

**STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK  
COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
CANTON, NEW YORK**



**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 214: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION**

**Prepared By: ROBERT D. ADAMS, Ph.D.**  
**Revised By: Nancy Horan, Assistant Professor**  
**Revised By: Phil LaMarche, Assistant Professor**

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LIBERAL ARTS  
DEPARTMENT of ENGLISH and HUMANITIES  
REVISED: April 2016**

A. **TITLE:** Contemporary American Fiction

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ENGL 214

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

D. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks

E. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Spring

F. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:** 3 lecture hours

G. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:**

Through the writings of current authors, students examine literary trends and their relationship to social, political, cultural phenomena in America. Students are given an opportunity-through their own writing and class discussion to explore contemporary ideas, values, and attitudes expressed in the literature.

H. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-COURSES:** None

I. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):** By the end of this course, the student will:

<b><u>Course Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Institutional SLO</u></b>
a. <i>interpret</i> and <i>analyze</i> selections of contemporary American fiction	<b>1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking</b>
b. <i>understand</i> and display ability to <i>apply</i> terms common to the humanities	<b>1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking</b>
c. <i>argue</i> for specific interpretations of course materials	<b>1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking</b>

J. **TEXTS:** Texts will vary with instructor and course theme.

- "I Stand Here Ironing," Tillie Olsen
- "Townies," Andre Dubus
- "The Unclouded Day," E. Annie Proulx
- "The Lesson," Toni Cade Bambara
- *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston (1937)
- *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood (1985)
- *The Shipping News*, E. Annie Proulx (1993)
- *The Tortilla Curtain*, T. Coraghessan Boyle (1995)

K. **REFERENCES:** Contemporary Literary Criticism, New Revision of Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Authors, Black Literature Criticism, Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction

L. **EQUIPMENT:** Instructor computer with projection.

**M. GRADING METHOD:** A-F

**N. MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**

- papers
- in-class writing and participation
- reading journal
- research
- quizzes

**O. TOPICAL OUTLINE:** Attached.

**P. LABORATORY OUTLINE:**

## TOPICAL OUTLINE

### ENGL 214 - CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN FICTION

#### TOPICS (theme specific)

- I. Literary Terminology
  - A. Narrative Structure
  - B. Characterization
  - C. Style, Theme, Symbolism
  
- II. Social and Cultural Context
  - A. Race
  - B. Class
  - C. Gender
  
- III. Literary Genres
  - A. Realism
  - B. Fabulism
  - C. Formalism
  - D. Satire
  - E. Southern Gothic
  - F. Metafiction

IV. Social Class Themes in The Short Story:

- A. Ethnicity and Economics: *The Lesson*, Toni Cade Bambara
- B. Economics and Lifestyle: *I Stand Here Ironing*, Tillie Olsen
- C. Economic, Job, Lifestyle: *The Unclouded Day*, E. Annie Proulx
- D. Economic, Education: *Townies*, Andre Dubus

V. Social Class Themes in the Novel

- A. Ethnicity: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston
- B. Gender and Political Oppression:
  - 1. Science Fiction as Satire - *The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood
  - 2. *The Handmaid's Tale* - film
  - 3. Analysis of genre using social class as lens
- C. Education, Occupation, and Lifestyle: *The Shipping News*, E. Annie Proulx
- D. Ethnicity, Economics, Lifestyle: *The Tortilla Curtain*, T. Coraghessan Boyle

VI. Choosing Social Class: Social Mobility

- A. Upward Mobility
- B. Down Shifting