



Austin Mecklem, 'Engine House and Bunkers' (1934);
courtesy Smithsonian Museum of American Art

English 445

Studies in American Realism

Joe Lockard

Fall 2007
Line no. 84179
TTh 12:15-1:30 ED 202

Office Hours and Contact Information

W 9-12, or by appointment -- 209 LL -- Joe.Lockard@asu.edu -- 727-6096 [do not leave voicemail]

Course Description

The realist and naturalist traditions constitute the longest aesthetic era of American literature. This course introduces significant texts from the Civil War to post-World War I. It examines literary responses to issues of race and violence, labor and commercial life, gender and family relations, immigration, and US class structure.

Course Texts

(reading order)

Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884)
Charles Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901)
Rebecca Harding Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* (1860)
William Dean Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes* (1890)
Henry James, *Washington Square* (1880)
Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900)
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (1905)
Willa Cather, *My Antonia* (1918)
Sinclair Lewis, *Babbitt* (1922)

Course Requirements

- Two 6-7 page papers [25 percent each, 50 percent total]
- Final examination [40 percent]
- Discussion [10 percent]

Attendance

Attendance is required throughout the course. Two section absences without prior excuse will result in the lowering of a student's final course grade by one letter. Four absences will result in failure. Attendance sign-in will be taken at all classes.

Reading

A complete knowledge of the day's assigned reading is required. This course is predicated on give-and-take discussion, and without a reading knowledge of the text it is difficult or impossible to participate meaningfully in class discussions. This is more than a standard syllabus clause; it is a matter of respect towards the class discussion.

Reading has been set at a careful pace of 100-120 pages per class, a pace that is quite reasonable if you keep up with the course readings.

Office Hours

I strongly encourage you to visit office hours, whether to discuss class-related issues or just to chat. For Paper 1, I will require you to schedule a visit with draft in hand. Sign-up sheets will be passed around for two special office hours days devoted to consultation on draft papers.

If I must cancel an office appointment, I will try to notify you by e-mail. To cancel a scheduled appointment, send me an e-mail note. It is poor form to skip an appointment without prior notice.

Please feel free to visit without an appointment during office hours, to discuss coursework or just to chat.

Online

There is a MyASU course-site for this course. Course materials will be posted there regularly. Consult this site regularly, visible and accessible via your MyASU homepage.

Writing

Your writing is a crucial element of your success in this course. I will be available in office hours to discuss paper ideas, and to read and comment on paper drafts. For in-depth editorial work on your writing, visit the Writing Center at LL340 or call them for a tutorial appointment at (480) 965-4272.

High rates of plagiarism have been noticed in English literature courses. Plagiarism violates the ASU Student Code of Conduct, available online at: <http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/sta/sta104-01.html>. Plagiarism will be regarded with utmost seriousness and university procedures will be followed to resolve such problems.

Grades

Grades are an archaic form of evaluation. The notion that we can assign grades for intellectual effort is antiquated and I urge you to work for the day when this system will no longer prevail. Until then, this instructor appreciates having a university salary, so the course gives honest grades — dubious as this concept ultimately may be — using clear criteria.

Grading will be based on writing (50 percent), a final examination (40 percent), and class participation. The course emphasizes regular reading preparedness.

You have the right to query or challenge any grade given during this course, without concern for suffering consequences. Reasoned protest is a good sign that you are taking your education seriously. Upon receiving a grade query, I will either raise or confirm the grade. I take grade queries seriously and will revise a grade upwards (and only upwards) given a reasonable case for doing so.

Accommodations

If you have a learning variation that makes online assignments difficult, please let the instructor know and I will arrange other methods. If certain instructional styles work better for you than others, please let me know: e.g., if you need handouts in large print, if certain visual formats are more difficult for you to understand than others, if all printed material needs to be in black and white instead of colors, etc. Such accommodation requests should be made at the beginning of the semester.

This is a child-friendly class. If you have a child-care emergency or arrangements problem that otherwise might prevent you from coming to class, please bring your children to class and we shall be delighted to see them.

Detailed Schedule

- *This schedule is subject to adjustments and alterations, which will be announced both in class and online.*
- *Bold numbers in square brackets refer to class session number.*

Tuesday, August 21 **[1]**

Introduction
Literary naturalism and realism

Thursday, August 23 **[2] Writing Race and Nation**

Read & discuss: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Introduction & 1-69
(chaps. 1-11)
Paper 1 assigned (chapter explication)

Tuesday, August 28 **[3]**

Read & discuss: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 70-178
(chaps. 12-24)

Weds., Aug. 29, 9-12 – Paper 1 office hours

Thursday, August 30 **[4]**

Read & discuss: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 179-246 (chaps. 25-32)

Tuesday, September 4 **[5]**

Read & discuss: Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, 247-336 (chaps. 33-Chapter the Last)

Weds, Sept. 5, 9-12 – Paper 1 office hours

Thursday, September 6 **[6]**

Read & discuss: Chesnut, *The Marrow of Tradition*, 1-147 (Introduction, chaps. 1-17)

Tuesday, September 11 **[7]**

Read & discuss: Chesnut, *The Marrow of Tradition*, 147-246 (chaps. 18-27)
Paper 1 due

Thursday, September 13 **[8]**

Read & discuss: Chesnut, *The Marrow of Tradition*, 274-288, 331-421 (Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address"; Chesnut, excerpt from "The Future American"; "Law & Lawlessness" & "The Wilmington Riot")
Paper 1 comments discussion

Tuesday, September 18 **[9] Labor and Capital**

Read & discuss: Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* [online]

Thursday, September 20 **[10]**

Read & discuss: Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, 3-175; Kaplan, "The Knowledge of the Line: Realism and the City in Howells' *A Hazard of New Fortunes*" [online]

Tuesday, September 25 **[11]**

Read & discuss: Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, 176-353.

Thursday, September 27 **[12]**

Read & discuss: Howells, *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, 354-496.

Tuesday, October 2 **[13] Gender and Capital**

Read & discuss: James, *Washington Square*, 5-104 (chaps. 1-16).

Thursday, October 4 **[14]**

Read & discuss: James, *Washington Square*, 105-219 (chaps. 17-35); Gregory, "From Melodrama to Monologue: Henry James and Domestic Terror" [online]

Tuesday, October 9 [15]

Read & discuss: James, *Washington Square*
Paper 2 assigned

Thursday, October 11 [16]

Read & discuss: Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 1-125 (chaps. 1-18); Kaplan, "The Sentimental Revolt in *Sister Carrie*," 510-521.

Tuesday, October 16 [17]

Read & discuss: Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 125-251 (chaps. 19-35); Trachtenberg, "Who Narrates? Dreiser's Presence in *Sister Carrie*," 521-536.

Thursday, October 18 [18]

Read & discuss: Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, 251-355 (chaps. 36-47); Gelfant, "What More Can Carrie Want? Naturalistic Ways of Consuming Women," 554-569.

Tuesday, October 23 [19]

Read & discuss: Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*

Thursday, October 25 [20]

Class canceled

Tuesday, October 30 [21]

Read & discuss: Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, Introduction & Book I, chaps. 1-9; Pizer, "The Naturalism of Edith Wharton's *The House of Mirth*" [online].

Thursday, November 1 [22]

Read & discuss: Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, Book I, chaps. 10-15; Book II, chaps. 1-3; Blair, "Misreading *The House of Mirth*" [online].

Tuesday, November 6 [23]

Read & discuss: Wharton, *The House of Mirth*, Book II, chaps. 4-14.

Thursday, November 8 [24]

Read & discuss: Wharton, *The House of Mirth*

(Veterans Day – Monday, November 12)

Tuesday, November 13 [25] **Novels of Everyday Americans**

Read & discuss: Cather, *My Antonia*, 1-90 (Forward, Introduction & Book 1); O'Brien, "The Thing Not Named': Willa Cather as a Lesbian Writer" [online]
Paper 2 due

Thursday, November 15 **[26]**

Read & discuss: Cather, *My Antonia*, 93-161 (Book 2); Shaw, "My Antonia: Emergence and Authorial Revelations" [online]

Tuesday, November 20 **[27]**

Read & discuss: Cather, *My Antonia*, 165-238 (Books 3-5);

(Thanksgiving Break – November 22-23)

Tuesday, November 27 **[28]**

Read & discuss: Lewis, *Babbitt*, 1-115 (chaps. 1-11); Hines, "Echoes from Zenith: Reactions of American Businessmen to Babbitt" [online];

Thursday, November 29 **[29]**

Read & discuss: Lewis, *Babbitt*, 116-214 (chaps. 12-23)

Tuesday, December 4 **[30]**

Read & discuss: Lewis, *Babbitt*, 215-305 (chaps. 24-34)
Review

Final exam: Tuesday, December 11, 12:20-2:10pm