

Desire, Industry, and the Individual: Literature and the Rise of Modern America, 1865-1910

Late-Nineteenth-Century American Literature
Cedar Crest College
English 322: Sec 70/80
Spring 2009; Format: Seminar
Thurs. 7-9:30 PM; Room: BHA 10

Dr. Robert Wilson
Office: 113 Hartzel Hall
Office Hours: M & W 2:30-3:30 PM;
T, W, & R 6-6:45 PM; and by appointment.

Email: rawilson@cedarcrest.edu
Phone: x3474, off campus dial
610-606-4666

“The past was nothing to her; offered no lesson which she was willing to heed. The future was a mystery which she never attempted to penetrate. The present alone was significant.”

--Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* 1899

“The woman had been set free [...] Behind them, in every city, town and farmhouse, were myriads of new types,—or type-writers,—telephone and telegraph-girls, shopclerks, factory hands, running into millions on millions, and, as classes, unknown to themselves as to historians [...] all these new women had been created since 1840; all were to show their meaning before 1940.”

--Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* 1907

Books & Resources: The below books can be purchased from the Campus Bookstore, but feel free to pick them up elsewhere. Online booksellers (e.g. www.alibris.com, www.betterworldbooks.com) often sell texts at reduced prices. You may use any edition of the novels, but be aware that this will give you different pagination from the course’s references.

The Heath Anthology of American Literature. Volume C: Late Nineteenth Century, 1865-1910. Paul Lauter, Ed. 5th Edition. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2006.

Louisa May Alcott. *Little Women: or, Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy.* (1869) Norton Critical Edition. Anne K. Phillips and Gregory Eiselein, Eds. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2003.

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton. *The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California.* (1885) Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita, Eds. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1997.

Theodore Dreiser. *Sister Carrie.* (1900) Norton Critical Edition. Donald Pizer, Ed. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006.

Charles Waddell Chesnut. *The Marrow of Tradition.* (1901) Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2003.

You’ll also want access to the course’s eCollege companion website, which will have digital copies of the syllabus, schedule, assignments, and handouts. We’ll also be using the eCollege site’s threaded message boards to propose discussion questions on given readings. The site is accessed at: www.cedarcrestonline.net. To login, you’ll need a user ID and password issued to you from the Cedar Crest Registrar’s Office, typically sent to your Cedar Crest email account.

Your writing for the course should follow the MLA format, so you’ll want to have access to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or a manual that covers the MLA style. An online companion to Diana Hacker’s *Research and Documentation in the Electronic Age*, which covers the MLA and research in the Humanities, is available at: www.dianahacker.com/resdoc. See also my “Guidelines for Writing about Literature and Film.”

Course Description: ENG 322 covers the period of American literature from about 1865-1910, a moment of dramatic cultural and economic change as the country entered the modern era. Theodore Dreiser worried over this period that America was caught between the twin desires of instinct and reason, the unseen forces of nature and society: “Our civilization is still in a middle stage, scarcely beast in that it is no longer wholly guided by instinct; scarcely human, in that it is not yet wholly guided by reason.” From this starting point, we’ll read such

well-known writers as Louisa May Alcott and Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, and Dreiser, but also some perhaps less-known but equally important ones as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton and Charles W. Chesnutt.

Four areas of cultural change and how American literature came to represent and influence those changes will drive our reading and discussion: 1) the shifting status of women intellectually, politically, and artistically, 2) the struggles between national and regional identities following the Civil War, 3) the crisis in social justice under modern American democracy and capitalism, and 4) the change in race relations after the abolition of slavery.

We'll deal with these areas across four units, within which we'll use the following overarching questions as our guidelines:

- 1) **An American Girl & the New Woman:** What new literary techniques did female writers use to depict the experiences of women? How did male writers fashion woman's new social status?
- 2) **Out of Many, One:** In what ways did literature enable *these* United States to conceive of themselves as *the* United States?
- 3) **This Vulgar American Life:** How did the narratives of naturalism confront the imbalances of economic, political, and social power?
- 4) **Race and the Reconstructed South:** In what ways does African American literature reflect on the arrival of the New South?

Course Outcomes: The goals of ENG 322 Late-Nineteenth-Century American Literature are 1) to develop an understanding of the artistic and cultural importance of America literature produced between 1865 and 1910, and 2) to become knowledgeable about the diverse literary conventions of American Realism, Naturalism, and Regionalism. Through the course of the semester, these are the skills I hope you'll come away with:

- You'll develop a knowledge of the literary conventions of the Realist, Naturalist, and Regionalist movements, including a set of authors that represent the diversity of America at the close of the 19th century.
- You'll be able to interpret works of American literature during this period for how their language suggests complex meanings, and you'll be able to analyze such works for what they suggest about the cultures that produced and read them.
- You'll develop an understanding of how literary scholars have interpreted the literature of this period, be able to evaluate such scholarly claims, and be able add your own voice to such ongoing literary conversations and debates as you sharpen your critical thinking skills.
- You'll be able to express your understanding of course material thoughtfully and clearly through written analyses and seminar discussions.

Course Assessment: We'll work toward achieving our course goals each week by studying different literary works within the context of each unit's overarching questions. Your success in achieving the course's goals will be assessed through the following assignments:

- Two exams over the course of the semester will allow you to demonstrate your knowledge of and ability to interpret late-nineteenth-century American literature through short-answer and essay questions.
- One seminar paper (of about 8-10 pages, with an annotated bibliography) will allow you to analyze one of the course's novels in depth, taking into account the range of scholarly arguments on the works and developing your own interpretation as to their significance.
- Participation in seminar discussions, including regular submission of reading questions, will allow you to refine your interpretations and hone your critical thinking skills about the significance of American literature.

See further down the syllabus for specifics on assignments, due dates, and participation assessment.

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Behavior and Protocol: You're both encouraged and expected to share your understandings of the literature we'll be reading together. By sharing our interpretations, each of us will develop more refined but also more broadly considered understandings of these works. A discussion—like any conversation worth having—requires both talking and listening. So, I ask that we treat each other's contributions with their deserved respect, consider one another's interpretations with an open mind, and not attempt to impose a particular point of view on our classmates. You should argue for a particular line of interpretation to which you're committed, but do so with an openness to other ideas and a respect for disagreement.

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or otherwise compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion—the call of cell phones, the click of mice, ringing in our ear—it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to silence cell phones before class begins (a vibrate setting is appropriate for emergencies). Also, refrain from checking your email or any wayward browsing of the internet during class time.

Attendance: Simply put, you must attend class. An accumulation of absences will affect your course participation grade.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Incumbent from the Honor Code, academic integrity and ethical behavior provide the foundations of the Cedar Crest scholarly community and the basis for our learning environment. Cedar Crest College expects students to set a high standard for themselves to be personally and intellectually honest and to ensure that other students do the same. This standard applies to all academic work (oral, written, or visual) completed as part of a Cedar Crest education.

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely your own, except as may be approved by an instructor, and you must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified. Paraphrased material from a source must also be attributed. In addition, if you are indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether or not you've directly quoted the source—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense. All cases of academic misconduct will be kept on record with Cedar Crest College's Provost Office.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest's campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, you should refer to Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. Of course, you should always use common sense and place your safety first when determining whether or not it's appropriate for you to drive to campus under

such conditions. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account and (if possible) place an outgoing message on my office voicemail (x3474).

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact Academic Services.

Assignment Format: All formal out-of-class assignments must be typewritten, stapled, and double-spaced with a 12-pt Times New Roman font and one-inch margins. Syntactically correct American English should be used. You don't need a cover page or fancy binder, but be certain to include your name, our class information, and a descriptive title on the first page.

Deadlines and Lateness: Since it's important to work with deadlines and fairest to your classmates to maintain consistent due dates, assignments are due for the dates specified on the course syllabus. Assignments submitted late will be reduced one letter grade (A to A-) for each 24-hour period after the due date. Out-of-class assignments may be submitted via email (rawilson@cedarcrest.edu) as an attached MSWord or RTF document. Please do not send assignments in a different format (WordPerfect, etc.): most word processing programs allow you to save files as either Word (.doc) or RTF (.rtf) documents. Individual assignment extensions may be granted for extenuating circumstances (personal or family crisis, serious illness, roommate problems, etc.), but should be requested as soon as possible. Computer problems are not appropriate excuses for extensions or lateness.

Assignments: You'll get extended details for our assignments as we go along this semester, as well as review sheets for our exams, but here are the basics.

- 1) **Exams:** (50% of final grade, or 2 for 25% each) Exams are moments for you to bring together a breadth of readings as a way of forming your answers to our unit questions. Review sheets will be distributed in the class beforehand and will contain a list of possible essay questions.
- 2) **Seminar Paper and Annotated Bibliography:** (30% of final grade) In order to understand how one of our major novels represents and interacted with this early modern period, you'll write a 8-10 page research paper on one major work (*Little Women*, *Daisy Miller*, *The Squatter and the Don*, *Sister Carrie*, or *The Marrow of Tradition*). As a way of helping your research and writing, I'll ask for a 1-page proposal and then an annotated bibliography of your sources (5% of Seminar Paper Grade). I hope you'll feel welcome to talk to me at any stage about your paper. You'll present your paper's interpretation during our finals week meeting.
- 3) **Discussion Questions and Seminar Participation:** (20% of final grade) As part of a rotating group, you'll submit two discussion questions for the class to consider on a given week's readings. Your two questions must be posted to the appropriate eCollege message board at least one hour before the start of class on the assigned dates. (For instance, Group 1 will first post their two questions by 6PM on 1/29.) Questions should be something about which you're genuinely curious in the literature, and you should try for a diversity in types of questions (for instance, two questions on different short stories or two questions on different characters or scenes in a novel). Participation in weekly seminar discussions will be evaluated by the below rubric.

Evaluation of Course Participation	
Grade	Criteria
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Consistently raises thoughtful questions and proposes original ideas based upon course texts and concepts. Makes substantive connections, criticisms, and interpretations between multiple texts. Goes beyond those interpretations presented in lectures and readings. ○ Regularly cites specific textual evidence (passages from the readings, scenes from a film, etc.). When offering reader-response to a text or drawing upon personal experience or anecdotal evidence, regularly bases those reactions in a clear understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Regularly engaged in discussion with professor and classmates, and responds constructively to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains consistent participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates excellent understanding of course texts and concepts.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequently contributes to discussion with relevant points and questions drawn from course texts and concepts. ○ Tends to cite specific textual evidence. May rely upon reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence with a vague understanding of how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens attentively to discussion with professor and classmates, and responds to questions and alternative interpretations. Maintains regular participation throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates good understanding of course texts and concepts.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Infrequently contributes to discussion except when called upon, but contributions demonstrate familiarity with essential course texts and concepts. ○ Occasionally cites textual evidence. Relies heavily upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Listens to discussion with professor and classmates, but does not respond to questions or alternative interpretations. Participation variable throughout the semester. ○ Demonstrates competent understanding of course texts and concepts.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rarely contributes to class discussion except when called upon and contributions are off-topic and do not reference course texts and concepts. ○ Does not cite textual evidence. Relies almost exclusively upon unqualified reader-response to a text, personal experience, or anecdotal evidence without reference to how textual language and images operate. ○ Absent from several classes. ○ Demonstrates unsatisfactory understanding of course texts and concepts.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Fails to contribute to class discussion. ○ Absent from multiple classes. ○ Demonstrates negligible understanding of course texts and concepts

Final Grade Assessment: Assignments will carry the following weights relative to your final grade.

_____ /250 pts	Exam 1	94-100%	A
_____ /250 pts	Exam 2	90-93.99%	A-
_____ /250 pts	Analytical Paper	87-89.99%	B+
_____ /50 pts	Annotated Bibliography	84-86.99%	B
_____ /10 pts	Discussion Questions 1	80-83.99%	B-
_____ /10 pts	Discussion Questions 2	77-79.99%	C+
_____ /10 pts	Discussion Questions 3	74-76.99%	C
_____ /85 pts	Seminar Participation 1	70-73.99%	C-
_____ /85 pts	Seminar Participation 2	67-69.99%	D+
		60-66.99%	D
_____ / 1000 Total Points		0-59.99%	F

"You want something [...] to lift you out of this crowded, tobacco-stained commonplace, to kindle and chafe and glow in you. I want you to dig into this commonplace, this vulgar American life, and see what is in it. Sometimes I think it has a new and awful significance that we do not see."

--Rebecca Harding Davis, *Margaret Howth* (1862)

Course Schedule

Date	Reading Assignment
Unit One: An American Girl & The New Woman (Realism)	
1/22/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “A New England Nun” (pp. 715-723) and “Love and the Witches” (p. 758); William Dean Howells, “Editha” (pp. 269-279) and from “The Editor’s Study” (pp. 258-259)
1/29/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), “A True Story: Repeated Word for Word as I Heard it” (pp. 67-70); Sarah Orne Jewett, “A White Heron” (pp. 694-701); Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, “The Revolt of ‘Mother’” (pp. 723-733); and William Dean Howells, “Mary E. Wilkins’s Short Stories” (pp. 264-265) Discussion Group 1 Questions Due
2/5/09	Henry James, <i>Daisy Miller: A Study</i> (1879) (pp. 281-320) and “The Art of Fiction” (pp. 320-334) <i>Heath Anthology</i> : Frances E. W. Harper, “A Double Standard” (pp. 571-573) Discussion Group 2 Questions Due
2/12/09	Louisa May Alcott, <i>Little Women: Or, Meg, Jo, Beth and Amy</i> (1868–69) (pp. 1-380) Scenes from <i>Little Women</i> (1994; Gillian Armstrong, dir.; Columbia Pictures; with Winona Ryder and Susan Sarandon; 115 min.) Discussion Group 3 Questions Due
Unit Two: Out of Many, One (Realism)	
2/19/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : John Milton Oskison (Cherokee), “The Problem of Old Harjo” (pp. 224-228); Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa; Sioux), from <i>The School Days of an Indian Girl</i> and “Why I Am a Pagan” (pp. 811-821); Charles Alexander Eastman (Sioux), from <i>From the Deep Woods to Civilization</i> , VII “The Ghost Dance War” (pp. 547-554) and <i>Ghost Dance Songs</i> (pp. 214-217); Edith Maud Eaton, “Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of a Eurasian” (pp. 777-786); and José Martí, “Our America” (pp. 831-38) Discussion Group 1 Questions Due
2/26/09	María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, <i>The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California</i> (1885) (pp. 51-344) <i>Heath Anthology</i> : <i>Corridos</i> , “Kiansis I” (Kansas I) and “Gregorio Cortez” (pp. 229-237) (Note: Are you planning to graduate? 3/1 is the deadline to apply for May graduation.) Discussion Group 2 Questions Due
3/5/09	Exam 1 (In Class) Post-Exam Film Screening: <i>Carrie</i> (1952; William Wyler, dir; Paramount; with Jennifer Jones and Laurence Olivier; 118 min.) Note: Exam 1 will take up to an hour to complete tonight, and the running time of <i>Carrie</i> may thus extend to 10PM.
3/12/09	No Class: Spring Break! (3/9 – 3/13)
Unit Three: This Vulgar American Life (Naturalism)	
3/19/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : Emma Lazarus, “The New Colossus” (p. 27); Ella Wheeler Wilcox, “Goddess of Liberty, Answer” (p. 757); Abraham Cahan, from <i>Yekl</i> , Chapter 4, 9, and 10, “The Meeting,” “The Parting,” and “A Defeated Victor”; Samuel Clemens (Mark Twain), “The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg” (pp. 70-100) Discussion Group 3 Questions Due Seminar Participation 1
3/26/09	Theodore Dreiser, <i>Sister Carrie</i> (1900) (pp. 1-355) and The Appendix on Passages Cut from the 1900 Doubleday edition (pp. 355-369) Discussion Group 1 Questions Due
4/2/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : Henry Adams, from <i>The Education of Henry Adams</i> , Chapter XXV, “The Dynamo and the Virgin” (pp. 634-642); Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat” (pp. 497-513) and “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” (pp. 513-520); and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Turned” (pp. 590-596) Discussion Group 2 Questions Due
Unit Four: Race in the Reconstructed South (Naturalism II)	
4/9/09	<i>Heath Anthology</i> : Paul Laurence Dunbar, “Mr. Cornelius Johnson, Office Seeker” (pp. 172-178) and William Dean Howells, “Paul Laurence Dunbar” (pp. 265-267); Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “Sister Josepha” (pp. 209-214); Grace King, “The Little Convent Girl” (pp. 203-208); and Kate Chopin, “Désirée’s Baby” (pp. 359-363) (Note: The college is on break from 4/10 – 4/13. Also, 4/14 at 4PM is the deadline for course withdrawal, and this is a good time to check on how you’re doing in all of your classes.) Discussion Group 3 Questions Due
4/16/09	Charles W. Chesnutt, <i>The Marrow of Tradition</i> (1901) (pp. 1-213) <i>Heath Anthology</i> : William Dean Howells, “Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt’s Stories” (pp. 267-269); and Chesnutt, from <i>Journal</i> , “I think I must write a book” (p. 170) and “What is a White Man?” (pp. 120-126) 1-Page Proposal for Seminar Paper Due
4/23/09	Exam 2 (In Class) Evaluating Scholarly Essays, Writing an Annotated Bibliography
4/30/09	Seminar Paper Workshop: Bring three copies of your seminar paper draft to workshop for this class. Annotated Bibliography Due (Note: 5/5 is the last day of spring-semester classes. You should follow your Cedar Crest Friday schedule on that Gregorian-calendar Tuesday.)
Finals Week	Seminar Paper Presentations: Time and Location TBD. (Note: Finals Week runs between 5/6 and 5/13.) Seminar Paper Due & Seminar Participation 2

