



**ENG 519.001 (82715)—American Literature in Transition
“Realism and the Transition into the 20th Century”**

**Fall 2014
R—7:20 pm-10:00 pm
Room: HL 304**

Instructor: (Christopher Gonzalez, PhD – Assistant Professor)
Office Location: Hall of Languages (HL) 225
Office Hours: MW 12:00 pm-2:30 pm and by appointment
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NOTE: I reserve the right to revise the contents of this syllabus as I deem necessary.

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings:

Textbooks Required:

- Crane, Stephen. *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. (ISBN: 0375756892)
- Norris, Frank. *McTeague*. (ISBN: 0393970132)
- Wharton, Edith. *The House of Mirth*. (ISBN: 0312062346)
- James, Henry. *Portrait of a Lady*. (ISBN: 0393966461)
- Jewett, Sarah Orne. *Country of the Pointed Firs*. (ISBN: 0451531442)
- Dreiser, Theodore. *Sister Carrie*. (ISBN: 0393960420)
- Chopin, Kate. *The Awakening*. (ISBN: 0199536945)
- Sinclair, Upton. *The Jungle*. (ISBN: 039397779X)
- Twain, Mark. *Pudd'nhead Wilson*. (ISBN: 0199554714)
- Chesnutt, Charles. *The Marrow of Tradition*. (ISBN: 0393934144)
- London, *The Sea-Wolf*. (ISBN: 045141585X)
- Howell, William Dean. *The Rise of Silas Lapham*. (ISBN: 0140390308)
- Pizer, Donald. *The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism*. (ISBN: 0521438764)
- Barrish, Phillip J. *The Cambridge Introduction to American Literary Realism*. (ISBN: 0521050103)

(ENG 519 *catalogue description*): Hours: 3

American Literature in Transition: From Civil to World Wars. Three semester hours. This course investigates the ways in which the literature of the United States reflected the country's rapid political, industrial, economic, and social transformations between 1865 and 1914. Topics for discussion could include the rise of literary realism, the significance of American regional writing, a growing emphasis on vernacular traditions, the impact of immigration the phenomenon of the New Woman and the uses of naturalistic writing to capture America's ever-changing urban landscape.

Course Description

ENG 519 is designed to provide graduate students with an opportunity to critically examine American literary production during the time that spans the end of the Civil War to the onset of World War I (generally, the range of years between 1865 and 1914). This prolific time in American literature saw the movement from the dark romanticism of Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville to a new interest in the real. With William Dean Howells as its influential champion, American Realism ushered an influential and auspicious beginning to the 20th century. American Naturalism help solidify this impactful era of American literature that would ultimately open the door to Modernism. Writers such as Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, Charles Chesnutt, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, Edith Wharton, and others helped to shape an American literary tradition that was overtly concerned with reality—a reality that depended on the eye of the beholder. Chesnutt's view of reality was different than, say, Twain's. In this examination of American Literature in Transition, we will keep in focus the relativity of whose America was under scrutiny by these authors at any given time.

This course is a graduate-level exploration of the expansive field American Literature of the late 19th- and early 20th century. As we trace our way through the major movements of this area of study, we will apply our understanding of this period of American literature through a number of exemplar texts. We will also consider this rich literary tradition in light of the scholarship produced by significant scholars. At its core, this journey through American Literature in Transition will hopefully provide a more nuanced understanding of this important literary period. Students with specific thematic or scholarly interests are encouraged to integrate them into the coursework whenever possible. Students should plan to engage in and at times lead productive discussions based on the theoretical and commonplace readings; develop ideas via questions posed in response to the readings; hone the skills presenting before an academic audience, continue to develop writing via short, analytical essays, and write a final seminar paper aimed at publication in a peer-reviewed journal or perhaps section of a dissertation.

Course Objectives:

- Students will further develop their ability to present scholarly research before an academic audience.
- Students will demonstrate their engagement with the scholarly community.
- Students will hone their ability to write an essay for publication.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Students will further develop their ability to present scholarly research as measured by a team presentation.
- Students will hone their ability to write an essay for publication by submitting a final seminar paper for grading at the end of the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Instructional / Methods / Activities Assessments

This course consists of a series of activities and assessments to assist you in achieving the outcomes and objectives of this course and instructional units/modules. By the end of this course the class will read and discuss several book-length texts as well as secondary materials.

During the semester you will complete several major assignments designed to build on each other intellectually and conceptually. These assignments are:

Class Participation 20%

Active class participation is vital in graduate classes, but it is at times difficult to measure. You should be prepared to discuss several aspects of the readings during each class meeting. Each class meeting ought to be viewed as a collaboration of an investigative team that is charged with examining a problem. Everyone's sustained attention and participation is key to this approach. Expect to be called on to discuss some facet of the day's readings and to elaborate on these points via discussion.

Two Position Papers 20%

As an opportunity to expand and deepen your understanding of the course material, you will write two short position papers (1,000-1,500 words) to be submitted on two different class meetings of your choice. The topics for your papers should **not** overlap from discussions we have had in class. Focus on different readings than we've discussed in class.

Team (or Solo) Presentation 20%

For this assignment you will team up with a partner (or go alone) and prepare a presentation based on one of the supplementary readings. You are encouraged to use a multimedia format to present your ideas (PowerPoint, Prezi, handout, etc.). The goal here is to introduce the rest of the class with the contents of the supplemental reading and demonstrate how it operates with our commonplace texts or the assigned reading of the day.

Discussion Questions 10%

Beginning on Week 2, you will bring to class two questions and discussion points to share with the class during our exploration of the week's readings. You will submit this for grading at the end of each class.

Final Seminar Paper 30%

At the culmination of the course, you will submit a well-organized, persuasively-argued, well-researched seminar paper approximately 15 pages in length. Your final paper must unite a theoretical position with one of our commonplace novels.

Class participation	20%
Two Position Papers	20%
Team Presentation	20%
Weekly Discussion Questions	10%

Final Seminar Paper

30%

Total: 100%

Scale used to compute final letter grades:

Percentage

A: 100-90

B: 89-80

C: 79-70

D: 69-60

F: 59-0

Technology

This course is conducted face to face (f2f). There will be no eCollege component.

There will be no extra credit assignments. As a rule, I do not accept late work.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES
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Course Specific Procedures:

Academic Honesty Policy

Texas A&M University-Commerce and the Department of Literature and Languages do not tolerate **plagiarism** and other forms of **academic dishonesty**. Conduct that violates generally-accepted standards of academic honesty is defined as academic dishonesty. “Academic dishonesty” includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism (the appropriation or stealing of the ideas or words of another person and passing them off as one’s own), cheating on exams or other course assignments, collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with others in preparing course assignments), and abuse (destruction, defacing, or removal) of resource material. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students guilty of academic dishonesty include disciplinary probation, suspension and expulsion (Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1, 2, 3]). Cheating, including plagiarizing papers in whole or part, will result in a grade of zero (0) on the assignment for the first offense and failure of the course for any subsequent offenses.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in this graduate class equates to participation in the discussions and is important to the success of this class and to your development as a writer/scholar. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that you notify me of potential conflicts with course expectations. The expectation is that you will do more than simply show up to class. Your active participation, in the form of discussion responses and questions, is vital for success in this course. Deadline extensions and other allowances can often be accommodated before they are required, but this requires advance notice. Related to this, SEE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Assignment Policy

Student work must be completed and submitted on time. All assignments should be turned in during the class period when they are due. Students who know they will miss class when an assignment is due must contact the instructor as soon as possible in advance of class to arrange for submission of the assignment.

All papers should conform to the MLA or Chicago style guidelines, with the exception of your weekly responses.

Late Work

I will not accept any assignment after its due date. Assignments submitted after the due date may receive a score of zero (0).

Drop a Course

A student may drop a course by logging into his/her myLEO account and clicking on the hyperlink labeled "Drop a class" from among the choices found under the myLeo section of the Web page.

Incompletes

Incompletes (grade of "X") are granted only under rare and extraordinary circumstances.

Administrative Withdrawal

I reserve the right to drop a student from the course administratively for excessive absences or violations of student conduct codes.

University Specific Procedures:*ADA Statement*

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Gee Library 132

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

[Student Disability Resources & Services](#)

Student Conduct

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. It is next to impossible to explore ideas in a classroom setting if students and instructors do not feel safe or otherwise supported. I will not tolerate discrimination in all its forms. Likewise, rudeness has no place in any classroom, and I will ensure that my classroom remains a rudeness-free environment. (See *Code of Student Conduct from Student Guide Handbook*).

Responsibility

You are responsible for understanding all of the material contained in this syllabus, as well as any announced changes to this syllabus. You are also responsible for understanding instructions and directives related to assignments, exams, and grades. This means visiting your professor during

office hours if instructions and/or directives remain unclear. Unless you state otherwise, I will assume that you have understood what is expected of you in this class.

COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

The following course schedule is subject to revisions and other modifications as the instructor deems necessary for the course. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced on the course website in advance of the week in which the change will occur.

Fall 2014

Date	Agenda
Week 1 8/28	Introduction, syllabus overview, discussion and overview of American Literature in Transition
Week 2 9/4	James, <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> Barrish, Ch 1 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 1: "The American Background" (Louis J. Budd)
Week 3 9/11	Howells, <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham</i> Barrish, Ch 2 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 5: " <i>The Portrait of a Lady</i> and <i>The Rise of Silas Lapham: The Company They Kept</i> " (John W. Crowley)
Week 4 9/18	Norris, <i>McTeague</i> Barrish, Ch 3 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 7: " <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> and <i>McTeague: Passage to Modernity</i> " (J.C. Levenson)
Week 5 9/25	Crane, <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> Barrish, Ch 6 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 3: "Recent Critical Approaches (Michael Anesko)"
Week 6 10/2	Twain, <i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i> Barrish, Ch 9 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 4: "Expanding the Canon of American Realism" (Elizabeth Ammons)
Week 7 10/9	No Class Scheduled
Week 8 10/16	Jewett, <i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> Barrish, Ch 5
Week 9 10/23	Chopin, <i>The Awakening</i> Barrish, Ch 8
Week 10 10/30	Dreiser, <i>Sister Carrie</i> Barrish, Ch 7 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 8: "What More Can Carrie Want? Naturalistic Ways of Consuming Women" (Blanche H. Gelfant)
Week 11 11/6	Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 11: "Troubled Black Humanity in <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> and <i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> " (Kenneth W. Warren)"
Week 12	London, <i>The Sea-Wolf</i>

11/13	“‘And Rescue Us from Ourselves’: Becoming Someone in Jack London’s <i>The Sea-Wolf</i> ” (Lee Clark Mitchell)
Week 13 11/20	Wharton, <i>The House of Mirth</i> Barrish, Ch 4
Week 14 11/27	No Class Scheduled (Thanksgiving Break)
Week 15 12/4	Sinclair, <i>The Jungle</i> Barrish, Ch 10 <i>Cambridge Companion</i> , Ch 10: (<i>The Call of the Wild</i> and <i>The Jungle: Jack London’s and Upton Sinclair’s Animal and Human Jungles</i> ” (Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin)
	Final Papers due at Midnight, December 11, 2014