Dr. Farmer English 324: Modern American Novel Spring 2024

**Course Description**

ENG 324.Modern American Novel focuses on major and representative American novelists of the twentieth and twenty-first century. The course is designed to acquaint you with authors who have excelled in this genre; to address your need to know the some of the best, most creative, and most influential works to emerge from this period; and to deepen your appreciation for, and critical understanding of, the novel.

The word *novel* literally means “new.” Compared to drama, poetry, and the short story, the novel is a literary latecomer. Scholars generally agree that it originated in England with Samuel Richardson, whose epistolary novel, *Pamela*, was published in 1740-41. The first American novel, St. John de Crevecoeur’s *Letters from an American Farmer*, was published 42 years later. As the novel evolved, letters became chapters, giving us the novel form most common today.

The very act of writing an extensive, complex work of imagination that one expects people to read from cover to cover is risky (*Pamela* originally comprised four huge volumes!), so novelists have always been risk-takers in form and content. The best novelists dare to wrestle with issues that make readers uncomfortable and raise questions that lack easy answers. The serious student will always take something new from a close encounter with a good novel.

**Texts**

*As I Lay Dying* William Faulkner

*The Great Gatsby*, F. Scott Fitzgerald

*A Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway

*Beloved*, Toni Morrison

*The Shipping News*, Annie Proulx

*The Secret History*, Donna Tartt

I do not require a specific edition of any of these books, so you don’t have to buy them through eCampus. You can get them from Amazon or check them out of a library. If you already own any of these books, you do not need to purchase other copies. Moreover, if you have a Kindle, a Nook, or an app for an e-reader and want to order an e-book, you may do so.

**Reinhardt University Student Learning Outcomes (RUSLO)**

**Communication**

1. Students will demonstrate effective expression of ideas through writing, speech, and visual media.

**Critical Thinking and Inquiry**

1. Students will demonstrate integrative, critical thinking, and inquiry-based learning using evidence, logic, reasoning, and calculation.
2. Students will demonstrate technological and scientific literacy, knowledge of various research methodologies, and the ability to seek out information.
3. Students will demonstrate independent thought and imagination; preparation for lifelong learning.

**Self, Society, and Culture**

1. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the traditions of Western civilization and their global context.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge of the diversity of societies and cultures; the ability to view themselves and the world from cultural and historical perspectives other than their own.

**Values and Ethics**

1. Students will demonstrate integrity and ethical responsibility
2. Students will demonstrate understanding of, and commitment to, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness.
3. Students will demonstrate stewardship and civic engagement, coupled with the ability to work with others both collaboratively and in leadership roles.

**English Program Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)**

1. To ensure that students master sound skills in expository writing, including the ability to craft correct and readable prose and to sustain a logical argument

2. To ensure that students develop sound skills in critical analysis, including the ability to read, comprehend, and study independently

3. To ensure that students understand the historical and / or cultural context of literature

4. To ensure that students develop the ability to conduct and apply effective library research, including finding scholarly articles, using signal phrases, correctly citing both print and electronic primary and secondary sources, and avoiding academic dishonesty

**Course Student Learning Objectives (CLO)**

* To familiarize you with several of America’s greatest novels and novelists
* To enable you to understand how these works break new ground and achieve their power
* To introduce you to literary techniques used by skilled novelists
* To help you discover the influence of one novelist on other novelists
* To instill in you an appreciation for the novel
* To provide you with the tools you need to study other novels on your own
* To encourage you to think more critically and creatively about literature
* To further develop in you good writing and research habits
* To give you models for your own creative-writing efforts

**Meetings**

This class meets Tuesdays and Thursdays in SCARB from 2:00 p.m. to 3:15 p.m.

**Virtual Meetings**

If an emergency on my part or a campus-wide crisis necessitates a switch to online instruction, you will join the class remotely at the usual time—12:30 p.m.—using the BigBlueButton feature of Canvas. To join the class using the BBB, do the following:

* Log onto Canvas through Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Firefox.
* Find and choose ENG 324 010. Click the BigBlueButton.
* On the next page, join by clicking the blue Join button.
* I recommend that you select the Microphone option when you join so you can speak to the class. Just remember to mute your microphone when you are not talking to minimize static and background noise.
* You may instead select the Audio option when you join, but you can listen only. You can still communicate with the class through Chat.

**I have scheduled one virtual meeting for Tuesday, January 16, so you can familiarize yourself with this process.**

**Office**

Lawson 124-D

**Office Hours**

All office hours are virtual and by appointment. Just let me know when you need to talk to me so we can schedule a time to meet through our Canvas class portal, ENG 324 010 MC. Virtual hours mean that I can be available to you almost any time, including evenings, weekends, and final exam week.

**Phone**

770-720-5633: Discouraged method of contact.

**Email**

[jaf@reinhardt.edu](mailto:jaf@reinhardt.edu). Preferred method of contact. Email enables me to answer your questions fully, and it provides you with a written response to use as a later reference. If you have taken a course with me previously, you know that I respond promptly to emails—as long as you use my RU address. Please note that I seldom check my Canvas mail.

**Electronic/Wireless Devices**

You are taking this course because you want to engage fully with the subject matter. Therefore, I am going to assume that you will keep your phones and other electronic devices invisible and silent. Please don’t make me resort to having you surrender these items at the beginning of class.

**Recordings of Class Procedures**

Anyone who wants to record the class is welcome to do so. In fact, I need one student to volunteer to make cell phone recordings of class proceedings and to agree to share these recordings with students who may be absent.

If we are meeting via the Big Blue Button, we will have the advantage of the Record feature, which allows every lecture to be recorded and then saved for seven (7) days. Therefore, if you miss class for any reason, you can listen to the recording and keep up with the material. Remember, however, that once the seven days have passed, the recording is gone for good.

**Attendance**

As you know by now, there is a high correlation between class attendance and course success. Classes will be conducted as lecture-discussion. Because this is a 300-level course, much of the burden will be on you, the student, for contributions and insights. You must therefore come prepared, having done all of the assigned reading.

**Major Life Event**

A major life event is defined as **a crisis that requires you to be absent for more than two weeks or four consecutive class meetings.** Should you find yourself in this situation, you need to send official notification to Dr. John Miles, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Walter May, the Vice President for Student Affairs. They will then inform me of your circumstances, and we will work collaboratively to determine the best course of action. An illness, a funeral, a court date, or a transportation problem that causes you to miss class for a day or two is not a major life event. Therefore, I do not need a note from any source for these things since they automatically count as unexcused absences.

**Canvas**

Because I promptly and regularly post grades on Canvas, you will always have current information on your standing in this course. I ask that you use this information to attain or sustain the level of performance that will result in a favorable final outcome. You should pay special attention to your midterm grade, which provides a further incentive to step up or maintain your level of performance.

**Course Portfolio/Binder**

Though I post grades on Canvas, I ask that you file all graded work, including oral quizzes, in a portfolio or binder dedicated to ENG 324. The contents of your portfolio will serve to verify your grades in the event that I forget to record, or incorrectly record, one or more of your scores.

**Workload**

This is a reading-intensive course with writing and research components. Thus, you must be prepared to maintain a consistent and steady pace to keep up with the work. To help you manage the novels, I have divided them into increments of approximately 50-100 pages per assignment. To be specific, over fifteen weeks, you will spend 150 minutes/week in lectures, class discussions, and examinations (37.5 hours/semester). Instructional time includes a three-hour final exam. In addition to reading, out-of-class work includes writing essays and preparing for quizzes and exams and is estimated at 300 minutes/week (75 hours/semester).

**Oral Quizzes**

Each day a new reading assignment is due, the class period will begin with an oral quiz based on this reading, except in the case of *As I Lay Dying*. Quizzes will carry extra-credit points and focus on information you should know if you have read the selection(s) with reasonable care. **Quizzes cannot be made up unless you are absent due to official University business.** Then I must receive advance notice from a coach, a professor, an administrator, or other University employee, and you must make up the quiz the next day the class meets. If you are absent for any other reason, you will receive a zero for that day’s quiz. I will, however, drop your four (4) lowest grades when I compute your final quiz average so the damage from the zero(s) will be minimal. Note this policy allows you to miss four quizzes without penalty, so you can save and use your quiz-day absences for emergencies. Also note that a quiz average exceeding 100% is entirely possible and that such an average will do wonders for your final grade.

**Research Project, Oral Reenactments, and Short Paper (3-5 pp.)**

*As I Lay Dying* is a novel of voices, so that is how we will approach it. On page 13 of this syllabus, you will find your four (4) assigned characters and the sections for your oral reenactments. Your task is to research articles that will give you insight into your characters because your goal is an authentic, in-class portrayal. You should practice each presentation beforehand because you will be graded on how well you present your character. This grade will take the place of your usual reading quiz.

When should you start your research? **NOW**, because we will begin *As I Lay Dying* on February 8. Thus, you need to be prepared to reenact your first character then.

The Hill Freeman Library databases, book collection (including eBooks), and interlibrary loan are the only approved resources for academic research, so please do not consult unscholarly resources like Google. In our library databases alone, you will find a wealth of scholarly material on *As I Lay Dying*. In the stacks, we also have an excellent collection of Faulkner criticism, which I encourage you to explore. (Hint: A book is the easiest item to prepare a Works Cited entry for.)

On February 29, the day before spring break, you will submit your articles along with a 3-5 page essay explaining the insights you gained on each character from studying these articles. Please prepare your typescript according to the general guidelines attached to this syllabus. You will use the MLA style sheet for your Works Cited page and for in-text citations (both quotations and paraphrases). A great resource is our own library’s **Citation Help: MLA**, which is easier to follow than Purdue’s OWL. If you get stuck, reach out to me. I am always happy to help you prepare a correct Works Cited page.

Please DO NOT staple or paperclip your typescript. Please DO paperclip or staple each article together individually and write your name on the first page of every copy. **In your articles, highlight any material you quote and bracket any material you paraphrase.** A quotation or paraphrase from a secondary source must be preceded by a signal phrase and followed by a page number, if available. A quotation from a primary print source must be followed by a page number, but no page number is necessary for a paraphrase from a primary source. Please consult Citation Help: MLA or OWL to find out how to cite an eBook, which will not have page numbers. And please submit your essay on time. I will deduct five (5) points for every day it is late.

You will be graded on the quality of your articles and the thoughtfulness of your insights.

**Moderate Essay (5-7 pp.)**

Great writers borrow from other great writers all the time. Your task is to choose two novels we have studied this semester, one early and one late, and write an essay exploring ways you think the later novel exhibits influences from the earlier novel. Because you will have proven your ability to conduct effective research on your reenactment, you do not need a heavy research component in this essay. I am far more interested in your own ideas, though I do ask you to support some of them with the words and ideas of an established scholar. Three secondary sources should be sufficient. As with your short paper, you will prepare your typescript according to the general guidelines attached to this syllabus and use the MLA style sheet for your Works Cited page and for in-text citations.

To ensure the integrity of your work, you will submit all secondary sources with your essay. If your source is a journal article, please include the full document. If your source is a book, include copies of only the pages you are citing. Please DO NOT staple or paperclip your typescript. Please DO paperclip or staple each secondary source together individually and write your name on the first page of every copy. **In your secondary sources, highlight the material you quote and bracket the material you paraphrase.** A quotation or paraphrase from a secondary source must be preceded by a signal phrase and followed by a page number, if available. A quotation from a primary print source must be followed by a page number, but no page number is necessary for a paraphrase from a primary source. Please consult Citation Help: MLA or OWL to find out how to cite an eBook, which will not have page numbers. And please submit your essay on time. I will deduct five (5) points for every day it is late.

Because you may want to consider Tartt’s novel, your essay is not due until the day of the final exam (May 1). I do, however, welcome essays submitted earlier.

**Final Exam**

Your final exam will consist of an oral presentation of your moderate essay. You may work from a script (that is, read your paper) or wing it—whatever you are the most comfortable doing.

**Grade of Incomplete**

According to the 2023-24 undergraduate catalog, if “for non-academic reasons beyond [your] control,” you are “unable to meet full course requirements,” you may qualify for an Incomplete. You must, however, “have a deficiency [. . .] in a relatively small portion of the course” and be “performing satisfactorily” (46). You must also provide me with a valid, verified, written excuse from a credible source. To remove the Incomplete, you must make up the assignment during the first summer session of 2024.

**Academic Dishonesty**

In this course, as in every course, you are expected to do your own work based on your own reading, learning, and thinking. Quizzes must reflect your grasp of the material, and in essays words and ideas that are not your own must be correctly attributed to their source or sources. In every endeavor, whether an essay, a quiz, or an examination, you are expected to abide by the Reinhardt Honor Pledge, which bears your signature and binds you to a high standard of integrity. This standard applies to Internet sources as absolutely as it applies to print materials.

I recognize two categories of plagiarism in this course–intentional and unintentional. **Intentional plagiarism involves using an outside source with the intent to deceive.** Such use includes, but is not limited to, purchasing a paper from a paper mill; wholesale copying of ideas, organization, language, and/or sentence structure from one or more sources you do not cite; wholesale copying of ideas, organization, language, and/or sentence structure from one or more sources you do not include with the sources you submit with your essay; substituting your words in someone else’s sentence; turning in a paper you have previously written for another course or instructor; turning in a paper that someone else has written for you; turning in a paper ChatGPT has written for you. By now, all your professors have heard about ChatGPT, which is able to churn out *C* papers on any subject. We have also become adept at recognizing the bland, hallucinatory writing that ChatGPT produces, and we know that Chat GPT is terrible at incorporating relevant and correctly documented research into an essay. My advice: Don’t even be tempted because if you are caught intentionally plagiarizing, the penalty is a zero on the assignment.

Unintentional plagiarism includes the wholesale, unattributed copying of ideas, organization, language, and/or sentence structure from one or more sources you submit with your essay or substituting your words in a sentence or sentences from such a source without knowing that these actions are wrong. Please be advised that I consider plagiarism unintentional ONLY WHEN you submit evidence against yourself by turning in your secondary sources. Then I can see where you have erred and help you avoid the same mistakes in the future. If you commit this offense, you must review all instances of it with me, correct your mistakes, and resubmit your essay.

Cheating on quizzes, tests, and examinations is another form of academic dishonesty. It involves bringing crib sheets to class and copying answers from a neighbor. In the electronic age, it also involves accessing the Internet to look up answers during a quiz or exam or texting answers to another classmate. The penalty is a zero on the exercise for the first offense and dismissal from the class with an *F* for the second offense.

I will submit copies of all academically dishonest work to my school dean, Dr. Ken Wheeler, and to Dr. John Miles, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will enter your name and offense in his Book of Academic Misconduct. **No zero earned as a result of academic dishonesty will be dropped.**

**The Americans with Disabilities Act**

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, the legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation for this or any other class, please contact Reinhardt University’s Academic Support Office (ASO), register, and obtain the proper documents. ASO is located in the basement of the Lawson Building (phone: 770-720-5567). If your disability requires a note-taker, please let me know. Because it is sometimes difficult for me to find a reliable note-taker for this class, you are always welcome to record my lectures.

**Library/Virtual Library**

Reinhardt University Library is available to all students. Links to library materials such as electronic journals, databases, interlibrary loans, digital reserves, dictionaries, encyclopedias, maps, and librarian support may be found at <https://www.reinhardt.edu/library/>.

**Academic Calendar**

Please review the Academic Calendar for the last date to drop the course or other registration issues at <https://www.reinhardt.edu/calendar/>.

**Important Contact Information**

All students, faculty, staff and administration at Reinhardt University are subject to changes in policies if mandated by the State of Georgia. Current policies and procedures can be found at: <https://www.reinhardt.edu/back-to-campus>. If you have any questions, please refer to the Web site or contact Reinhardt University at the numbers below:

Campus Nurse within the Student Health Center  
[studenthealthcenter@reinhardt.edu](mailto:studenthealthcenter@reinhardt.edu)

770-720-5542  
  
Public Safety

**Non-Emergency Phone:** 770-720-5789  
**Emergency Phone:** 770-720-5911  
[publicsafety@reinhardt.edu](mailto:public_safety@reinhardt.edu)

Dean of Students – Dr. May

[deanofstudents@reinhardt.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@reinhardt.edu)

770-720-5540

Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs – Dr. John Miles

[VPAA@reinhardt.edu](mailto:VPAA@reinhardt.edu) or [John.Miles@reinhardt.edu](mailto:John.Miles@reinhardt.edu) .

**Grade Weights**

Your final grade will be based on your oral quiz average (25%), the short essay (25%), the moderate essay (35%), and the final presentation (15%).

**Grade Ranges**

A = 90-100

B = 80-89

C = 70-79

D = 60-69

F = 59 and below

Schedule of Assignments

Jan. 9 Course Introduction

Jan. 11 *The Great Gatsby*: Chs. 1-3

Quiz #1

Jan. 16 *The Great Gatsby*: Chs. 4-6

Quiz #2

**Virtual class**

Jan. 18 *The Great Gatsby*: Chs. 7-9

Quiz #3

Jan. 23 *A Farewell to Arms*: Chs. 1-8

Quiz #4

Jan. 25 *A Farewell to Arms*: Chs. 9-20

Quiz #5

Jan. 30 *A Farewell to Arms*: Chs. 21-28

Quiz #6

Feb. 1 *A Farewell to Arms*: Chs. 29-33

Quiz #7

Feb. 6 *A Farewell to Arms*: Chs. 34-end

Quiz #8

Feb. 8 *As I Lay Dying*: Read to Vardaman’s section that begins with the words, “When they get it finished . . .”

Quiz #9 (Act I)

Feb. 13 *As I Lay Dying*: Read to Tull’s section that begins with the words, “So they finally got Anse to say . . .”

Quiz #10 (Act II)

Feb. 15 *As I Lay Dying*: Read to Moseley’s section that begins with the words, “I happened to look up . . .”

Quiz #11 (Act III)

Feb. 20 *As I Lay Dying*: Finish the novel

Quiz #12 (Act IV)

Feb. 22 *Beloved*: Read to the section that begins with the words, “Rainwater held on to pine needles . . .”

Quiz #13

Feb. 27 *Beloved*: Read to the section that begins with the words, “SHE MOVED HIM.”

Quiz #14

Feb. 29 *Beloved*: Read to the end of Part I.

Quiz #15

Short essay due

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Mar. 4-8 Spring Break

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Mar. 12 *Beloved*: Read to the section that begins with the word, “HOWDY.”

Quiz #16

Mar. 14 Finish the novel

Quiz #17

Mar. 19 *The Shipping News*: Chs. 1-7

Quiz #18

Mar. 21 *The Shipping News*: Chs. 8-15

Quiz #19

Mar. 26 *The Shipping News*: Chs. 16-25

Quiz #20

Mar. 28 *The Shipping News*: Chs. 26-33

Quiz #21

Apr. 2 *The Shipping New*s: Chs. 34-end

Quiz #22

Apr. 9 *The Secret History*: pp. 3-111

(Page numbers refer to the First Vintage Contemporary Edition, April 2004.)

End with the words, “I pulled down the shades and lay down on my unmade bed and went back to sleep.”

Quiz #23

Apr. 11 *The Secret History*: pp. 111-222

End with the words, “I poured the water down the sink and turned on the tap so I wouldn’t have to listen.”

Quiz #24

Apr. 16 *The Secret History*: pp. 222-332

End with the words, “Just bring the whole bottle in, why don’t you,” Henry said.

Quiz #25

Apr. 18 *The Secret History*: pp. 333-444

End with the words, “*Only that I do what you tell me,* I thought as I hung up the telephone.”

Quiz #26

Apr. 23 *The Secret History*: Finish the novel.

Quiz #27

**Apr. 24 Reading Day (Finish your essay!)**

**May 1 Final Exam, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.**

General Guidelines for Typescript Preparation

Essays must be typed and spell-checked. Typescripts should have one-inch margins and be double spaced. The top left header should include your name, my name, the course number, and the date. The top right header should include your last name, a space, and the page number. The correct font is 12-point Times New Roman. Please do not use **boldface** or underlining for any reason, and reserve BLOCK CAPS for acronyms like AIDS and common designations like ADHD and HVAC. Formal essays must have centered, correctly capitalized phrasal titles. Do not adorn your title with quotation marks or italics unless the title of a work is a part of your title. Examples are as follows:

John Kennedy Toole’s *Confederacy of Dunces* as Authentic Parable

*Confederacy of Dunces* is italicized because it is the title of a long work, in this case, a novel.

Fortune and Bankruptcy in Flannery O’Connor’s “A View of the Woods”

“A View of the Woods” is enclosed by quotation marks since it is the title of a short work, in this case, a short story.

Do not staple or paper clip your typescript (unless you are putting it under my office door) or submit it in a plastic binder or notebook.

The required documentary style for essays about literature is MLA. If your paper includes quotations or paraphrases from a source or sources, full documentary information should appear on the double-spaced Works Cited page. The heading Works Cited should be centered.

Signal phrases identifying the source (the author and his or her area of expertise or the title of the source if the author’s name is not given) must precede quotations and paraphrases. Quoted material must be enclosed in quotation marks, and parenthetical documentation must follow paraphrases and quotations in the text. The correct position of commas and periods is always inside quotation marks unless there is an intervening parenthetical citation:

1. In “A View of the Woods,” Flannery O’Connor appears to be moving in a different theological direction.

2. No O’Connor story has occasioned more criticism than “A Good Man Is Hard to Find.”

3. O’Connor decries “our gain in sensibility and our loss in vision” (*Mystery and Manners* 227), which she attributes to our loss of faith.

4. O’Connor calls human imperfection “the raw material of good” (*MM* 227).

*As I Lay Dying*: Character Assignments

Note: Because there are no chapters and because we may all have different editions, I have indicated the section you are to read with a key phrase or sentence. Note that the immediate context of your character’s situation can impact your presentation, so you have to complete the entire reading assignment to do an effective reenactment. You will read in the following order:

**Act I (February 8)**

Andres (Jewel): Jewel has only one section, the fourth one in the novel.

Phoebe (Cora): “It was the sweetest thing . . .”

Tiffany (Dewey Dell): “The first time me and Lafe picked on down the row.”

Jake (Anse): “Durn that road.”

Mason (Darl): “He has been to town this week.”

Wesley (Vardaman): “Then I begin to run.”

**Act II (February 13)**

Mason (Vardaman): “When they get it finished . . .”

Jake (Cash): “I made it on the bevel . . .”

Wesley (Darl): “He stoops among us above it . . .”

Tiffany (Anse): “I told him not to bring that horse. . .”

Phoebe (Dewey Dell): “The signboard comes in sight.”

Andres (Tull): “After they passed . . .”

**Act III (February 15)**

Wesley (Tull) “So they finally got Anse to say . . .”

Jake (Vardaman): “Cash tried but she fell off . . .”

Tiffany (Cora): “One day we were talking . . .”

Phoebe (Addie): “In the afternoon when school was out . . .”

Mason (Whitfield): “When they told me she was dying . . .”

Andres (Darl): “*On the horse he rode* . . .”

**Act IV (February 20)**

Jake (Darl): “Jewel,” I say, “whose son are you?”

Andres (Vardaman): “She was under the apple tree . . .”

Wesley (Peabody): “I said, I reckon a man in a tight . . .”

Tiffany (Vardaman): “Now it is wider and lighter . . .”

Mason (Dewey Dell): “When he saw the money . . .”

Phoebe (Cash): “So when we stopped there . . .”

Andres: Jewel, Tull, Darl, Vardaman

Phoebe: Cora, Dewey Dell, Addie, Cash

Tiffany: Dewey Dell, Anse, Cora, Vardaman

Jake: Anse, Cash, Vardaman, Darl

Mason: Darl, Vardaman, Whitfield, Dewey Dell

Wesley: Vardaman, Darl, Tull, Peabody