



## DEPARTMENT OF ARTS & EDUCATION

### COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2016

#### EN3620 (A2): AMERICAN LITERATURE SINCE 1970 - 3 (3-0-0) 45 Hours

**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Stephen Guy

**PHONE:** 780.539.2977

**OFFICE:** C418

**E-MAIL:** sguy@gprc.ab.ca

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 4-5pm (drop-in) or by appointment (much better).

**PREREQUISITE(S)/COREQUISITE:** Six credits of Junior English.

#### **REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:**

Diaz, Junot. *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*.

Didion, Joan. *Play It As It Lays*.

Millet, Lydia. *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love*.

Reed, Ishmael. *Flight to Canada*.

Other readings available online or as hand-outs in class.

**CALENDAR DESCRIPTION:** A study of American writing since 1945, examining issues of language, power, gender, class, race, politics and significant moments in American culture and literary production.

**CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS:** 3 credits / 3 hours per week

**DELIVERY MODES:** Course work includes lectures, class discussions, and individual student work, both written and oral.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:** Students will read American literature in various genres with a focus on evaluating the utility of the nation state as a framework for understanding art. Because this is an election year, we will spend extra time considering recent literary depictions of the foibles of American democracy. The course is designed to help students develop and strengthen close reading, critical thinking, academic writing, and public speaking skills.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** After taking EN3620, students will be able to:

- Engage in advanced literary analysis that is alert to the historical and social contexts of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century America.
- Identify and critically discuss major themes and developments in the recent American literature and culture.
- Deliver effective seminar-style presentations.
- Plan, research and write advanced critical essays.

**TRANSFERABILITY:**

King's U ENGL 3xx (3)  
UofA ENGL 362 (3) or  
AUENG 271 (3)

**\*\* Grade of D or D+ may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students are cautioned that it is their responsibility to contact the receiving institutions to ensure transferability**

**GRADING CRITERIA:**

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE			
GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A <sup>+</sup>	4.0	90 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	85 – 89	
A <sup>-</sup>	3.7	80 – 84	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B <sup>+</sup>	3.3	77 – 79	
B	3.0	73 – 76	GOOD
B <sup>-</sup>	2.7	70 – 72	
C <sup>+</sup>	2.3	67 – 69	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	63 – 66	
C <sup>-</sup>	1.7	60 – 62	
D <sup>+</sup>	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

**EVALUATIONS:**

Participation 10%

Short paper 10%

Presentation 20%

Long paper 30%

Final exam 30%

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Please come to class and pass your papers in on time. Papers must be submitted as hard copies, double-spaced and stapled, and are due the minute before class begins on the day of the deadline. The deadlines are STRICT. For every day that your paper is late, you will lose 5% from your grade. Extensions will be granted for EXTRAORDINARY circumstances only. Please pause before submitting a request for an extension and ask yourself: are these circumstances really, truly EXTRAORDINARY? Better to begin planning your essay early, or to accept the penalty like a responsible adult. If you are genuinely ill, you may provide a note from a doctor to have the penalty waived.
2. Read all of the assigned material and come prepared to discuss it during class. Contribute meaningfully to the discussion by preparing questions and comments about specific passages and by engaging actively with the instructor and other students.
3. The reading schedule is subject to change according to time constraints and other considerations. All changes will be posted to Moodle.
5. Please keep a copy of all written work. In the event of theft or loss, the student is required to submit a duplicate copy.
6. Cell phones must be turned off during class, and I strongly encourage you to avoid taking notes with a laptop. Pen and paper have worked very well for this purpose for generations. Surfing the internet during class is disrespectful and very distracting to the other students. Please come prepared to engage with the material, with the other students in the class, and with me.
7. Students are expected to check the Moodle site for this course before each class to stay informed. Important passages, chapters, or poems to focus on will be posted there. In the event of a class cancellation, the announcement will be posted to Moodle.
8. Students are advised to read the GPRC Admissions Guide for the rules regarding Registration, Withdrawals, Academic Misconduct including plagiarism, and Appeals.

## STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Incidences of academic dishonesty will result in penalties commensurate with the severity of the offence. Please refer to the college policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/fetch.php?ID=68>

\*\*Note: all Academic and Administrative policies are available at <https://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/index.html>

## COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week 1:

8/31 – Introductions – “America’s just a word but I use it.”

Week 2:

9/7 – Labour Day, no class

9/9 – Joan Didion – *Play It As It Lays*

Week 3:

9/12 – Joan Didion – *Play It As It Lays*

9/14 – Joan Didion – *Play It As It Lays*

Week 4:

9/19 – Ishmael Reed – *Flight to Canada*

9/21 – Ishmael Reed – *Flight to Canada*

Week 5:

9/26 – Ishmael Reed – *Flight to Canada*

9/28 – Junot Diaz – *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Week 6:

10/3 – Junot Diaz – *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

10/5 – Junot Diaz – *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Week 7:

10/10 – Thanksgiving, no class.

10/12 – Junot Diaz – *Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* **[Short paper due]**

Week 8:

10/17 – David Foster Wallace and Donald Barthelme’s president stories.

10/19 – Hunter S. Thompson – “Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail”

Week 9:

10/24 – Joan Didion – “Inside Baseball” / “Clinton Agonistes”

10/26 – David Foster Wallace – “Up, Simba”

Week 10:

10/31 – Millet – *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love*

11/2 – Millet – *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love*

Week 11:

11/7 – Millet – *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love*

11/9 – Millet – *George Bush, Dark Prince of Love*

Week 12:

11/14 – John Barth – “Lost in the Funhouse”

11/16 – Grace Paley – “Love” and “In This Country, but in Another Language, My Aunt Refuses to Marry the Men Everyone Wants Her To.”

Week 13:

11/21 – Raymond Carver – “Fat” and “Chef’s House” **[Final paper due]**

11/23 – Lydia Davis – Three stories.

Week 14:

11/28 – John Ashbery and Frank O’Hara - poems

11/30 – Amiri Baraka and Claudia Rankine - poems

Week 15:

12/5 - Review

**EMAIL AND MEETING POLICY:** I will respond to an email within 48 hours of receiving it. I strongly encourage students to speak with me during my office hours or to set up an appointment.