

## Syllabus: *Contemporary Literature*

### Course Description

*This is not a traditional survey course. While each work of literature must be understood within its historical context, there is no firm chronology to which this course adheres. Instead, emphasis is placed on concepts and themes that consciously or unconsciously unite us. Looking through a contemporary lens, students explore issues of love, war, identity, humanity, art, culture, and family. The character of the “post-modern” novel—stylistically and thematically—is the primary focus, and students will come to a better understanding of those tools and techniques used to read and discuss fiction. This course goes beyond the basic elements (character, plot, setting, etc.) and introduces students to the deeper analysis of literature—the set of conventions and patterns, codes and rules, we employ in reading and discussing a piece of writing.*

### Primary Text

- *Seven Contemporary Short Novels* ed. Clerc and Leiter

### Major Readings

- *Being There* Jerzy Kosinski
- *Slaughterhouse-Five* Kurt Vonnegut
- *The Bluest Eye* Toni Morrison

### Estimated Coursework

- 200 points Homework & In-Class Work
- 50 points Two Exams
- 50 points Two Essays
- 25 points One Group Presentation

325 points Total

- Semester Exam = 20% of Overall Grade

### Grading Scale

- 100 – 90 A
- 89 – 80 B
- 79 – 70 C
- 69 – 60 D
- 59 – 0 F

### Expectations

This course should be used to exchange ideas, and this classroom should be used as the forum for that exchange. Ask questions, but be willing to hear the answers. Offer opinions, but be willing to support them with evidence. Be alert, enthusiastic, critical, and confident, but always remain considerate and receptive in your language. Keep your ears *and* mind open. Afford others the same measure of respect you would like in return.

### General Policies

- Check the class website weekly and when absent—it contains 90% of the necessary course and assignment information
- Lost or misplaced assignments should be printed from the website
- Quizzes and exams will be made up **only** after school
- Arrive on time and prepared (**do not** expect hall passes)
- Read assignments prior to class, participate in discussion, and take notes
- Follow instructions and formatting guidelines on all assignments (plagiarism of any sort will result in a **zero**)
- It is the student’s responsibility to meet all deadlines and complete all missed (late work may be given a **zero**)
  - Further policies for absences, tardies, and make-up work can be found in the Student Handbook (5.05–5.09)
- Field trips, suspensions, and prearranged absences **are not** excuses for late work
  - Work must be turned in **immediately** upon your return or **before** your absence (subject to teacher’s discretion)
- When all else fails: **use your common sense**

### **Tentative Schedule: *Contemporary Literature***

Week 1*	<b>Course Introduction</b>	Syllabus, Letter Home, and Entrance Exam
Week 2	<b>The Novel: The Anatomy &amp; Grammar of Fiction</b>	
Week 3	<b>The Novel: The Anatomy &amp; Grammar of Fiction</b>	Exam 1
Week 4*	<b>Metaphor &amp; Allegory: <i>Being There</i></b>	
Week 5	<b>Metaphor &amp; Allegory: <i>Being There</i></b>	
Week 6	<b>Metaphor &amp; Allegory: <i>Being There</i></b>	Essay 1
Week 7	<b>Writing Workshop: <i>The Literary Essay</i></b>	
Week 8*	<b>Narrative, Theme, &amp; Motif: <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i></b>	
Week 9*	<b>Narrative, Theme, &amp; Motif: <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i></b>	
Week 10*	<b>Narrative, Theme, &amp; Motif: <i>Slaughterhouse-Five</i></b>	Exam 2
Week 11	<b>Voice, Place, &amp; Style: <i>The Bluest Eye</i></b>	
Week 12	<b>Voice, Place, &amp; Style: <i>The Bluest Eye</i></b>	
Week 13	<b>Voice, Place, &amp; Style: <i>The Bluest Eye</i></b>	Essay 2
Week 14*	<b>Book Club: <i>Independent Reading and Group Work</i></b>	
Week 15*	<b>Thanksgiving Break</b>	
Week 16	<b>Book Club: <i>Independent Reading and Group Work</i></b>	
Week 17	<b>Book Club: <i>Presentations</i></b>	Group Presentation
Week 18	<b>OPEN WEEK: TO BE DETERMINED</b>	
Week 19	<b>Semester Exams</b>	

\* denotes shortened academic week