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## Independent Study Course Syllabus

**Course Number: LIT 902**  
**Course Title: Studies in the American Novel**

Online     Distance Learning

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**Instructor:** Luetta Reimer  
**Phone number:** (559) 255-2308  
**Email:** [Lmreimer@fresno.edu](mailto:Lmreimer@fresno.edu)  
**Website:** [www.pdcourses.com](http://www.pdcourses.com)

**Units: 3**  
**Grade Level: 7-12**

### Course Description:

This course, designed for teachers of middle and secondary school, provides the structure and incentive to read and think about some of the great novels from American fiction. These works have shaped not only the development of American literature, but also the very nature of our thought and culture.

Teachers will be asked to read two novels selected from a list of 19th and 20th century classics. Critical research on the novels will enhance the preparation of lesson plans for teaching one of these novels.

This course is designed to meet the objectives identified in the Common Core State Standards in Language Arts as well as the five core propositions of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Students will be asked to make connections between their work and these standards or the standards of their own states.

### Course Dates:

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year to complete assignments.

Students have up to one year from the date of registration, and no less than three weeks (one week per credit) to complete the course.

### Course Materials:

Because each participant is free to select novels of his or her choice and because the books are all readily available at bookstores and libraries, there are no texts included in the materials.

The folder with instructions for completing this course also includes information about Fresno Pacific University, the Center for Professional Development, and the instructor, plus specifics on course policies and procedures.

### **Course Requirements:**

The assignments in this course are designed to engage participants in the reading of two great novels, to teach or reinforce concepts related to the novel, and to encourage participants to develop an effective lesson plan for teaching one of the novels. Participants are asked, therefore, to read, to conduct scholarly research, to think critically, and to respond thoughtfully to the readings.

To successfully complete this course, participants must submit

1. a three to five page typed response (based on the "Novel Response" guidelines) for each of the novels selected.
2. notes from two secondary sources (literary scholarship found in libraries or on the Internet) on each of the novels read in the course.
3. a general outline for teaching one of the novels.

See the "Schedule of Topics and Assignments" for more details on these assignments.

All work should be typed and sent to the instructor at one time when the course is completed. Please make a copy of all work; work will not be returned. Students have one full year to finish the course but should not send completed work in less than three weeks from registration.

**Send completed work by email attachments to: [Lmreimer@fresno.edu](mailto:Lmreimer@fresno.edu)**

**OR**

**Mail all the above items to:**

Luetta Reimer  
1549 S. Lind Avenue  
Fresno, California 93727

### **National Standards:**

This course is designed to reinforce and support the English Language Arts Standards of the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSS). The Anchor Standards for Reading (Grades 6-12) are listed here:

### **Key Ideas and Details**

1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize

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the key supporting details and ideas.

3. Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of text.

### **Craft and Structure**

4. Connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, tone.
5. Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger
6. Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

### **Integration of Knowledge and Ideas**

7. Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse formats and media, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.
8. Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
9. Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

### **Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity**

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

### **National Board for Professional Teaching Standards: Five Core Propositions**

In addition to the content standards referenced above, this course supports the following core propositions that characterize National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

#### **Proposition I: Teachers are Committed to Students and Their Learning**

- NBCTs are dedicated to making knowledge accessible to all students. They believe all students can learn.
- They treat students equitably. They recognize the individual differences that distinguish their students from one another and they take account for these differences in their practice.
- NBCTs understand how students develop and learn.

- They respect the cultural and family differences students bring to their classroom. They are concerned with their students' self-concept, their motivation and the effects of learning on peer relationships.

**Proposition 2: Teachers Know the Subjects They Teach and How to Teach Those Subjects to Students.**

- NBCTs have mastery over the subject(s) they teach. They have a deep understanding of the history structure and real-world applications of the subject.
- They have skill and experience in teaching it, and they are very familiar with the skills gaps and preconceptions students may bring to the subject.
- They are able to use diverse instructional strategies to teach for understanding.

**Proposition 3: Teachers are Responsible for Managing and Monitoring Student Learning.**

- NBCTs deliver effective instruction. They move fluently through a range of instructional techniques, keeping students motivated, engaged and focused.
- They know how to engage students to ensure a disciplined learning environment, and how to organize instruction to meet instructional goals.
- NBCTs know how to assess the progress of individual students as well as the class as a whole.
- They use multiple methods for measuring student growth and understanding, and they can clearly explain student performance to parents.

**Proposition 4: Teachers Think Systematically about Their Practice and Learn from Experience.**

- NBCTs model what it means to be an educated person—they read, they question, they create and they are willing to try new things.
- They are familiar with learning theories and instructional strategies and stay abreast of current issues in American education.
- They critically examine their practice on a regular basis to deepen knowledge, expand their repertoire of skills, and incorporate new findings into their practice.

**Proposition 5: Teachers are Members of Learning Communities.**

- NBCTs collaborate with others to improve student learning.
- They are leaders and actively know how to seek and build partnerships with community groups and businesses.
- They work with other professionals on instructional policy, curriculum development and staff development.
- They can evaluate school progress and the allocation of resources in order to meet state and local education objectives.

## Learning Outcomes:

Participants will be able to

1. read and analyze two outstanding novels from American literature. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 9 & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2)
2. sharpen skills for analyzing and understanding the novel as a literary form.
3. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, & 10; NBPTS Prop. 2)
4. discover connections between literature and other disciplines. (CCSS 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, & 10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, & 4)
5. experience the value of locating and using secondary sources as a means for increasing and enriching literary insight. (CCSS 4, 7, 8, 9, 10; NBPTS Prop. 2)
6. develop lesson plans to effectively share the novel in their classrooms. (CCSS 1 - 10; NBPTS Props. 1, 2, 3, & 4)
7. connect lessons to state or national standards. (Prop 5)

## Schedule of Topics and Assignments

Studies in the American Novel

### A. Reading:

Select and read two novels from the following list. Choose novels that you have not read before, if possible, and certainly novels you have not taught.

Cooper, James Fenimore	<i>The Last of the Mohicans</i>
Hawthorne, Nathaniel	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>
Stowe, Harriet Beecher	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
James, Henry	<i>Portrait of a Lady; The Turn of the Screw</i>
Twain, Mark	<i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i>
Crane, Stephen	<i>The Red Badge of Courage</i>
Chopin, Kate	<i>The Awakening</i>
London, Jack	<i>The Call of the Wild</i>
Wharton, Edith	<i>Ethan Frome</i>
Cather, Willa	<i>My Antonia; O Pioneers</i>
Fitzgerald, F. Scott	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>
Buck, Pearl	<i>The Good Earth</i>
Steinbeck, John	<i>Grapes of Wrath; Of Mice and Men; The Pearl</i>
Saroyan, William	<i>The Human Comedy</i>
Warren, Robert Penn	<i>All the King's Men</i>
Salinger, J.D.	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i>
Hemingway, Ernest	<i>Old Man and the Sea; For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>
Ellison, Ralph	<i>Invisible Man</i>
Rawlings, Marjorie	<i>The Yearling</i>

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Walker, Margaret	<i>Jubilee</i>
Lee, Harper	<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>
Heller, Joseph	<i>Catch 22</i>
Vonnegut, Kurt	<i>Slaughter House Five</i>
Hurston, Zora	<i>Their Eyes were Watching God</i>
Anaya, Rudolfo	<i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>
Clark, Walter Van Tilburg	<i>The Ox Bow Incident</i>
Knowles, John	<i>A Separate Peace</i>
Angelou, Maya	<i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>
Wright, Richard	<i>Native Son; Black Boy</i>
Potok, Chaim	<i>The Promise; The Chosen</i>
Walker, Alice	<i>The Color Purple</i>
Morrison, Toni	<i>Beloved; The Bluest Eye</i>
Irving, John	<i>A Prayer for Owen Meany</i>
Cisneros, Sandra	<i>The House on Mango Street</i>
Tan, Amy	<i>The Joy Luck Club</i>
Doerr, Harriet	<i>Stones for Ibarra</i>
Taylor, Mildred	<i>Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry</i>

*Note: Students who wish to propose reading an American novel not on this list should contact the instructor in advance for approval.*

## **B. Response:**

After completing the reading of the first novel, answer these questions. Respond to each question fully, being as specific and concrete as possible. The total response to each novel should be about three to five typed, double-spaced pages.

Please complete a separate response for each of the novels you read.

1. Name and author of novel.
2. Have you read other fiction by this author? If so, please identify
3. How is the setting (in time and place) appropriate for this novel?
4. Name four characters and identify the role each plays in the novel.
5. Briefly summarize the plot of the novel.
6. What is the central idea (theme, controlling generalization, etc.) of the novel?
7. How does the author use humor? Describe one incident that you found humorous.
8. Quote a sentence or a short paragraph from the novel that is representative of the author's writing style. Explain what may be observed through the writing sample you selected. (Look for imagery, figurative language, unusual diction or sentence structure, symbolism, etc.)

9. Which other pieces of literature does this novel remind you of? Films? Poems? Music? How?
10. Formulate an evaluation of the novel. What do you most admire about it? What aspects were not satisfying for you? What values and ideals does the novel promote?

### **C. Secondary Readings:**

Go to a library (or use the Internet) to read comments about the novel by two literary scholars. These may be short essays or chapters; you are not expected to read entire books! Take brief notes on observations about the novels, not the authors. Identify the source of your information by including the title of the article or book and the author. Your notes should fill about two typed pages, but you may wish to do more research if you plan to teach these novels. Because all of the authors on the list are well known, you should have no trouble finding information about their works. If you find it difficult to locate resources, the instructor is prepared to help you.

### **D. Teaching the Novel:**

Prepare a general outline for teaching ONE of the novels you read in this course. How might you introduce the experience? What kinds of activities would you use to engage students? Although the plans for this teaching experience need not be in exhaustive detail, they should include at least the following elements:

- 1) goals and objectives for the unit
- 2) national or state standards addressed by the unit
- 3) background preparation for students
- 4) student/teacher activities with estimated time blocks
- 5) methods for evaluating or assessing student progress and growth

It is not necessary to include copies of handouts, quizzes, or other supplementary materials.

### **Evidence of Learning:**

- Instructor observed evidence of understanding of course objectives as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Instructor observed evidence of understanding literary concepts and terminology as demonstrated through student's reflective writing assignments. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)
- Student demonstrated his/her understanding of effective design of lesson plans. (Outcomes 5,6)
- Student included the use of critical thinking skills and made connections to state content and/or professional teaching standards. (Outcome 2, 6)
- Student demonstrated an understanding of course objectives by identifying how course content and terminology may be used in his/her teaching. (Outcomes 2, 5, 6)

### **Grading Policies and Rubric:**

Grades will be determined using the following percentages:

Reading responses to the two novels: 40%

Notes on critical readings for two novels: 30%

Lesson outline 30%

Responses and lessons will be evaluated to determine thoughtful, engaged reflection, incorporation of literary concepts, and effective, creative classroom procedures. Coursework is to be typed. Instructions regarding reading and writing requirements should be followed carefully.

Total scores determine the final grade:

90 - 100% = A

80 - 89% = B

79% or below = no credit

All coursework must reflect a minimum "B" quality to receive credit. The discernment between an A and a B is at the discretion of the instructor, based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubric). Participants may request either a letter grade (A or B) or credit (CR). Coursework falling short of a "B" or CR grade will be returned with further instructions. Every person with a score of 80% or above will receive three semester units of credit.

<b>Scoring Rubric</b>	<b>90 – 100 Points Exceptional</b>	<b>80 – 89 Points Adequate</b>	<b>70 – 79 Points Not acceptable</b>
<b>Type of Assignment</b>			
Written responses	Student’s written responses show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is original and thorough. The student effectively organizes key insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the texts.	Student’s written responses show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student is complete, but lacks thoroughness and originality. The student sufficiently organizes insights and demonstrates evidence of interaction with the readings.	Student’s written responses show little investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. The work submitted by the student does not show adequate thought or effort.
Lesson design	Lesson plans show an exceptional investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student consistently makes connections to local instructional goals/standards and implements research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans show an adequate investment of time, energy and thoughtful reflection. Student makes some connections to local instructional goals/standards and research-based strategies and approaches.	Lesson plans submitted by the student do not show adequate thought or effort, and may not address specific goals.

### **Instructor/Student Contact**

Students are warmly invited to contact the instructor at any time with concerns, questions, or comments related to course work. They are specifically asked to do after reading and reflecting on the first novel. At the completion of the course, the instructor will comment on the student's work and make suggestions, if needed.

### **Final Course Grade and Transcripts**

When all work for the course has been completed, students will need to logon to the Center for Professional Development website (<http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd>) to "Submit Grade Form". Once the instructor fills out the grade form online, students may log back in to request their Grade Report as well as order transcripts online. Please allow at least two weeks for the final grade to be posted. For more information see the Independent Studies Policies and Procedures that were sent to you when you received your course materials, or in your online course. They are available, also at <http://ce.fresno.edu/cpd> - under General Information > CPD Policies.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Honesty**

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue. URL <http://www.fresno.edu>.

### **CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

CE 1. Demonstrate proficient written communication by articulating a clear focus, synthesizing arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to inform and persuade others, and present information applicable to targeted use.
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CE 2. Demonstrate comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
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CE 3. Reflect on their personal and professional growth and provide evidence of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and professional improvement.
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CE 4. Apply critical thinking competencies by generating probing questions, recognizing underlying assumptions, interpreting and evaluating relevant information, and applying their understandings to the professional setting.
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CE 5. Reflect on values that inspire high standards of professional and ethical behavior as they pursue excellence in applying new learning to their chosen field.
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CE 6. Identify information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, organize that information, identify the best sources of information for a given enquiry, locate and critically evaluate sources, and accurately and effectively share that information.
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## FRESNO PACIFIC UNIVERSITY STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>Student Learning Outcomes Oral Communication:</b> Students will <i>exhibit</i> clear, engaging, and confident oral communication – in both individual and group settings – and will critically <i>evaluate</i> content and delivery components.
<b>Written Communication:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> proficient written communication by <i>articulating</i> a clear focus, <i>synthesizing</i> arguments, and utilizing standard formats in order to <i>inform</i> and <i>persuade</i> others.
<b>Content Knowledge:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> comprehension of content-specific knowledge and the ability to apply it in theoretical, personal, professional, or societal contexts.
<b>Reflection:</b> Students will <i>reflect</i> on their personal and professional growth and <i>provide evidence</i> of how such reflection is utilized to manage personal and vocational improvement.
<b>Critical Thinking:</b> Students will <i>apply</i> critical thinking competencies by <i>generating</i> probing questions, <i>recognizing</i> underlying assumptions, <i>interpreting</i> and <i>evaluating</i> relevant information, and <i>applying</i> their understandings to new situations.
<b>Moral Reasoning:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> and <i>apply</i> moral reasoning and ethical decision-making skills, and <i>articulate</i> the norms and principles underlying a Christian world-view.
<b>Service:</b> Students will <i>demonstrate</i> service and reconciliation as a way of leadership.
<b>Cultural and Global Perspective:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> personal, cultural, and global perspectives and will employ these perspectives to <i>evaluate</i> complex systems.
<b>Quantitative Reasoning:</b> Students will accurately <i>compute</i> calculations and symbolic operations and <i>explain</i> their use in a field of study.
<b>Information Literacy:</b> Students will <i>identify</i> information needed in order to fully understand a topic or task, <i>explain</i> how that information is organized, <i>identify</i> the best sources of information for a given enquiry, <i>locate</i> and critically <i>evaluate</i> sources, and accurately and effectively <i>share</i> that information.