

AMERICAN LITERATURE OF THE 1920's
FALL 2008 SYLLABUS
W. MARK WEAVER, INSTRUCTOR

Summer Assignment: Read *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemmingway

Week One: Introduction and Overview

- Class Overview: Discuss format and create goals for the class.
- 1920: A New Era for America. Discussion of American society culturally, politically, economically, and socially.
- Review and discussion of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.
- Assignment for Week Two: Selected short stories by Hemmingway (copies will be distributed in class).

Week Two: Search for the American Voice

- The Evolution of the American Voice in Writing: Discussion of the new stylistic tone exemplified by Hemmingway and others.
- Review and discussion of selected short stories.
- Assignment for Week Three: Read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Week Three: Changing American Morals

- From Puritans to Prohibition: Discussion of American morality reflected in literature.
- Review and discussion of *The Great Gatsby*.
- Assignment for Week Four: Selected short stories by F. Scott Fitzgerald (copies will be distributed in class).

Week Four: The New American Dream

- “The rich are different from you and me”: Discussion of Materialism and Conspicuous Wealth in the 1920's.
- Review and discussion of selected short stories.
- Assignment for Week Five: Read *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* by James Wheldon Johnson

Week Five: The Harlem Renaissance pt. 1

- The Role of Race: Discussion of the African-American Literature in the 1920's
- Review and discussion of *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*.
- Assignment for Week Six: Selected poems and short stories, including works by Langston Hughes and Claude McKay (copies will be distributed in class).

Week Six: The Harlem Renaissance pt. 2

- Advance or Retreat: African-American movements and politics
- Review and discussion of selected poems and short stories.
- Assignment for Week Seven: Read *Show Boat* by Edna Ferber

Week Seven: A Different Perspective

- Women's Issues of the 1920's
- Review and discussion of *Show Boat*, viewing of select scenes from film adaptation.
- Assignment for Week Eight: Read *Desire Under the Elms* by Eugene O'Neill

Week Eight: The New Broadway

- American Drama in the 1920's
- Review and discussion of *Desire Under the Elms*.
- Assignment for Week Nine: *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton

Week Nine:

- Discussion of American views of Europe in the 1920's
- Review and discussion of *The Age of Innocence*
- Assignment for Week Ten: Selected short stories and poems, including works by e.e. cummings and Ezra Pound.

Week Ten: The New Modernism

- Experimentalism and modernism in the 1920's
- Review and discussion of selected short stories and poems.
- Assignment for Week Eleven: Read *Babbitt* by Sinclair Lewis

Week Eleven: The "Normal" American

- Review and discussion of *Babbitt*.
- Assignment for Week Twelve: Individual selections

Week Twelve: Review and Evaluation

- Discussion of individual reading selections
- Overview of class themes
- Evaluations