

**ENG 308**  
**American Literature 1865 to 1940**  
Dr. Peter Sands || fall 2005

Class: CRT 368, M, W 2-315 p.m.  
Office: Curtin 578  
Office hours: M 1-3; and by appt.

sands@uwm.edu  
<http://www.uwm.edu/~sands>  
229.4416 (o); 964.4342 (h)

## **Introduction**

This course surveys the literature of the United States between the Civil War and World War II. It is a hybrid course that meets half the time online.

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature reflects the rapid growth westward and southward, industrialization, changing social and economic conditions, and experimentation with language. There are many ways to organize a course such as this. New England authors dominate, at least early on. But newer scholarship and changing readers have steadily incorporated other writers and stories: non-whites, women, people from every walk of life and region of the country. We could look at regions, moving from the Northeast to the West and the South. We could look at race and gender, exploring the contributions of women and non-whites, as well as their reception in the culture. We could look at the experiments with form, genre, and content in poetry and prose. And we could integrate all those approaches. This particular course walks the line between the "canonical" and "other" literatures of the period, relying on in-class discussion to fill in some of the gaps. In your final projects, you must focus on an author not covered in class—from any writer in the period.

My belief is that vigorous engagement with the material, both online and in the classroom, needs to happen through frequent writing and reflection about the reading. Rather than the one-way street of lecture and reading, the weekly writing assignments in the course will generate learning, dialogue, and interpretation. We will write both short, informal, and one longer, more formal paper, in two substantial drafts.

This course will meet part of the time in a regular classroom and part of the time online. Much of our time in the classroom will be spent talking about the reading assignments and your online, written responses—so come to class every week prepared to discuss both what you've read and what you've written. Beginning the second week, we will conduct about half of the classwork online.

Students may be expected to meet once with the instructor, as well as fill out questionnaires and surveys pertinent to the class.

## **Course Goals**

- Study the broad contours of American literature of the period.
- Explore and write about print and online resources for students of literature.
- Study, learn, and practice writing and revising skills for literary and cultural studies.

## Required Materials

Books, available at People's Books on Locust Street:

Conarroe, *Six American Poets*  
 Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*  
 James, *Turn of the Screw & Other Stories*  
 Chopin, *The Awakening & Selected Stories* (Signet)  
 Gilman, *The Yellow Wall-Paper*  
 Norris, *McTeague*  
 Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*  
 Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*  
 Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*  
 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Other:

- Instructor handouts, a dictionary and a good style manual (e.g., MLA Handbook).
- A good attitude and reliable Internet connection for online readings and activities

## Required Electronic Literacy

Because this “hybrid” course meets partly online, you need to be able to:

- Open, edit, save, and store files in MS-Word or Rich Text format. Transfer data between applications through cut-and-paste or other techniques.
- Create, send, receive and read email, including attachments, using UWM email.
- Use Desire to Learn (D2L) to read assignments, post responses, and attach paper drafts.

Help files are available at the D2L site: <https://uwm.courses.wisconsin.edu/>. For more information on hybrid classes, read: <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/LTC/hybridcourses.html>.

## Course Policies and Procedures

Each week will look like this:

Read/Write alone	→→	Write/Discuss Together	→→	Reflect on Learning
------------------	----	------------------------	----	---------------------

I highly value collaboration, sharing, and creative interplay. I prefer to keep lectures brief and concentrate on student-led discussion and question-and-answer. This means that it is incumbent upon each of you to engage the readings critically and to make significant contributions to discussions, whether conducted face-to-face, synchronously using a computer during class time, or via email. You are expected to puzzle over, worry at, think upon, write about, and otherwise actively engage the material rather than simply imbibing it.

Specifically, you must:

- Complete all reading and writing assignments by their due dates.
- Attend class when we meet; complete online tasks when we don't.
- Participate vigorously and with respect for the ideas of others, the newness of the material to *everyone* in the class, and the need for patience, patience, patience.

### **Participation by Students with Disabilities/Religious Accommodation**

If you need special accommodations to complete requirements, please contact me early. Students will be allowed to complete requirements missed for a religious observance.

### **Hybrid Courses**

You should think of the hybrid class as being like a twice-a-week class that only meets once. So what happens to that other hour and a half? How do you spend the 9-12 hours of out-of-class preparation/reading/writing time that is expected of a normal 3-credit course? (The expectation is for 2-4 hours of outside-class preparation for every 1 hour of in-class time!)

You will spend that time:

- Reading and writing.
- Exploring online archives and library resources.
- Exchanging ideas with each other.
- Discovering independently online and print resources in early American literature.

### **The Week**

A hybrid course releases students and faculty from being tied to a given time and place for our studies by distributing our time and attention more evenly through the week. Because we meet partly online and partly in a classroom, it is necessary to rethink the notion of class-time. In this class, it will be more helpful to think in terms of “the week,” rather than the class. Accordingly, when considering your interactions online and in-class, you should think in terms of weeks-long exchanges in which some members of the class are responsible for posting their thoughts online by Friday and others are responsible for replying by Monday, etc. You don't have to wait for either Monday or Friday to make your posting—you choose the time during the week when you have the time and the words to contribute. Repeat each week.

Thus, a week looks like (beginning with the class meeting):

- Monday – Class meeting
- Tuesday – read/write/online work
- Wednesday – Commentaries due (see instructions on handout)
- Thursday – read/write/online work
- Friday – Responses to Commentaries due (see instructions on handout)
- Sat/Sun – read/write/online work

And a month looks like:

- Week 1: read/write/discuss
- Week 2: read/write/discuss
- Week 3: read/write/discuss
- Week 4: read/write/discuss – and reflect

## Writing Assignments

There are two kinds of writing assignments in this class: informal and formal. You can think of the difference between them as the difference between trying your ideas out with friends versus presenting them for evaluation.

Please take the informal writing as a serious obligation from which you can reap great rewards. See them as practice in thinking your way into and through problems. This writing is intended to generate class discussion and test your ideas before committing them to full arguments in your major project. Try ideas out, think implications through, throw them out for discussion, but worry more about content than form.

This course's informal and formal writing assignments should:

- Increase fluency in producing, revising and editing writing.
- Distribute as much as possible responsibility for generating discussion.
- Prepare you for writing longer projects and for writing in other courses.

If you find yourself taking more than my suggested times, please meet with me.

## Informal Writing Tasks

1. Weekly reading responses (30-40 minutes each time):  
See the handout “Weekly Commentaries and Responses.”
2. Monthly reflection (30-60 minutes each month):  
See the handout “Reflective Letters Assignment.”

## Formal Writing Projects:

Everyone will complete one final project, a paper of 8-10 pages. This paper is to go through two preliminary drafts and one final, with workshopping by members of your review group. Only papers that have gone through all three drafts will earn full credit.

Each member of the class will have at least three partners in their review group. Your group will be your support system as well as the first line of response to your writing and your monthly reflections. Dr. Sands will also be a member of each group.

A formal assignment guide is available on the course website.

## Grades

Your grade will be calculated by averaging together separate grades for three areas:

1. Informal writing: includes Commentary/Response and Monthly Reflections and discussion prompts.
2. Formal writing: your major project.
3. Peer review: your peers will assign this grade based on your online performance and your review of their final projects.

### Informal-Writing Contract:

A grading contract is an advantage to students: because you don't stand or fall on a single assessment, your grade more accurately reflects the quality of your work over time, rather than how you do on a particular day or at a particular task. What's more, this contract emphasizes the quality of your understanding and interaction with the texts and each other over less-relevant measures.

Informal writing will be assessed as Acceptable or Unacceptable. You will be notified if your work is Unacceptable; otherwise assume that completion = Acceptable.

Acceptable	Unacceptable
On-task	Sloppy, careless, rushed, mechanical errors
Actively engaged/cites reading/reflective	Factually/logically inaccurate
Around 250 words	Too short/non-substantive
On time	Late

90-100 % Acceptables = A; 80-90 % = B; 70-80 % = C; 60-70 % = D; 0 - 60 % = F

### Major Projects:

The longer projects will be graded on an A-F scale, focusing on quality of writing and research, and the writer's demonstrated understanding of early American literature, culture and history, not time and effort expended.

Failure to turn in early draft(s) or to respond to peers appropriately and on time will reduce your final grade by one letter.

### Peer Review:

Your peer review grade will be assigned via a criteria sheet distributed and discussed in class, so it behooves you to think about what makes for good peer review and how you want to achieve a high performance in that category.

## Schedule

**Preparation → → Writing/Discussion → → Reflection**

Weekly Reading for Monday's Class	By Wed: Commentary	By Fri: Responses	Monthly Reflection	Projects
9/8 intros; syllabus	9/8— <b>note early deadline</b> A on Whitman	9/12 B on Whitman		
9/12 “Song of Myself”	9/14 B on Dickinson	9/16 A on Dickinson		
9/19 “Song”; lesser poems	9/21 A on Twain	9/23 B on Twain		
9/26 <i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	9/28 B on Twain	9/30 A on Twain	1 <sup>st</sup> Reflection	
10/3 <i>Huckleberry Finn</i>	10/5 A on Dreiser	10/7 B on Dreiser		
10/10 <i>Sister Carrie</i>	10/12 B on Norris	10/14 A on Norris		
10/17 Project discussion; <i>McTeague</i>	10/19 A on Norris	10/21 B on Norris		Project Proposals (10/21)
10/24 <i>McTeague</i>	10/26 B on James and Gilman	10/28 A on James and Gilman	2 <sup>nd</sup> Reflection	Proposal Comments Due (11/4)
10/31 <i>Turn of the Screw</i> ; <i>Yellow Wall-paper</i>	11/2 A on Faulkner	11/4 B on Faulkner		
11/7 <i>Sound and the Fury</i>	11/9 B on Faulkner	11/11 A on Faulkner		Paper Draft (11/11)
11/14 <i>Sound and the Fury</i>	11/18 A on Hemingway	11/18 B on Hemingway	3rd Reflection	Paper Comments (11/18)
11/21 <i>Sun Also Rises</i>	11/21 B on Chopin NOTE EARLY DEADLINE FOR T'GIVING	11/28 A on Chopin NOTE LATE DEADLINE FOR T'GIVING		
11/28 Project discussion; <i>The Awakening</i>	11/30 A on Hurston	12/2 B on Hurston		Paper Draft (12/2)
12/5 Project discussion; <i>Eyes Watching God</i>	12/7 B on Hurston	12/9 A on Hurston		Paper Comments (12/9)
12/12 <i>Eyes Watching God</i>			Final Reflection And Peer-Evals	Final projects (12/16)