

English 105: *Success and Failure in American Literature*
Introduction to American Literature
Fall 2009
MWF 9-9:50; Section 04; 224 Williams
Ithaca College

Instructor: Tim Glenn
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& by appoint.

Course Texts:

Thomas King, <u>Medicine River</u>	Penguin
Bernard Malamud, <u>The Natural</u>	Farrar, Straus and Giroux
F. Scott Fitzgerald, <u>The Great Gatsby</u>	Scribner's
Lorraine Hansberry, <u>A Raisin in the Sun</u>	Vintage
Arthur Miller, <u>Death of a Salesman</u>	Penguin
Fae Myenne Ng, <u>Bone</u>	Hyperion

(There will also be a few texts that will either be available on-line, or I will provide them in electronic format. We'll address this issue when it comes up.)

Course Description:

In his poem "America," Allen Ginsberg asks, "When can I go into the supermarket and buy what I need with my good looks?" This course, an introduction to American Literature, takes its cue from Ginsberg and investigates American literature's persistent questioning of what it means to be successful in modern America. Whether success is defined in terms of economic wealth (Fitzgerald, Miller, Hansberry), the outcome of physical competition (Malamud), or the embodiment of cross-cultural ideals (Erdrich, Ng), this course will attempt to explore and connect the various—and often contradictory—definitions of success in American letters.

Course Assignments & Policies:

Essays and Exams: This course will have 2 exams (a midterm and a final) and 2 papers (4 pages each) as well as a few other assignments. The essays are to be typed, double-spaced, and conform to MLA style citation. (The essays and exams will be discussed more thoroughly in the future).

Late Policy: As a rule, assignments will be due at the beginning of class on the designated day. Any late papers may be marked down one grade (A→AB, AB→B) for every calendar day past the due date. Papers more than one week late (7 days) will not be accepted. If you want an extension, I will almost always give one of up to a week with no questions asked. Just ask *before* the paper is due. If extenuating circumstances arise, let me know.

Attendance: Attendance is expected and mandatory. Your active participation is vital to your success in the course. Keep in mind that your participation grade, as noted below, is 20% of your final grade (this includes attendance, participation, and any assignments that aren't listed separately). As a result, in the event of a **fifth** absence your final course grade will drop one letter grade, and will continue to do so in the event of a **six, seventh or eighth** absence. **A ninth absence will result in a failing grade for the course.** (If you have to miss class because of

illness, death in the family, etc., let me know. Religious obligations and university-sponsored athletics are exempt. Once again, it is vital to discuss these issues if/as they arise.) *If you have enrolled in this class knowing that you cannot make the class meetings, please drop it immediately.*

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is bad. In fact, “whether intended or not, plagiarism is a serious offense against academic honesty. Under any circumstances, it is deceitful to represent as one's own work writing or ideas that belong to another person. Students should be aware of how this offense is defined. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's published or unpublished ideas, whether this use consists of directly quoted material or paraphrased ideas” (Ithaca College Library Guide). For more info, see <http://www.ithaca.edu/library/research/plagiarism.htm>. We will talk about this issue at more length in the future. If you have any questions about it at any time, please ask.

Grade Distribution:

Participation	20%
Essay 1	15%
Midterm	20%
Essay 2	25%
Final Exam	20%

Improvement will be rewarded!

The Writing Center: The Writing Center (107 Smiddy; 274-3315) has writing instructors who are skilled at working with student writers of all abilities. It is a service available to all IC students. If you would like help in essay organization or constructive criticism of a draft, schedule an appointment in person or call the number above. They also have a website: <http://www.ithaca.edu/hs/depts/writing/writingcenter>. (Note: They do not proofread drafts).

Office of Academic Support Services for Students with Disabilities (ACSSD): Ithaca College has support services for students with learning disabilities. If you have, or suspect you have a learning disability, and need accommodations for this course, please contact their office and they will contact me to help facilitate your success in this course. For more info, see their website: <http://www.ithaca.edu/acssd/>

Course Calendar: English 105, Glenn, 224 Williams

Week 1:

(W) 8/25: Course Introduction. Welcome!

Unit 1: Success in the Sporting World

(F) 8/27: Craig Paulenich, “To Fungo the Torn Ones”; Wyatt Prunty, “Baseball”

Week 2:

(M) 8/31: Malamud, The Natural (3-49)

(W) 9/2: Natural (50-96)

(F) 9/4: Natural (97-142)

Week 3:

(M) 9/7: **Labor Day – No Class**

(W) 9/9: Natural (143-185)

(F) 9/11: Natural (186-231)

Unit 2: Family Rivalry

Week 4:

(M) 9/14: William Faulkner, “Barn Burning”

(W) 9/16: Ralph Ellison, “Flying Home”

(F) 9/18: Ellison, “Flying Home”

Week 5:

(M) 9/21: Fae Myenne Ng, Bone (Chpt. 1-2)

(W) 9/23: Ng, Bone (3-5)

(F) 9/25: Ng, Bone (6-7)

Week 6:

(M) 9/28: Ng, Bone (8-9)

(W) 9/30: Ng, Bone (10-11)

(F) 10/2: Ng, Bone (12-13)

Unit 3: Success and Society

Week 7:

(M) 10/5: Emily Dickinson, selected poems

(W) 10/7: Dickinson

(F) 10/9: Herman Melville, “Bartleby, The Scrivener”

Week 8:

(M) 10/12: **Midterm Exam**

(W) 10/14: TBD

(F) 10/16: **Fall Break**

Week 9:

(M) 10/19: Thomas King, Medicine River (1-40)

(W) 10/21: King, Medicine (41-84)

(F) 10/23: King, Medicine (85-128)

Essay #1 Due

Week 10:

(M) 10/26: King, Medicine (129-167)

(W) 10/28: King, Medicine (168-207)

(F) 10/30: King, Medicine (208-249)

Unit 4: Money and The American Dream

Week 11:

(M) 11/2: Mark Twain, "The \$1,000,000 Bank-Note"

(W) 11/4: F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (5-42)

(F) 11/6: Fitzgerald, Gatsby (43-85)

Week 12:

(M) 11/9: Fitzgerald, Gatsby (86-102)

(W) 11/11: Fitzgerald, Gatsby (103-153)

(F) 11/13: Fitzgerald, Gatsby (154-189)

Week 13:

(M) 11/16: Arthur Miller, Death of a Salesman, Act I

(W) 11/18: Miller, Salesman, Act II; Requiem

(F) 11/20: Miller, Salesman

Thanksgiving Break

(MWF) 12/21-12/29: No Class

Week 14:

(M) 11/30: Lorraine Hansberry, A Raisin in the Sun, Act I

(W) 12/2: Hansberry, Raisin, Act II; Act III

(F) 12/4: Hansberry, Raisin (TBD)

Week 15:

(M) 12/7: Allen Ginsburg, “America,” “A Supermarket in California”

(W) 12/9: Louise Erdrich, “Lulu’s Boys”

(F) 12/11: Exam Review/Evals

Essay #2 Due

Final Exam: Thursday, Dec. 17; 7:30 AM – 10 AM