

**Skyline College  
Official Course Outline**

**Date:** April 2007

**1. TITLE:**

Lit 101: Contemporary Literature  
3.0 units, three lecture hours per week  
Prerequisite: ENGL 100 or 105, or equivalent

**2. COURSE CLASSIFICATION:**

Credit course applicable to the Associate Degree.

**3. COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

**Catalog Description:**

Students read, interpret and analyze a representative selection of contemporary literary fiction, poetry and drama since WWII using some of the major theoretical approaches to literature. These readings offer not only a greater critical perspective and insight into contemporary history, but an enhanced understanding of ourselves within our own culture.

*Transfer credit: UC; CSU (C2).*

**Schedule of Classes Description:**

Students read, interpret and analyze representative contemporary literature to gain greater insight into contemporary history and an enhanced understanding of ourselves within our own culture.

*Transfer: UC; CSU (C2).*

**4. COURSE JUSTIFICATION:**

To introduce students to the major thinking that has influenced contemporary literature as well as theoretical schools of critical literary interpretation and key literary terms, all with the objective of assisting students in critical analysis of major contemporary works. This course is intended for English majors for the A.A. degree and satisfies the transfer requirement for English majors for many California State Universities and Universities of California. Transfer to UC and CSU (C2).

**5. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLO's):**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Identify, analyze, and evaluate major themes and literary techniques in the reading
- Critically read, discuss, and interpret texts
- Write coherent, analytical, and original responses to course content

## **6. COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

During this course, students will be asked to:

- Analyze and synthesize the works of a variety of writers
- Understand the cultural and literary contexts of various works
- Trace the cultures' developing themes, characters, and imagery
- Understand the relevance of the various works' ideas to the present
- Compare/contrast the various works to works of others
- enjoy a solid understanding of the differences in genre as well as specialized knowledge of specific components of each genre
- approach a literary work from a variety of theoretical perspectives as well as points of view

## **7. COURSE CONTENT:**

The course covers a representative sample of representative works from representative countries, including novels, short stories, dramas, and poetry; appropriate historical and literary background and analyses; and writing essays/research paper, demonstrating independent analytical responses.

- I. A general historical review of the intellectual and cultural ideas which have influenced and formed contemporary literature
- II. A study of major trends in fiction, poetry, and drama from WWII to the present through a selection of representative works
- III. The common literary and unique literary themes and techniques of various works
- IV. An exploration of those qualities in contemporary literature which are distinctly modern and of those which represent the continuation or resurrection of earlier traditions as well as the universality of the human dilemmas as revealed in the various works
- V. Novels: At least two works in depth and others for discussion

- A. Historical/cultural backgrounds
- B. Sources
- C. Themes, characters, settings, plot structures, dramatic conventions
- VI. Short Stories: at least one work in depth and others for discussion
  - a. Historical/cultural backgrounds
  - b. Sources
  - c. Themes, characters, settings, plot structures, dramatic conventions
- VII. Dramas: at least one work in depth and others for discussion
  - d. Historical/cultural backgrounds
  - e. Sources
  - f. Themes, characters, settings, plot structures, dramatic conventions
- VIII. Poetry: at least one work in depth and others for discussion
  - A. Historical/cultural backgrounds
  - B. Sources
  - C. Themes, characters, settings, plot structures, dramatic conventions
- IX. Other: At least one work in depth and others for discussion
  - A. Films
  - B. Paintings
  - C. Unique forms of literary value that are important to other countries

**8. REPRESENTATIVE METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

A) Lectures, small/large group discussions, guided readings, reading journals, critical essays, oral reports, field trips to live performances as appropriate, films, dramatic presentations, and/or collaborative/individual projects.

B) Reading assignments will cover a segment of a work per class session, including reading background materials, with a total of at least two novels, plus short stories, dramas, and a substantial body of poetry. Students will keep reading journals in response to specific questions on the texts.

C) Writing critical essays, totaling at least 2,500 words, which demonstrate understanding of the materials and independent analytical responses supported by references to the texts.

**9. ASSIGNMENTS:** Typical assignments might include the following:

<b>Course Objective</b>	<b>Instructional Methods</b>	<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Method of Evaluation</b>
Identify, analyze, and evaluate major themes in various works  Critically read and interpret	<b>Lecture:</b> Instructor gives oral presentation to introduce students to the specific genre and country being studied—origins, themes, literary histories; identifies major themes and concerns of works to be studied;	<b>Reading Journal:</b> Students reflect on the various themes or literary techniques; for example, they write responses to specific questions on the texts for discussions  <b>Guided reading:</b> Students are assigned a	<b>Essays:</b> Students present written textual analyses showing understanding of the themes and literary techniques of the works. Essays must also present original

<p>various works</p> <p>Analyze various works for literary techniques and conventions</p>	<p>makes connections with the themes and literary techniques of other works</p> <p><b>Student Discussion:</b> Student-led oral discussions based on journal readings and structured group interactions.</p> <p><b>Guided reading in-class:</b> Students read aloud a passage from various works. Instructor explains difficult language, highlights certain passages to critically analyze</p> <p><b>Group work:</b> Groups report on findings about their assigned works, contributing to a general analysis of the works.</p> <p><b>Collaborative/individual projects:</b> Student-initiated projects related to coursework or related material (cultural, biographical, historical, contextual, etc.)</p>	<p>part of a work to read in advance and again in class.</p> <p><b>Group work:</b> In groups, students continue analysis modeled by instructor by preparing analysis of parts of works, looking for themes and/or literary techniques, etc.</p> <p><b>Collaborative/individual projects/reports:</b> Students work in groups or individually to create visual projects, perhaps with the aid of media or performing or visual arts, which demonstrates understanding of coursework or background materials (cultural, biographical, historical, contextual, etc.)</p> <p><b>Exercises/homework:</b> Students will be assigned practical exercises and other brief homework activities to practice analysis for themes and literary techniques in the texts.</p>	<p>ideas supported by references to the texts.</p> <p><b>Oral participation:</b> Participating in and initiating discussions demonstrates understanding of the works and their contents; also, leading discussions and participating actively in small and large group (class) discussions demonstrates how far students have developed original responses.</p> <p><b>Presentation of report or project:</b> Students will be judged on the quality of their research as well as their presentation skills.</p> <p><b>Exams and quizzes:</b> Students will be evaluated on their understanding of the similarities and differences of themes and literary techniques in works.</p>
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**Suggested Out-of-class Assignments:**

- **Readings**—Works of various forms from various countries, supplemented by scholarly essays on applicable topics
- **Journals**—Written responses to questions or course materials (readings, videos, films, lectures, etc.)
- **Essays**—Write critical compositions of 500 to 1,250 words analyzing and evaluating themes and issues in various works supported by references to the texts

- **Projects/reports**—Oral/written presentations of individual or collaborative research on relevant subjects
- **Viewing**—Students may be asked to watch/listen to relevant videotapes, audiotapes, and/or other presentations and to respond with appropriate written responses and analyses

## 10. EVALUATION OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE:

Credit/No credit or letter grade

Letter grades will typically be based on:

**Essays**—organized, coherent, and well developed critical essays demonstrating understanding of material and presenting independent analytical responses supported by references to the texts

**Oral participation**—active participation in class discussions demonstrating understanding of and responses to the texts

**Journals**—written critical responses to assigned readings and class discussions demonstrating understanding and analysis of important concepts in the texts

**Oral presentations/reports**—students will be judged on the quality of their works as well as on the delivery of the information

**Quizzes**—students will be quizzed on comprehension of materials

**Homework/exercises**—students will be required to analyze various works for common and unique themes and literary techniques in short, written exercises

**Final exam**—students will be required to demonstrate that they have learned to recognize, analyze, and evaluate literary techniques and themes in the works of various countries.

## 11. RECOMMENDED or REQUIRED AUTHORS/TEXTS:

Suggested texts include, but are not limited to:

Ramazani, Jahan; Richard Ellmann; and Robert O'Clair, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, third edition (2003). W. W. Norton & Company.

Didion, Joan. *Play It As It Lays*. VHPS, 2005. ISBN 978-0-374-52994-9  
Gibson, William, *Neuromancer*. Penguin USA, 2006. ISBN 978-0-441-56959-5.

### Other supplemental texts:

#### Novels:

House Made of Dawn—M. Scott Momaday

From Sand Creek Rising in this Heart Which Is— Ortiz, Simon J.

Topdog/Underdog—Parks, Suzan-Lor  
Things Fall Apart—Chinua Achebe  
A Gesture Life -- Chang-rae-Lee  
In Cold Blood – Truman Capote  
Naked Lunch – William S. Burroughs  
Cat's Cradle – Kurt Vonnegut  
Love Medicine—Louise Erdrich  
Jazz—Toni Morrison  
An American Tragedy – Theodore Dreiser  
Tropic of Cancer – Henry Miller  
Invisible Man – Ralph Ellison  
White Noise—Don DeLillo  
A Handmaid's Tale—Margaret Atwood

*Drama:*

7 Guitars—August Wilson  
The Lisbon Traviata—Terrance McNally  
Waiting for Godot—Samuel Beckett  
Fool for Love—Tom Stoppard

*Poetry:*

Mother Love—Rita Dove  
War Music—Christopher Logue  
INVOCATO—William Devault  
Etcetera—e.e. cummings  
God's Silence—Franz Wright  
The Spoken Word Revolution—Mark Eleveld  
Five Terraces—Ann Fisher-Wirth  
Deer Flies—Jeff Gundy

*Anthologies:*

The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Literature—Richard Ellman  
The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry—Richard Ellman  
The Ether Dome and Other Poems: New and Selected—Grossman, Allen  
Literature: A Pocket Anthology--Gwynn