

Contemporary Literature

Ms. Lane

Introduction:

“Reading without reflecting is like eating without digesting.” —Edmund Burke

Welcome to Contemporary Literature class! This class is designed to expose you to more recent works that might not otherwise be covered in a traditional survey class (such as American or British Literature).

To quote the Contemporary Literature master, Mr. McEvilly, “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, and using the novel as its focus, students explore issues of love, hate, identity, humanity, conformity, culture, and family. Venturing well beyond the basic elements (character, plot, setting, etc.) of fiction, this course 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.”

Please note that nearly all the texts we will examine this semester contain mature content. Students must be prepared to handle this material accordingly and be able to conduct themselves as professionals through both their discussions in class and their written analyses of the texts.

Extended Texts:

Being There by Jerzy Kosiński

Slaughterhouse-Five by Kurt Vonnegut

The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

You will also be responsible for purchasing your own copy of a novel (from the provided list or with pre-approval from me).

Course Goals:

It is my goal that students will be able to analyze an author’s purpose, a novel’s structure, and connect the content of the novel to the outside world in meaningful ways by the end of this semester. Through close reads, annotation, reflection, class discussion, and independent research students will be able to formulate their own opinions, supported with evidence, about literature and the themes, motifs, criticisms, etc. offered by an author.

Also, students are required to choose a novel of their own and write a research paper (along with all other required components of research) in order to pass this course.

Grading Scale and Final:

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