

**Fall 2012: Eng 232C: (CRN:42337) Contemporary American Fiction**  
**MW 3:15-4:55 in Jef 101**

**Professor Stacey Donohue**

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**Readings:**

- A selection of short stories available in Blackboard, and the following novels:
- Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*
- Don DeLillo, *White Noise*
- Cormac McCarthy, *The Road*
- Alice Sebold, *The Lovely Bones*

**Course Description:**

In this course you will read, ponder, discuss and write about a very small selection of contemporary American fiction: we cannot hope to cover it all in one quarter. Topics include postmodernism; the influence of social and historical events on aesthetics and literary style; and issues of race, gender, class, and family.

Required work for the course includes careful reading of all assigned material and active participation in class discussions. Please come to class prepared with questions and comments about the assigned reading for each day--the success of the course depends on your involvement.

***NOTE: During the term we will be reading novels that contain adult themes, including sexuality. So if you are shy, easily offended, or in some way opposed to such content, you may wish to re-think taking this course this term.***

**Recommended Prerequisites:**

College Entry-Level Reading and Writing Skills. Placement in RD 117 and WR 121 would indicate college entry-level reading and writing skills. In this class I expect you to read at least 8 hours a week. I also assign writing as part of the assessment of learning. Thus, if your reading and/or writing skills are not up to college entry level, then you may have some difficulty in succeeding in this class, or may require more than 8 hours a week to complete the work.

**Course Outcomes:**

Students will...

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the varieties of contemporary fiction in terms of style and theme.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the basic elements of fiction and how an individual work can be interpreted by examining it terms of those elements.
3. Analyze the significance of aesthetic, historical and cultural contexts in contemporary fiction.
4. Apply a range of reading strategies to analyze and interpret a variety of literary texts within their historical and literary contexts.

5. Use informal and formal writing to analyze and interpret literary works integrating textual evidence.

**Assignments and Grading: the following assignments are designed to address the outcomes:**

- **15% In class work (informal writing, group work, quizzes—worth about 1% each)**  
These in class writing assignments will be done throughout the term. **In-class work cannot be made up; however, two missing or the two lowest graded assignments will be dropped.**
- **30% Reading Journals (typed and submitted online—worth about 4% each)**  
Each Wednesday, I will distribute a list of topics for you to write about at home either while you are doing the reading or immediately after the reading. These journal entries are due at the START of class. Late journals will receive a one letter grade penalty, but will be accepted up to 1 week late. **One grade will be dropped at the end of the term giving you the choice to miss one reading journal. If all are completed, the lowest graded report will be dropped.**
- **15%: Presentation**  
YOU will choose an author from a list and create a Word document, webpage, Power Point, or Prezi on that author (biography, photos, overview of his/her work, links to websites and articles about the writer, and your own review of the reading). The presentations are due throughout the term: you will sign up during week 1. **Missing presentations are docked one letter grade and cannot be made up after 1 week late; however, if there is room in the schedule, you can reschedule your project on ANOTHER author for later in the term.**
- **40%: Exams (20% each):**  
A midterm and a final exam. The midterm exam is a take home essay exam. The final exam will consist of both a take home and an in class portion on the day of our final. **Late midterm exam will receive a 1 letter grade penalty and will not be accepted after 1 week. No make-ups will be given for missing the in class final exam: if you are passing the course at the final and miss the final, you will receive an incomplete in the course and must complete a make-up final exam assignment Winter quarter.**

**The following Grading Scale will be used in this course**

A+	97-100	Outstanding performance [Note: this grade is not recognized by the college]
A	93-96	Exceptional
A-	90-92	Superior
B+	87-89	Excellent
B	83-86	Very good
B-	80-82	Good
C+	77-79	Better than satisfactory
C	70-76	Satisfactory
D	65-69	Passing
F	0-64	Not passing

**College Policies:**

**Plagiarism Statement:**

Proper citations and documentation of any sources that you quote, paraphrase, and/or summarize in

your writing are required whenever you borrow the words, facts, and/or ideas of others. In general, putting others' ideas into your own words still means you are borrowing, and to avoid plagiarism, the source must be cited and documented, both (a) at the point in your essay where there borrowing occurs (parenthetical citations for most academic documentation systems), and (b) in a list of all sources cited given at the end of your essay. Plagiarism—intended or not—is considered a serious academic violation of intellectual property rights, and may earn your written assignment an automatic “F.”

### ***Students Rights And Responsibilities:***

Please read the Students Rights and Responsibilities handbook available at:

<http://studentlife.cocc.edu/Resources/Policies/default.aspx>

### ***ADA Statement:***

Any student with a **documented disability** (physical, learning, psychological, vision, hearing) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must inform the College and Stacey as soon as possible. If you require any assistance related to a disability, contact the Disability Services Office located in Boyle Education Center: call **(541) 383-7583** or email [DisabilityServices@cocc.edu](mailto:DisabilityServices@cocc.edu) .

### ***COCC Non-Discrimination Policy:***

Central Oregon Community College is an affirmative action, equal opportunity institution.

**Course Schedule: Be sure to read all items before class on the day they're listed.**

**NOTE: This schedule is subject to change. Due dates may shift and readings may be cut to ensure time for discussion. Check Blackboard for any changes if you miss class.**

### **Week 1:**

Mon 9/24

- Course Introduction
  - Themes (Postmodernism; Popular Culture; Revisiting History; Race/Class/Gender)
  - Elements of Fiction and How to Read Literature Like an English Professor
  - Read: “To Do” by Jennifer Egan

Wed 9/26

- Read the following stories posted in Blackboard: print or bring to class electronically:
 

**Instructions for accessing Blackboard are on the last page of this syllabus.**

  - “How to Read Fiction Like an English Major” [includes Jamaica Kincaid’s “Girl”]
  - Raymond Carver’s “Cathedral”

### **Week 2:**

Mon 10/1

- Reading Journal 1 due
- Read in Blackboard: “Writing About Literature”
- Read Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* pp.3-109

Wed 10/3

- Read Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* pp.110-163

**Week 3:**

Mon 10/8: No Classes Today: Faculty Workday

Wed 10/10:

- Reading Journal 2 due
- Finish Read Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*
- Read the following story posted in Blackboard: print or bring to class electronically:

**Week 4:**

Mon 10/15

- Reading Journal 3 due
- Read the following stories posted in Blackboard: print or bring to class electronically:
  - Jhumpa Lahiri's "Interpreter of Maladies"
  - Sherman Alexie's "The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven"

Wed 10/17

- Read the following stories posted in Blackboard: print or bring to class electronically:
  - Tim O'Brien's "How to Tell a True War Story"
  - Excerpt from Art Spiegelman's *Maus*

**Week 5:**

Mon 10/22

- Reading Journal 4 due
- Read Don Delillo's *White Noise* chapters 1-3, 6, 8-13, 17 and 20 (about 57 pages)

Wed 10/24

- Read Don Delillo's *White Noise* part of chapter 21 (pp.107-137) and end of chapter 39- and chapter 40 (pp.302-310)
- Take home midterm exam distributed

**Week 6:**

Mon 10/29

- Take home midterm due, submitted to Blackboard and handed in
- Introduction to *The Road*

Wed 10/31

- Read Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* pp.4-25

**Week 7:**Mon 11/5

- Reading Journal 4 due
- Reader Read Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* pp.25-154

Wed 11/7

- Read Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* pp.155-198

**Week 8:**Mon 11/12: Veterans Day Celebrated: The College is Closed

- Read ahead

Wed 11/14

- Reading Journal 6 due
- Finish Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*

**Week 9:**Mon 11/19

- Reading Journal 7 due
- Read Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* pp.5-155

Wed 11/21

- Read Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* pp.156-197

**Week 10:**Mon 11/26

- Reading Journal 8 due
- Read Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones* pp.198-311

Wed 11/28

- Finish Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*

**Week 11:**Mon 12/3

- Reading Journal 9 due
- Read the following story posted in Blackboard: Print or bring to class electronically:
  - Excerpt from Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*

Wed 12/5

- Read the following story posted in Blackboard: Print or bring to class electronically:
  - Excerpt from Jennifer Egan's *A Visit to the Goon Squad*
- Take home portion of final exam distributed.

**Finals Week**Mon 12/10, 3:15pm

- Take home portion of final exam due printed and submitted to Blackboard. In class open book portion of final exam during final.

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**Instructions for Accessing Your COCC Email**

- Go to [www.cocc.edu](http://www.cocc.edu).
- Click on *Student Login* located in upper right hand corner.
- Click on *Web Email*
- Enter your **User Name**
- Enter your **Password**
- Your **Password** is your initials capitalized, followed by your date of birth (XXMMDDYY)

To access your email off campus, please point your browser to <http://owa.ad.cocc.edu/exchange/>. From on campus, you should use Outlook to access your email once you are logged into any campus computer. If you'd like to forward your COCC email to another account, you will need to set it up on a campus computer.

**Instructions for Accessing Blackboard**

To access Blackboard, please go to [www.cocc.edu](http://www.cocc.edu) .

- Click on *Student Login* located in upper right hand corner.
  - Click on *Blackboard*
  - Enter your **User Name**: A COCC student user name is your COCC ID number (e.g., 820012345)
  - Enter your **Password**
  - Your **Password** is your initials capitalized, followed by your date of birth (XXMMDDYY)
- Once you are logged into Blackboard, you will be taken to your own, personal location within Blackboard.
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