

Welcome to ENG240L-721 American Short Fiction online for Winter 2023 CRN10018 (Mercier)

ENG240L-721 23W CRN: 10018

Dates: Saturday, December 17, 2022 – Friday, January 13, 2023

**\*Required Texts: You will find the texts to read within our iLearn site in RESOURCES.\***

**Required Computer Access:** All students must have regular access to the iLearn site during each week that the online course is in session. You will need to use your Marist account to log in.

### Course Content Description

In this course, you will examine a variety of classic and modern American short fiction. You will analyze major elements of literature, such as plot, character, setting, style, symbol, and theme. We will ask meaningful questions: How does each work of literature connect itself to society? What clues does literature offer about its own time and place? What does each story seem to say about its own cultural context? It is critical, or supportive, or both? How have characters' lives been caught between social, political, and cultural circumstances and various forms of oppression? To what extent are short stories testimonials that seek to illuminate social practices and conditions? To what experiences do these texts bear witness? How do authors represent dominant and marginalized cultures and address questions about race, class, and gender relations? What are the interpersonal dynamics between family members, friends, and acquaintances? Do these texts offer moral values? Are they meant to raise public consciousness about particular issues? What is the relationship between these stories and our own historical moment?

Some authors include: Stephen Crane; Native American authors Zitkala-Sa, Ella Cara Deloria, and Leslie Marmon Silko; Harlem Renaissance author James Baldwin, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Tillie Olsen, Shirley Jackson, Ambrose Bierce, Edgar Allen Poe, H.P. Lovecraft, Mark Twain, and writers of contemporary short fiction.

As a class, we will develop intellectual frameworks for discussing important ideas and concepts available in short stories. You are encouraged to use your critical skills and imagination during class discussion and in your essays. How are thematic concerns similar and/or different? How does the rhetorical construction of these stories influence your own reading experience? How do these stories represent personality, identity, memory, needs, moods, and physicality? What sensations, tone, figurative language, scenes, and images are most striking and why? Many Discussions Prompts are meant to augment our discussion of themes and issues in our own contemporary society and in your own personal lives.

**\*The Syllabus includes how the course is graded and the Reading Calendar. Use the detailed [READING CALENDAR & WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS section on the Syllabus as the main guide to follow instructions for all aspects of the course, such as:](#)**

- 1) RESOURCES: Here in the iLearn site you will find the primary course readings, such as short stories, essays, and book chapters. RESOURCES may also include supplementary lecture materials.
- 2) ASSIGNMENTS holds Study Set Questions, Essay Assignments, and the Final Essay (Due on Friday night by 11:55p.m.)
- 3) DISCUSSIONS Post Due Dates (Posts 1 & 2 due by Tuesday at 11:55p.m.; Posts 3 & 4 by Friday at 11:55p.m.)
- 4) CALENDAR Due Dates for Essay #1, Essay #2, and the Final Examination (also found in ASSIGNMENTS)

**NOTE: On our last week ALL WORK is due by FRIDAY, JANUARY 13<sup>th</sup> at 11:55p.m.**

### Brief Biography:

Professor Mercier has been teaching full-time at Marist College since 2007. He regularly teaches Writing for College, First Year Seminar, American Literature I, Literature & Gender, and Hudson Valley Literature. His main areas of expertise are in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century American Literature, Nature Writing, and Rhetoric & Composition. In 2004,

he received his Ph.D. in English from the University of Rhode Island, where he wrote his dissertation upon Hudson Valley nature writer John Burroughs (1837-1921). Since then he has published several journal articles and book chapters on Burroughs and has been interviewed by *The New York Times* and *National Public Radio (NPR)*.

**Feel free to contact me through MESSAGES in this iLearn system if you have any questions.**

Sincerely,

Dr. Stephen Mercier

Office: Fontaine 323

Campus Phone: 845-575-3000 ext. 2614 (not on campus during Winter session)

E-mail: [Stephen.Mercier@marist.edu](mailto:Stephen.Mercier@marist.edu)