

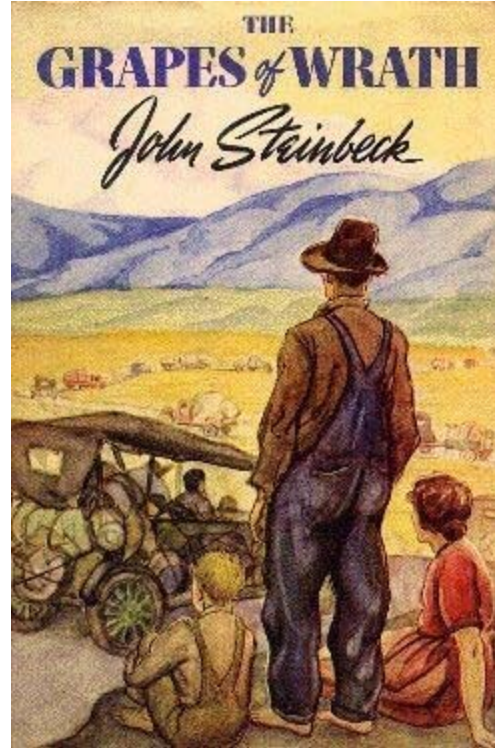
English 440

Studies in American Literature and Culture

American Protest Novels

Fall 2008

Prof. Lockard



Information

TTh 9-10:15am
Durham LL 107
SLN 74092

Instructor: Prof. Joe Lockard
209 LL
Joe.Lockard@asu.edu
480-727-6096 [do not leave
voicemail]

Office Hours: TTh 10:30am-12 noon and 3-5pm,
or by appointment

Course Texts (in reading order)

William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge* (1941)
Luis Rodriguez, *Music of the Mill* (2005)
Walt Whitman, *Franklin Evans, or The Inebriate: A Tale of
the Times* (1842)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life among
the Lowly* (1852)
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
Upton Sinclair, *The Jungle* (1902)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Herland* (1915)
George Schuyler, *Black No More* (1931)
D'Arcy McNickel, *The Surrounded* (1936)
John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939)
Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (1963)

Course Description

The American social protest novel has a lengthy history beginning from the early nineteenth century. Protest novels have provided a vehicle for an expansive array of US social movements to voice their cause and shape a responsive narrative aesthetic. This course will examine the history of American protest fiction, from the temperance novel to modern Chicano literature. It will cover moral reform fiction, anti-slavery novels, resistant representations of/by women and Native America, industrial and agrarian political fictions, and alternative-world science fiction. Theoretical readings will address relationships between fiction and reform or social justice movements.

Course Requirements

- Two five-page papers [20 percent each, 40 percent total]
- Take-home midterm exam [20 percent]
- Take-home final exam [30 percent]
- Participation [10 percent] (based on instructor evaluation)
- Alternative: Instead of two five-page papers, students may elect a social protest option. Drawing on the ideas and concerns of this class, students may propose an on-campus protest that involves one or more participants. Those who choose this option must

submit a 2-3 paragraph protest proposal to the instructor by September 11. The proposals will be posted on the class website and other students can be invited to join. A final proposal with names of participants must be submitted by September 16. Once submitted to the instructor, this protest represents 40 percent of your final grade – so be prepared to make it good! All protests must be public and legal, with (a) documentation (photographs, video, texts, etc.), and (b) the instructor observing. Documentation is to be submitted within two days after the protest, together with a 500-word statement and assessment, which may be placed on the class website. Students electing this option will still be required to do both take-home exams and participate fully in class discussions.

Attendance

Attendance is required throughout the course. Two 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 class meetings. Medical excuses must be documented.

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, and in a larger sense, respect towards the history this literature embodies.

Reading assignments will be approximately 100 pages per class, sometimes more.

Office Hours

Students will be required to attend one 15-minute office hours session early in the semester. The purpose of these sessions is to discuss coursework, paper assignments, and any questions you might have. Large universities need personalization; no one will disappear into anonymity.

Office hours sign-up lists will be passed around at class meetings. To cancel a scheduled appointment, send me an e-mail note. It is poor form to skip an appointment without prior notice. If I must cancel an office appointment, I will try to notify you by e-mail.

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

Course Electronics

There is a MyASU course-site for this course. Course materials will be posted there regularly, including lecture materials and section discussion summaries. Consult the English 440 MyASU site regularly, visible and accessible via your MyASU homepage.

E-mail instructions: All class e-mail from the instructor will be generated from the course site, and MyASU sends e-mail to university addresses. Since e-mail will not be delivered to non-university addresses, please check your university e-mail regularly and correspond with the instructor from that same address. I cannot accept responsibility for ensuring e-mail receipt at non-university addresses.

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 noticeable recently 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>. I treat plagiarism with utmost seriousness and follow university procedures to resolve such problems. Paper assignments will be formulated to reduce possibilities for plagiarism and better guarantee a fair opportunity to all students.

Grades

Grades are an archaic form of evaluation, and better forms of evaluation can be employed. However, your instructor appreciates having a salary and this course gives honest grades using clear criteria. Those criteria appear in every assignment.

You have the right to query or challenge any grade given during this course, *without concern for making the request*. Upon receiving a grade query, I will either raise or confirm the grade. A good number of grade queries accompanied by a substantive reason do receive a positive response. Please remember that a grade constitutes an evaluation of the work, not of the person.

Occasionally, at my discretion, I may decline to grade work and return it to a student if the grade would be a failure. In this event, the student will be requested to re-submit an improved version of the work within a specified brief period. This policy is in place because the instructor prefers not to give failing grades.

Honors

I will give section 18s to Barrett Honors College students. Please talk with me after class early in the course.

Accommodations

If you have a learning variation that makes class-work or assignments difficult, please let me know and we will arrange for an accommodation. 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 (remember the crayons to occupy them!) and we shall be delighted to see your family.

Detailed Schedule

- *This schedule is subject to adjustments and alterations, which will be announced both in class and online.*
- *Readings are due at the class meeting on the assignment date specified. Specific page references will be provided in class.*
- *Bold numbers in square brackets refer to class session number.*

Tuesday, August 26 **[1]**

Introduction

Thursday, August 28 **[2] What Does a Protest Tradition Look Like?**

Lukacs, "Prospects of Development for the New Humanism in the Historical Novel," in *The Historical Novel* (online)
Attaway, Blood on the Forge

Tuesday, September 2 **[3]**

Attaway, Blood on the Forge

Thursday, September 4 **[4]**

Attaway, Blood on the Forge
Rodriguez, Music of the Mill

Tuesday, September 9 **[5]**

Rodriguez, Music of the Mill

Thursday, September 11 **[6]**

Rodriguez, Music of the Mill
Paper 1 assigned

Tuesday, September 16 **[7] No Booze, No Slaves: Antebellum Moral Reform Novels**

Whitman, Franklin Evans

Thursday, September 18 **[8]**

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin

Tuesday, September 23 **[9]**

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin
Paper 1 due

Thursday, September 25 **[10]**

Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin

Tuesday, September 30 **[11] Slave Narratives and the Novel Form: Harriet Jacobs**

Jacobs, Incidents

Thursday, October 2 **[12]**

Jacobs, Incidents

Tuesday, October 7 **[13] Populist Protest Novels: Sinclair, McNickle and Steinbeck**

Sinclair, The Jungle

Thursday, October 9 **[14]**

Sinclair, The Jungle

Tuesday, October 14 **[15]**

Sinclair, The Jungle

Thursday, October 16 **[16]**

McNickle, The Surrounded
Take-home midterm exam

Tuesday, October 21 **[17]**

McNickle, The Surrounded

Thursday, October 23 **[18]**

McNickle, The Surrounded

Tuesday, October 25 **[19]**

Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath

Thursday, October 30 **[20]**

Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath

Tuesday, November 4 [21]

Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath

Thursday, November 6 [22]

Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath

Tuesday, November 13 [23] **Protest Science Fictions
of Race and Gender**

Schuyler, Black No More

Thursday, November 18 [24]

Schuyler, Black No More

Tuesday, November 20 [25]

Gilman, Herland
Paper 2 assigned

Thursday, November 25 [26] **Protesting the
Patriarchy: Sylvia Plath**

Plath, Bell Jar

Tuesday, December 2 [27]

Plath, Bell Jar

Tuesday, December 4 [28]

Plath, Bell Jar

Tuesday, December 9 [29]

Reserve Day
Paper 2 due
Final class – take-home final exam