

American Literary Realism

Course Info:

Course No.: ENG10-734-01

Section: 18520

Date/Time: M/W 3:00 – 4:15pm

Location: Mood-Bridwell 109

Website: americanrealismspring13.pbworks.com

Instructor: Ashley Squires, PhD

Office: Mood-Bridwell 311

Office Phone: 863-1815 (please send email rather than leaving voicemail)

Office Hours: M 12:00-1:30, W 1:30-3:00 or by appointment

Email: squiresa@southwestern.edu

Description:

Realism is the term used by authors and critics to describe the defining literary movement of the period from roughly 1860 to 1920. More than Modernism or even Romanticism, it is a term that speaks to the particular expectations readers bring to fiction, favoring verisimilitude, relatability, logical consistency, and social responsibility over escapism and exaggeration. But as we shall see, it is a term that remains fairly unstable and gets deployed differently depending on who's using it. The range of topics and styles available to the "realist" varies widely, as does the aesthetic and social aims of the fiction that gets placed under the heading of Realism.

During the first half of the semester, we will examine the seminal works of the Big Three figures in American Realism: William Dean Howells, Henry James, and Mark Twain. We shall then spend the rest of the semester looking at responses to those authors provided by Naturalists and Regionalists, usually from figures who provide alternatives to the white, middle class male perspective of the previous three.

Objectives:

In addition to providing an overview of the major authors of this period, this course will offer students the opportunity to develop their skills in academic research and writing. By the end of the semester, students will not only be able to locate peer reviewed secondary sources but to evaluate and engage with them intelligently. Additionally, students will write an original argument that integrates class readings and external sources. Nevertheless, students should recognize that this is a reading-intensive class and that keeping up with reading assignments and being prepared to discuss them in class is essential to success.

Required Reading:

The Rise of Silas Lapham, William Dean Howells

Portrait of a Lady, Henry James

Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain

The Marrow of Tradition, Charles Chesnutt

McTeague, Frank Norris

The Call of the Wild, White Fang, & To Build Fire, Jack London (Modern Library edition)

The Country of Pointed Firs, Sarah Orne Jewett

The Awakening, Kate Chopin

The House of Mirth, Edith Wharton

Assessment:

- 15% - Close Reading Essay (400-600 words)
- 15% - Analysis of a Scholarly Article (400-600 words)
- 20% - Discussion Leading (Bibliography & Discussion Questions)
- 50% - Final Research Paper (2500-2800 words)
 - 10% - Annotated Bibliography
 - 15% - First Draft
 - 5% - Peer Review
 - 20% - Final Draft

Attendance:

You are counted absent if you miss more than twenty minutes of any given class period. Regular and timely attendance is essential to doing well in this class. You are allowed 3 “free” absences for the entire semester. Each subsequent absence will result in the deduction of 3 points from your final grade. There will be no excused absences except for University approved religious holidays. Please save your freebies for illnesses and emergencies. If you have an extreme setback that requires you to miss multiple weeks of class (hospitalization, apartment fire, zombie apocalypse) and that you can document, you should come discuss it with me as soon as humanly possible.

Late Papers:

Papers are due by 11:59 pm on the day listed on the syllabus. Papers may not be submitted late unless you have made prior arrangements with me to do so. If you think you are going to need an extension or if you have an extreme setback of the type mentioned in the previous paragraph, you need to come discuss it with me immediately.

Grammar:

Despite whatever impressions you may have gotten from English teachers past, I do not sit up at night thinking about the subjunctive, and I am likely to forgive a comma splice or sentence fragment here and there so long as it doesn't make my task as a reader tortuous. I have no official procedure for grading grammar mistakes (1 point off for every missing comma!) other than saying that if your paper does not make sense or is difficult to read, you will lose points in categories on my rubric ranging from organization to clarity to editing in addition to being responsible for your instructor overdosing on non-prescription headache meds. Reference guides like *The Little Penguin Handbook* are highly useful resources that you are likely to consult throughout your college career. Students should also feel free to make use of the Writing Center.

Citations:

For research-based projects, all sources need to be cited using MLA format, and parenthetical citations for all quotes and paraphrases must be included along with a Works Cited page at the end of the document. Papers with an average of 2 missing citations per paragraph will automatically receive a failing grade and are eligible for academic dishonesty hearings, since the line between forgetfulness and deliberate plagiarism is often quite fuzzy (see below). Papers without a Works Cited will be reduced a full letter grade. If you are unsure about citation procedures, please check an MLA handbook, visit the Writing Center, or consult an appropriate website, such as the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Lab).

Honor Code:

Students should act “with honesty and integrity,” as the SU honor code requires, which includes properly citing the work of others and collaborating with others only when it is specifically

authorized. Honor Code violations will be reported to the Dean of Students office regardless of the level of egregiousness.

Students with Disabilities:

Southwestern University will make reasonable accommodations for persons with documented disabilities. Students should contact the Center for Academic Success to determine their eligibility to receive accommodations.

Reading Schedule

Date	Discussion Topic	Reading Assignment
Week 1		
1/14	Introduction	
1/16	William Dean Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>	Chapters 1-5
Week 2		
1/21	MLK Day - No class	
1/23	William Dean Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>	Chapters 6-13
Week 3		
1/28	William Dean Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i> **Brown Symposium**	Chapters 14-21
1/30	William Dean Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i>	Chapters 22-end
Week 4		
2/4	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 1-9
2/6	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 10-15
Week 5		
2/11	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 16-25
2/13	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 26-32
Week 6		
2/18	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 33-45
2/20	Henry James, <i>Portrait of a Lady</i>	Chapters 46-end
Week 7		
2/25	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Chapters 1-10
2/27	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Chapters 11-19
Week 8		
3/4	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Chapters 20-34
3/6	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>	Chapter 35-end
3/8	**Final day to turn in Close Reading and Analysis of a Scholarly Source**	
Week 9	Spring Break	
Week 10		
3/18	Frank Norris, <i>McTeague</i>	Chapters 1-12
3/20	Frank Norris, <i>McTeague</i>	Chapters 13-end
Week 11		
3/25	Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i>	Chapters 1-22
3/27	Charles Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i>	Chapters 23-end
3/29	**Annotated Bibliography due**	

Week 12		
4/1	Jack London, <i>White Fang</i>	Whole novel
4/3	Jack London, <i>The Call of the Wild</i>	Whole novella
Week 13		
4/8	Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>The Country of Pointed Firs</i>	Chapters 1-15
4/10	Sarah Orne Jewett, <i>The Country of Pointed Firs</i>	Chapters 16-end
4/12	**First draft due**	
Week 14		
4/15	Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>	Chapters 1-22
4/17	Kate Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i>	Chapters 23-end
4/19	**Peer Reviews due**	
Week 15		
4/22	Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Book I, Chapters 1-9
4/24	Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Book I, Chapters 10-15
Week 16		
4/29	Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Book II, Chapters 1-9
5/1	Edith Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i>	Book II, Chapters 10-14
5/3	**Final paper due**	