

ENG 116W-04
MW 2:30-4:00
Eaton 110
Fall 2017

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U.S. Literature of Social Protest

About This Class

Can a poem start a war, amend a law, sway public opinion—or can it even change one person’s mind? What political purposes call for a novel, say, rather than a poem—or a film, a hymn, a short story? What ways of thinking, expressing, exciting, inciting, and inspiring do these various kinds of literary texts facilitate? In this course, we will ask both why US writers protest and how protest literature works, exploring the historical circumstances that ignite—or are ignited by—objections and tracing how these texts change the course of history. By focusing on works of fiction, we will consider how texts make arguments not just through ideology and rhetoric but through strategies like plot, figurative language, and sound effects. We will move chronologically through US history, watching conversations unfold between writers and their texts about what constitutes “good” protest literature and why that matters. Yet ENG 116W is not a survey course; it is, rather, designed to help you engage with literature, improving your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills in the process. Weekly readings are relatively short but demanding. This class requires substantial writing and vigorous participation.

Learning Outcomes

General Education Requirement Fulfillment: ENG 116W is a writing-centered course, and it also satisfies the Mode of Inquiry: Interpreting Texts. Therefore, students should expect to:

- perform critical, formal analyses of texts, exploring and employing a variety of interpretive strategies
- draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate protest literature and writers within their cultural, political, and historical contexts
- explore whether – and, if so, in what ways – these texts embody cultural values
- to produce essays that respond appropriately to the topic, advance and sustain focus on a central thesis, provide appropriate evidence, organize material effectively, and use appropriate style and mechanics

Required Materials

The Constitution of the United States
Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Harriet Beecher Stowe
The Oxford Book of American Poetry, Lehman and Brehm (OBAP)
Native Son, Richard Wright
Howl, Allen Ginsberg
Resistance, Rebellion, Life: 50 Poems Now, Amit Majmudar (RRL)
A paper journal or notebook for in-class essays

Additional readings and handouts will be made available as PDFs on the course WISE site. You are required to make hard copies of PDFs and bring them to class on the days we discuss them.

Course website at <https://wise.willamette.edu/>

Course Requirements and Policies

Course Time Commitment

Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time there is an expectation of 2-3 hours of work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting for 3 hours per week like ours, you should anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities.

Examples include study time, reading and homework assignments, research projects, and group work.

Attendance

You are expected to attend every class meeting. You are expected to come to class on time, having completed all assigned reading for that day and with the relevant course textbooks, printed PDFs, and pen and paper for taking notes. Computers will not be allowed in the classroom unless you have a documented disability.

There will be a sign-in sheet at each class meeting; you are responsible for making sure you sign the sheet. Missing class more than **two** times in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each absence (an A becomes an A-). If you are late for more than **two** class sessions, the third late arrival will be considered an absence, and every late arrival after that will be considered an absence. Disrespectful behavior (sleeping, personal conversations during class, disrespecting others' points of view, using your cell phone) will result in your being counted absent that day; I will not interrupt the class to confront you about this behavior, I will simply count you absent.

Documented illness and documented personal emergencies are excused absences: you will not be penalized for an excused absence. If you are ill, contact me in advance of any missed class to touch base and find out what you will need to make up before next class.

Attendance and Religious Practice

Willamette University recognizes the value of religious practice and strives to accommodate students' commitment to their religious traditions whenever possible. When conflicts between holy days or other religious practice and academic scheduling arise, every effort should be made to allow students to adhere to their tradition, including, when possible, excusing class absences and allowing make-up work. A student anticipating the need to miss a class for religious reasons should alert the faculty member within the first two weeks of the semester, and the two of them should determine the next course of action. Any unresolved difficulty should be referred to the Office of the Chaplains.

Grading

The percentage ranges below will earn the following final grades. I will occasionally issue an A+ based on exceptional class performance in addition to a grade of over 98%.

93-100 (A), 90-92.99 (A-), 87-89.99 (B+), 83-86.99 (B), 80-82.99 (B-),
77-79.99 (C+), 73-76.99 (C), 70-72.99 (C-), 67-69.99 (D+), 63-66.99 (D),
60-62.99 (D-) lower (F)

Final grades are established as follows:

Participation	10%
Journal Essays	20%
Short Essays (2-3 pages x2)	20%
Poem Presentation	25%
Final Essay (5-6 pages)	25%

Assignments

Both in-class and take-home work will be counted toward your final grade in this course. Work to be prepared in advance of class, including assigned reading, is listed on the Course Schedule. You will also be expected to participate fully during class meetings, which may include discussions, activities, and workshops.

At least once a week, we will begin class with a brief in-class **Journal Essay** based on the day's assigned readings. These essays are informal opportunities to process and reflect on readings, but they are also designed to measure how carefully you've read and thought about the material. To help you focus on your own writing, these essays will be closed book; however, you may use your own notes. All journal essays should be written in your ENG 116W journals (I don't mind if you use these journals for reading notes or class notes, but keep in mind that I will collect these, so you may not always have access to them). Each essay will be worth up to five points, and I may give additional points for exceptionally insightful answers.

In this course, the **Short Essays and the Final Essay** are written in cycles. This means that they are submitted first in an early version, workshopped and commented on, revised, and submitted again in a second version. The first version of each essay will not receive a grade, but if the first draft is incomplete, that may adversely affect the final essay grade. If the first version of an essay is turned in late, the late deduction will be applied to the final essay grade; for example, if a Short Essay 1.1 is turned in one day late, the final grade on 1.2 will be deducted by one letter grade. Further, the failure to submit a complete first essay draft will result in a failing grade for the complete essay cycle; in other words, if you do not turn in Essay 1.1, you will receive a 'F' on Essay 1.2. When submitting essays, you must include all previous versions with comments; failure to include previous version with comments will result in a lower essay grade.

You will receive complete instructions for Short Essays, Final Essay, and the Poem Presentation later on in the semester.

All writing assignments (except Journal Essays) will be typed and submitted on paper. They must be stapled and double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font with 1" margins. In the top left hand corner, indicate your name, the name of the class (English 116W-04), the date, and the name of the assignment. Number all pages after the first. Use MLA style for all other formatting and citation requirements.

Please proofread and revise your written work – a good habit to get into. Sloppiness and mechanical errors will result in a lower grade.

Late assignments **lose one letter grade per day, including weekends and holidays.** You may

ask for an extension if the assignment is due more than 72 hours (3 days) later, and the earlier the better. I may not grant the extension. In case of a looming or unexpected disaster, consideration will be given if you keep me in the loop and communicate in advance.

No make-up in-class assignments will be offered except in cases of documented emergency.

Academic Honesty

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. This includes ideas you get from your classmates as well as ideas you get from websites as well as books and other media. Even if you rewrite a source in your own words, if you do not cite that source in your text and your bibliography, you are still committing plagiarism. **Plagiarism and cheating may be grounds for dismissal from the college.** For definitions of cheating and plagiarism, you may refer to Willamette's Plagiarism and Cheating Policy at

http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/resources/policies/plagiarism_cheating.php.

Please familiarize yourself with these if you are not clear on what constitutes cheating or plagiarism. You are also welcome to contact me with any questions about your use of sources. I'm very happy to talk with you about this!

Access

Please tell me about any disabilities that will affect your participation in this course. I will respect any accommodations authorized by the Office of Accessible Education Services.

Course Content

Many of the texts we will read together this term deal with difficult issues and have troubling and disturbing content. Religion, sexuality, and politics will be in our reading and conversation; cruelty and violence are often present in stories concerning US culture and history. We will be thoughtful in taking up issues that can and should disturb us, as they raise special ethical, intellectual, and emotional challenges and questions.

An Additional Tool for Your Success

E-mail your classmates: In the space below, write down the e-mail contact information for at least two of your classmates. When you have a quick question about something we did in class, something on the syllabus, or an unclear assignment, you may wish to check with a classmate or two before you check with me.

1. Name: _____ E-mail: _____

2. Name: _____ E-mail: _____

By remaining in this course you verify that you have read, understood, and agreed to abide by all information disclosed in this syllabus.

Course Schedule

Readings and assignments are due in class on the date listed. Scheduling, readings, due dates, and assignments are all subject to change at instructor's discretion.

Week 1

Date	Readings Due	Assignment Due
Mon., 8/28	Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," <i>OBAP</i> 13	
Wed., 8/30	"Declaration of Independence," and "Constitution" through "Amendment XII," <i>Constitution</i> 35-39, 1-25	

Week 2

Mon., 9/4	NO CLASSES – LABOR DAY	
Wed., 9/6	Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience," WISE	

Week 3

Mon., 9/11	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , pp. 3-79 plus Chapter XII (other chapter selections TBA)	
Wed., 9/13	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , pp. 329-379 (chapter selections TBA)	Short Essay 1.1 Due

Week 4

Mon., 9/18	Harper, Aunt Chloe Poems, WISE; and "Amendment XIV" and "Amendment XV," <i>Constitution</i> 25-27	
Wed., 9/20	Whittier, "For Righteousness' Sake," "Barbara Frietchie," "What the Birds Said," <i>OBAP</i> 51-57	

Week 5

Mon., 9/25	Temperance Hymns, WISE; Robinson, "Mr. Flood's Party," <i>OBAP</i> 201-203; "Amendment XVIII" and "Amendment XXI," <i>Constitution</i> 28 and 30	
Wed., 9/27	Millay, "First Fig," "Love is not all," "Rendezvous," <i>OBAP</i> 388-390; "Amendment XIX," <i>Constitution</i> 29	Short Essay 1.2 Due

Week 6

Mon., 10/2	Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," WISE	
Wed., 10/4	Stein, from <i>A Book Concluding with As A Wife Has a Cow A Love Story</i> , <i>OBAP</i> 240-242; Loy, "Gertrude Stein," <i>OBAP</i> 276	

Week 7

Mon., 10/9	McKay, "If We Must Die," "America," <i>OBAP</i> 382-83; In-class screening: <i>The Birth of a Nation</i> , 1915 (selections)	
Wed., 10/11	Hughes, selections from <i>Montage of a Dream Deferred</i> , <i>OBAP</i> 469-475	Short Essay 2.1 Due

Week 8

Mon., 10/16	Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> , pp. 3-93	
Wed., 10/18	Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> , pp. 97-184	

Week 9

Mon., 10/23	Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> , pp. 273-363	
Wed., 10/25	Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> , pp. 363-430	

Week 10

Mon., 10/30	Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> , "How 'Bigger' Was born," p. 433-462	Short Essay 2.2 Due
Wed., 11/1	Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," WISE; "Amendment XXIV," 32	

Week 11

Mon., 11/6	Ginsberg, <i>Howl</i> , 9-22	
Wed., 11/8	Ginsberg, <i>Howl</i> , 21-44	

Week 12

Mon., 11/13	Yamada, Camp Notes poems, WISE; "Amendment XXVI," <i>Constitution</i> 34	
Wed., 11/15	selections from <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i> , WISE	Final Essay 1.1 Due

Week 13

Mon., 11/20	THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Wed., 11/22	THANKSGIVING BREAK	

Week 14

Mon., 11/27	<i>RRL</i> , selections TBA	
Wed., 11/29	<i>RRL</i> , selections TBA	

Week 15

Mon., 12/4	<i>RRL</i> , selections TBA	
Wed., 12/6	<i>RRL</i> , selections TBA	

Finals Week

Wed., 12/13	Final Essay 1.2 due at 5:00pm	
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