

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**MASTER SYLLABUS**

**ENGL 214: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION**

**CIP Code: 230101**

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**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT of ENGLISH and HUMANITIES  
REVISED: April 2020**

A. **TITLE:** Contemporary American Fiction

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ENGL 214

C. **CREDIT HOURS:**

Credit Hours: 3

3 lecture hours per week

Course Length: 15 weeks

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Determined by Semester

E. **GER CATEGORY:** 7

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall, Spring

G. **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Through the writings of contemporary authors (post-1945), students examine literary trends and their relationship to social, political, cultural phenomena in America. Students are given an opportunity to examine the literary devices and structures of these works as well as explore contemporary ideas, values, and attitudes expressed in the literature.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES:**

Pre-requisite(s): ENGL 101 (Expository Writing) or ENGL 102 (Oral and Written Expression)

Co-requisite(s): None.

I. **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

<b><u>Course Student Learning Outcome [SLO]</u></b>	<b><u>PSLO</u></b>	<b><u>GER</u></b>	<b><u>ISLO</u></b>
<b>a. Interpret and analyze selections of contemporary American fiction</b>	1		1 [O,W] 2 [CA]
<b>b. Define common elements of literary study and demonstrate ability to identify and analyze those elements within works studied</b>	2	7	2 [CA]
<b>c. Compare and contrast common themes among contemporary American authors and the social/political contexts in which they were writing</b>	2		2 [CA]

KEY	<b><u>Institutional Student Learning Outcomes  ISLO</u></b> <b>1 – 5</b>
ISLO #	ISLO & Subsets
1	<b>Communication Skills</b> Oral [O], Written [W]
2	<b>Critical Thinking</b> <i>Critical Analysis [CA] , Inquiry &amp; Analysis [IA] , Problem Solving [PS]</i>
3	<b>Foundational Skills</b> <i>Information Management [IM], Quantitative Lit./Reasoning [QTR]</i>
4	<b>Social Responsibility</b> <i>Ethical Reasoning [ER], Global Learning [GL], Intercultural Knowledge [IK], Teamwork [T]</i>
5	<b>Industry, Professional, Discipline Specific Knowledge and Skills</b>

J. **APPLIED LEARNING COMPONENT:** Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No X \_\_\_\_\_

K. **TEXTS:** Texts vary with instructor and course theme.

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaid's Tale*. Anchor Press, 1985. ISBN 038549081X

Baldwin, James. *Another Country*. Vintage Books, 1960. ISBN 0679744711

Danticat, Edwidge. *Dew Breaker*. Vintage Books, 2004. ISBN 140003429

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage Books, 1987. ISBN: 1400033411

Orange, Tommy. *There There*. Vintage Press, 2018. ISBN: 0525436146

Thi Bui. *The Best We Could Do*. Abrams Press, 2018. ISBN: 1419718789

L. **REFERENCES:** Contemporary Literary Criticism, New Revision of Contemporary Authors,  
Contemporary Authors, Black Literature Criticism, Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology enhanced-classroom

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- papers
- in-class writing and participation
- reading journal
- research
- quizzes

P. **TOPICAL OUTLINE:**

I. Literary Terminology

A. Narrative Structure

- B. Characterization
- C. Style, Theme, Symbolism

II. Social and Cultural Context

- A. Race
- B. Class
- C. Gender

III. Literary Genres

- A. Realism
- B. Fabulism
- C. Formalism
- D. Satire
- E. Southern Gothic
- F. Metafiction

IV. Social Class Themes in The Short Story:

Atmics: *The Lesson*, Toni Cade Bambara

- B. Economics and Lifestyle: *I Stand Here Ironing*, Tillie Olsen
- C. Economic, Job, Lifestyle: *The Unclouded Day*, E. Annie Proulx
- D. Economic, Education: *Townies*, Andre Dubus

V. Social Class Themes in the Novel

- A. Ethnicity: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston
- B. Gender and Political Oppression:
  - 1. Science Fiction as Satire - *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood
  - 2. *The Handmaid's Tale* - film
  - 3. Analysis of genre using social class as lens
- C. Education, Occupation, and Lifestyle: *The Shipping News*, E. Annie Proulx
- D. Ethnicity, Economics, Lifestyle: *The Tortilla Curtain*, T. Coraghessan Boyle

VI. Choosing Social Class: Social Mobility

- A. Upward Mobility
- B. Down Shifting

Q. **LABORATORY OUTLINE**: none.