

English 374-001
U.S. Literature: Modernism
Fall 2019
Professor Bryant Mangum

I. Texts: The books listed below will be available through Virginia Book Company, 900 W. Franklin, as well as at the VCU Bookstore:

Anderson, Sherwood	<i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> (1919)
Cather, Willa	<i>The Professor's House</i> (1925 (Vintage))
Eliot, T.S.	<i>The Waste Land and Other Poems</i> (1922)
Faulkner, William	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i> (1929) (Norton Critical)
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925)
Hemingway, Ernest	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i> (1926)
Toomer, Jean	<i>Cane</i> (1923) (Norton Critical)

Additional texts on Blackboard

II. Written Assignments:

There will be (a) three hour tests (two of which will have close reading and essay sections), the last one of which will be taken on the day of the final examination (and which will have only close reading, short answer sections) (b) a final take-home essay examination due the day scheduled for the final exam (c) occasional reaction papers, plus blackboard postings and (d) an optional paper (3-5 pages long, typed) if you choose option 2 below. The written assignments will be weighted in this way:

Option 1:

Hour Test #1 (objective and essay): 25%

Hour Test #2 (objective and essay): 25%

Hour Test #3 (objective only; day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Class Participation (based largely on Blackboard postings—see below): 5%

Class Attendance: 5%

Final Essay Examination (take-home; bring in on day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Option 2:

Hour Test #1 (objective and essay): 20%

Hour Test #2 (objective and essay): 20%

Hour Test #3 (objective only; day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Class Participation (based largely on Blackboard postings): 5%

Class Attendance: 5% (see below)

Optional Essay (due last week of class): 10%

Final Essay Examination (take-home; bring in on day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Note: Much of our class will consist of discussion of the works we are reading. You are encouraged to contribute to class discussions and your participation will be figured into your final grade, particularly in borderline cases. Because participation is such an important component of the course, you are allowed to miss a maximum of four classes to receive credit for the course. I will take attendance at the beginning of each class, and from the beginning of week two, if you come into class late it will count as an absence. Class attendance (5% of your final course grade) will be factored into your final course grade in the following way: 0-1 absences=A; 2 absences =B; 3 absences=C; 4 absences=D. **If you miss more than**

four classes for any reason (other than one of dire emergency such as serious illness or death in your immediate family) you will receive a grade of F in the course. The final day to withdraw without penalty is Friday, 1 November. Over the course of the semester I will post approximately twenty questions on the discussion board of Blackboard. Five substantial postings (100 words or more) in response to these are considered the minimum. For a detailed explanation of the way that Blackboard postings will be computed into your class participation grade, check on Blackboard under Course Documents.

III. General Objectives:

The phrase "modern American literature" usually refers to literature published between World War I and World War II. "Modernist" or post-war I writers are those, generally, whose first major work appeared in the so-called "Modern Period" (i.e., 1919-1939). In this course we will be concerned primarily with the first of the two decades in this period: the 1920's. This decade has been referred to as "The Roaring Twenties" and "The Jazz Age." Some see it as the time of "the full flowering of American literature." By reading and studying some of the best writing to come out of this time we will attempt to identify major themes that characterize the writings of the post-war I decade in America, focusing particularly on the image of the wasteland that provides a context for these themes.

IV. Specific Objectives:

A. Close Reading: The hour tests are designed to bring your attention to concrete details in the works. The theory here is that in a well-constructed work, no detail is insignificant, though some details are more important than others are. The emphasis in these tests will be on factual material, but you will also relate the details to thematic concerns. The best way to prepare for these tests is to read the works carefully, and for the hour tests to mark the passages and details discussed in class with particular attention to the ways these passages and details reflect themes of the works. I will provide sample discussion questions to help you prepare for the essay questions on the hour tests.

B. Abstracting: After reading the works closely, the next objective will be to "abstract" from it major thematic concerns as they are expressed through concrete details, image patterns, etc.

C. Synthesis: We will try finally to relate the themes, characters, etc. in the works to each other. This will be an ongoing process in our class discussions. The hour-test essays and final essay examination will be aimed specifically at this objective, as will some of the Blackboard questions.

V. Below is the grading scale: These numerical grades will actually be of concern to you only on the short answer tests. The other assignments will be assigned letter grades.

90-100 A
80-90 B
70-80 C
60-70 D
0-59 F

Letter grades for essays will be averaged in as follows:

A=95; A-=90; B+=88; B=85; B-=80; C+=78; C=75; C-=70; D+=68; D=65; D=60; F+=59; F see me

VI. VCU Honor System: "Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education." This class will be conducted in strict adherence to VCU's Honor System policies. In essence, you should not use another student's work. You should not falsely present source material as your own. Whenever you use material from another source, you must credit this source clearly, whether you are quoting directly, summarizing, or paraphrasing. Conscious and uncorrected acts of plagiarism (either from another student's work or from

an academic source) will result in a failing course grade. In other words, respect the work of others and in no way present it as your own. If you have additional questions about academic integrity and plagiarism consult VCU's policy in the *VCU Resource Guide* or at the following web address:
<http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/honor.html>

VII. Students with Disabilities: "Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities offered." Students with disabilities should identify to the instructor at the beginning of the course the services that they will need. For complete information on university policy regarding this, go to <http://www.vcu.edu/eoaa/selfidprocess.html>

VIII. A Note on Computers: Much of the work in this course will depend on regular use of Blackboard and on email sent to and from your VCU email address. I will use **your VCU email address**, the university's official means of communication with students, for communication with you and will expect you to check it between each of our classes. The same is true for Blackboard: I will post announcements there and you should check it between each of our classes. If you do not have a user ID and password that will allow you to access Blackboard and your VCU email, be sure to get one before the second class meeting. You will be able to access all of the course materials by going to <http://blackboard.vcu.edu>. If you do not have a computer ID number and password you can get one by following the steps listed at the following web address: <http://www.vcucard.com/>. Reference to the university's email policy can be found at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/email.htm>.

IX. University Code of Conduct: The University's policies regarding student conduct can be found at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/conductguide.html>.

X. What to Know and Do To Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU:

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). Keep your information up-to date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>)
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

XI. Additional Information Regarding VCU Policies: Further information about the policies referred to above and about relevant additional VCU policies can be found on our Blackboard course site or at the following web address: <http://www.provost.vcu.edu/syllabi.html>

XI. Miscellaneous:

My office is 307 Anderson House (913 W. Franklin). The telephone number is 828-1255. I will post office hours on Blackboard, on my door, and on our course website (bryantmangum.net), but if you need to see me at times other than those posted please feel free to set up a time during which we can meet. There is a voice mail on my telephone, and if you leave word on it, I will call you back; however, email is quicker. My e-mail address is bmangum@vcu.edu. I will try to respond to each email promptly, but if you haven't heard back from me within a day, resend your email in case it has gone astray. The address for my web page is <http://www.people.vcu.edu/~bmangum>, but for information related to our class, visit our course website: <http://bryantmangum.net>

XII. Daily Assignment Sheet to Follow: