

MODULE SPECIFICATION

Code: UPGPPA-30-3 **Title:** Contemporary American Narrative **Version:** 6

Level: 3 **UWE credit rating:** 30 **ECTS credit rating:** 15

Module type: Standard

Owning Faculty: Creative Arts, Humanities and Education **Field:** English

Faculty Committee approval: CAC Chair's Action **Date:** 16/06/2011

Approved for Delivery by:

Valid from: September 2011 **Discontinued from:**

Contributes towards: Awards up to BA (Hons)

Pre-requisites: UPGPFV-60-1-Writing About Reading/Reading About Writing.

Co-requisites: None

Entry requirements:

Excluded combinations: None

Learning outcomes:

By the end of the module students should be able to demonstrate:

1. a critical understanding of the social, economic and aesthetic issues that have shaped American literature since 1975 (assessed through all elements of Components A and B);
2. an engagement with the key debates concerning the nature and purpose of American fiction in the period, this involving an examination of selected critical essays and reviews of the literature under consideration (assessed through all elements of Components A and B);
3. a knowledge of the major writers on the module, and the relevant texts, in relation to their historical context (assessed through all elements of Components A and B);
4. an ability to read fiction critically and self-consciously, and to discuss and write about the challenge of handling interpretative difficulties within a framework of competing theoretical views on the nature and purpose of reading fiction at an academic level (assessed through all elements of Components A and B);
5. an ability to critically reflect on cultural mediums including film, when discussing literary texts; (assessed through Component A and B)
6. research skills appropriate to a level 3 module (assessed through all elements of Components A and B);
7. an ability to engage actively with peers in group work (assessed through Component A and Element 1 of Component B);
8. excellent presentation skills, including the oral delivery of critical and independent readings of primary and secondary sources (assessed through Component A);
9. in the writing of assignments: the judicious use of primary and secondary material; organisational skills; sustained relevance; and a capacity for handling assignment questions with critical scepticism (assessed through all elements of Component B).

Syllabus outline:

Through literary analysis the module will examine the social and cultural shifts in America from the post-Vietnam era to the present, particularly in relation to the move from “Full” to “Flexible Fordism, or the generalisation of consumption as an available way of life. The course will develop a theoretical understanding of narrative structure, focusing on the changing representation of war and its aftermath; the effects of commodification on everyday life; the city as a spectacle and location of commodity aesthetics; the acknowledgment of, and resistance to, regional change, and the reaction of marginalised voices to increased consumerism. Students will explore these issues through a variety of mediums, including filmic adaptations of literary texts and visual representations of the contemporary American scene.

Teaching and learning methods:

A weekly lecture and seminar. Lectures will focus on supplying information, encouraging students to engage with the texts and issues at a progressively more demanding level, and stimulating enthusiasm. Seminars will concentrate on facilitating group discussion, often on the basis of work prepared in advance by students working in teams. Lectures and seminars will be supplemented by the occasional showing of films and the contribution of guest speakers.

Reading Strategy

The list of essential texts will be made available to students in advance of the module’s start date. In addition to the texts that students must buy, a module reader is also made available, for a small fee, that includes reading material for study.

Students will be encouraged to use electronic sources – detailed references for which can be found in the module handbook as well as on UWEOnline. Their use of such sources will be assessed in the written report assessment. Students will also be advised to make full use of the library search engine and other searches (i.e. MLA) to find relevant secondary material for assignment purposes – searches that are particularly necessary given the contemporary nature of the module. In addition, a collection of articles are available to students in the short loan section of the library in a module box.

Indicative Reading List:

The following list is offered to provide validation panels/accrediting bodies with an indication of the type and level of information students may be expected to consult. As such, its currency may wane during the life span of the module specification. However, as indicated above, CURRENT advice on readings will be available via other more frequently updated mechanisms.

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| Annesley, James. | <i>Blank Fictions: Consumerism, Culture and the Contemporary American Novel.</i> London: Pluto Press, (1998). |
| Aronson, Ronald. | <i>The Dialectics of Disaster: A Preface to Hope.</i> London: Verso, (1983). |
| Bilton, Alan. | <i>An Introduction to Contemporary American Fiction.</i> Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2002). |
| Bradbury, Malcolm. | <i>Contemporary American Fiction.</i> Stratford: Hodder Arnold, (1987). |
| Grice, Helena,
Candida Hepworth,
Maria Lauret and
Martin Padget (eds.). | <i>Beginning Ethnic American Literatures.</i> Manchester: Manchester University Press, (2001). |
| Harvey, David. | <i>The Condition of Postmodernity.</i> Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, (1997: First published 1990). |
| Lee, A. Robert. | <i>Multicultural American Literature.</i> Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, (2003). |
| Millard, Kenneth. | <i>Contemporary American Fiction: An Introduction to American Fiction since 1970.</i> Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2000). |
| Vickroy, Laurie. | <i>Trauma and Survival in Contemporary Fiction.</i> Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, (2002). |

Assessment

Please state which element of assessment should be recorded as the final assessment for the purposes of submitting data on non-submissions to HEFCE. (For further information please contact Academic Registry.)

Weighting between components A and B (standard modules only) A: 25% B: 75%

ATTEMPT 1

First Assessment Opportunity (Sit)

Component A

Description of each element	Element
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1 Group Seminar Presentation	25%
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Component B

Description of each element	Element
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1 Presentation Written Report (750 words)	5%
2 Critical Intervention (2,000 words)	25%
3 Independent Study (3,000 words) FINAL	45%

Second Assessment Opportunity (Resit) (further attendance at taught classes is not required)

Component A

Description of each element	Element
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1 Examination (Unseen) (1.5 hours)	25%
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Component B

Description of each element	Element
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1 Presentation Written Report (750 words)	5%
2 Critical Intervention (2,000 words)	25%
3 Independent Study (3,000 words)	45%

EXCEPTIONAL SECOND ATTEMPT (Retake): Attendance at taught classes is required.

Specification confirmed byDate
(Associate Dean/Programme Director)