit 451*, Chapter One

**Week Nine**

***Mon., Oct. 13*** ● *Fahrenheit 451*, Chapter Two

***Wed., Oct. 15*** ● *Fahrenheit 451,* Chapter Three

***Fri., Oct. 17*** ●*Fahrenheit 451,* con’t.

**Week Ten**

***Mon., Oct. 20*** ● Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid’s Tale*, Chapters I and II

***Wed., Oct. 22***  ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters III and IV

***Fri., Oct. 24*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters V and VI

**Week Eleven**

***Mon., Oct. 27*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters VII and VIII

***Wed., Oct. 29*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters IX and X

***Fri, Oct. 31*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters XI and XII

**Week Twelve**

***Mon., Nov. 3*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters XIII and XIV

***Wed., Nov. 5***  ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* Chapters XV and “Historical Notes” (which is an epilogue)

***Fri., Nov. 7*** ● *The Handmaid’s Tale,* wrap-up

**Week Thirteen**

***Mon., Nov. 10*** ● Emily St. John Mandel, *Station Eleven,* Part 1 (Chapters 1-6)

***Wed., Nov. 12*** ● *Station Eleven,* Part 2 (Chapters 7-12)

***Fri., Nov. 14*** ● *Station Eleven,* Part 3 (Chapters 13-18)

● **Essay #2 due on Canvas by 11:59 p.m.**

**Week Fourteen**

***Mon., Nov. 17*** ● *Station Eleven,* Parts 4 and 5 (Chapters 19-37)

***Wed., Nov. 19* ●** *Station Eleven,* Parts 6 and 7 (Chapters 38-47)

***Fri., Nov. 21*** ● *Station Eleven,* Parts 8 and 9 (Chapters 48-55)

**November 24-30: Thanksgiving Break. No Classes Meet.**

**Week Fifteen**

***Mon., Dec. 1*** ● *Station Eleven* wrap-up

***Wed., Dec. 3*** ● Course Wrap-up and SPOT Evaluation

***Fri., Dec. 5*  University Reading Day. Classes Do Not Meet.**

**The final exam for this course is Wednesday, December 10 from 8:00-10:00 a.m. in our usual classroom. It is cumulative.**