

Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Grace Heneks

Course: ENGL 376

Title: American Novel Since 1900

Description: This course covers American novels written since the turn to the 20th century that chart various social transformations in the US: Jim Crow segregation, changing sexual norms, violence against Indigenous cultures, the immigrant experience, anxieties over contemporary warfare, and economic recession. The novels will also give us various examples of modern and postmodern styles of storytelling. The term “American novel” is multifaceted, but for the purposes of this course, we will approach the American novel as a long-form textual narrative written by an author intimately familiar with historical, cultural, and social events inside and outside the US. The novels we will read this semester experiment with the genre’s form; narrativize historical shifts that are political, cultural, social, and economic; and chart how cultural standards and values have changed due to these historical shifts.

Proposed Readings: Passing, Nella Larsen

The Price of Salt, Patricia Highsmith

Tracks, Louise Erdrich

In the Lake of the Woods, Tim O’Brien

The Tattooed Soldier, Hector Tobar

Gone Girl, Gillian Flynn

The Nickel Boys, Colson Whitehead