Course Description: In this course we will look at different forms of literature and narrative, including essays, poetry, film, short stories and novels with a purpose of experiencing and understanding their formal elements, the creative struggles of various authors, specific content, symbolism and meaning, and how all of these things work to reveal broader aspects of culture and human struggle. We will specifically focus on “counter cultures” and “quests” within (mostly) the USA, with views from diverse voices and positions within society.

Note: the url (http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf) contains official information on course policies and procedures according to University guidelines. This is a good resource that outlines your rights as a student, access to services if you have disabilities, explains religious observance policies, and also explains academic misconduct. (also, see document “UWM Policies” under “Content” on D2L). This is a GER course, which means that specific learning objectives apply. These are outlined below.

Requirements/Grading

• Attendance: (30%) Regular attendance, preparation for class, and participation in discussion: Missing more than 3 classes will lower your final grade. However, if you are sick, stay home: let me know right away and keep up with the work. Being chronically late will also affect your final course grade.
• Project 1: Class Blog (see description below) (40%)
• Project 2: Poetic Form Mash-up (see description below) (5%)
• Project 3: Fiction (see description below) (5%)
• Project 4: Final Essay Take Home Test (see description below) (20%)

Texts (books to acquire) (All texts in order of appearance and available through UWM Bookstore)

Note on texts: You either need to come to class with a book, a print of the text, or an accessible electronic version, which you show me that you have. To not have access to the text during class discussion is to be marked absent for the day.

• On the Road, (original published version) Jack Kerouac
• In Watermelon Sugar, Richard Brautigan (there are online versions that are acceptable, but flawed in formatting)
• Parable of the Sower, Octavia Butler
• 3 Plays, Alanis King (note: we will be focusing on If Jesus Met Nanabush. I will make a pdf version of this available)

Texts (pdfs on D2L or web links) (In order of appearance: see D2L for links)

• Hugo Ball: Karawane and Seahorses and Flying Fish (web)
• Gertrude Stein: If I Told Him Would He Listen (Portrait of Picasso) (web)
• The Sonnet Tradition and Claude McKay, (Denizé and Newlin) (pdf on D2L)
• Claude McKay: America, If We Must Die, The Lynching (web)
• Robert Frost: Acquainted With the Night, Nothing Gold Can Stay (web)
• ee cummings: When Serpents Bargain for the Right to Squirm, In Just Spring (web)
• Elizabeth Bishop: Sonnet, One Art (web)
• Dylan Thomas: Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night (web)
• Theodore Roethke: The Waking (web)
• Sylvia Plath: Mad Girl’s Love Song (web)
• William Butler Yeats: The Second Coming, Sailing To Byzantium (web)
• Mina Loy: Feminist Manifesto (web)
• William Carlos Williams on the Baroness Else von Freytag-Loringhoven (pdf on D2L)
• William Carlos Williams: The Red Wheelbarrow, A Sort of Song, Patterson (excerpt) (web)
• Duke Ellington: It Don’t Mean a Thing (video, music)
• Charlie Parker & Coleman Hawkins (video, music)
• Russel Edson: Selected Prose Poems (web)
• Langston Hughes: A Dream Deferred, Night Funeral In Harlem (web)
• James Baldwin: Sonny’s Blues (pdf on D2L)
• Malcolm X: speech after returning from Mecca (video)
• Nicole Homer: Things Only a Black Mother Can Prepare You For (web)
• Nikki Giovannni: Talk To Me Poem, I think I’ve Got the Blues (web)
• Patricia Smith: Skinhead (web)
• Allen Ginsberg: Howl (web)
• Gary Snyder: Mid August at Sourdough, No Matter Never Mind (web)
• Amiri Baraka: Money (web)
• Diane DiPrima: Revolutionary Letters (web)
• Charles Bukowski: The Laughing Heart (web)
• Audre Lorde: There Is No Hierarchy of Oppressions (web)
• Henry David Thoreau: Walden (excerpt)
• Vine Deloria Jr: Custer Died For Your Sins (chapter on humor)

Films
• Magic Trip: Ken Kesey’s Search for a Kool Place, Alison Ellwod, Alex Gibney
• Smoke Signals, Chris Eyre, Sherman Alexie
General Education Requirement

This course meets the criteria for General Education Requirement Humanities credit at UWM by addressing “questions, issues and concepts basic to the formation of character and the establishment of values in a human context; … inducing an organic study of letters and knowledge; [and providing] literary, aesthetic and intellectual experiences which enrich and enlighten human life,” as specified in UWM Faculty Document No. 1382. The course uses humanistic means of inquiry, including critical use of sources and evaluation of evidence, judgment and expression of ideas, and organizing, analyzing and using creatively substantial bodies of knowledge drawn from both primary and secondary sources. In addition to addressing other GER Humanities criteria, the course introduces substantial and coherent bodies of historical, cultural and literary knowledge to illuminate human events in their complexities and varieties, and enhances appreciation of literary and other arts by thoughtful, systematic analyses of language and artifacts such as novels, stories and films.

UWM seeks Essential Learning Outcomes throughout the undergraduate curriculum in four key areas: Knowledge of Human Cultures and the Physical and Natural World; Intellectual and Practical Skills; Personal and Social Responsibility; and Integrative Learning. GER courses in particular contribute to these learning outcomes. Student work in GER courses is assessed individually for course-specific outcomes and goals, and holistically as part of departmental self-assessment of learning outcomes throughout the major.

Grading and Assessment

In English 215, students will demonstrate learning outcomes in “Knowledge of Human Cultures” and in “Intellectual and Practical Skills”: by engagement with key questions in literary and other cultural artifacts, and by producing written literary or cultural analysis that reflects thoughtful, informed engagement with source material and standards of evidence and argumentation in humanistic disciplines. This outcome will be assessed through review of papers written in the course, a requirement of all English GER courses, via the rubric which appears on the following page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Mechanics &amp; Editing</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Highly original. Clear thesis and argument. No factual or logical inaccuracies. Minimal summary; uses evidence, not opinion; represents secondary sources accurately.</td>
<td>Well-organized, even at paragraph level. Reader led through a logical sequence; paper stays on topic.</td>
<td>Accurate use of citation conventions. Virtually no mechanical or formatting errors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Less original; may have minor factual errors. May use secondary sources uncritically or with mild inaccuracy.</td>
<td>Well-organized, but structure sometimes disjointed. Goes off-topic on occasion.</td>
<td>Some awkwardly worded passages. Some errors, but not enough to distract the reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Relies more on summary than original interpretation or argument. Restates common or familiar arguments or interpretations uncritically. Secondary sources do not clearly contribute to or support the argument, or may be presented inaccurately.</td>
<td>Basically well organized, though individual paragraphs may be disunified or misplaced. Logical and apparent plan overall.</td>
<td>More frequent awkwardness, with distracting errors, although meaning is clear. Citations improperly formatted or absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>No original contribution; restatement or misstatement of the ideas of others. Doesn’t interpret, but just repeats or reports.</td>
<td>Poor organization; reader has little sense of a plan even though a thesis or main point is recognizable. Some sentences may be so confused that their meaning does not clearly emerge.</td>
<td>Words may be imprecise, incorrect, trite, or vague. In general, however, the paper is understandable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F | Lacks clear thesis or point. | Language muddled and unclear in several spots. | Highly distracting mechanical errors. | Shows little care or attention to detail on the part of the author.

GER Course Assessment

All GER courses in the Department require significant student writing, including papers of varying length. The Department samples GER courses in each semester, including primarily papers from the required ENG 215 course, evaluating them on a holistic scale, according to the following rubric:

1. Work does not meet disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts. Work does not meet expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose. Work does not show student awareness of conventions for analysis and expression.

2. [Work quality falls between 1 and 3]

3. Work shows some awareness of conventions for analysis and expression but may contain distracting errors. Work meets some disciplinary standards for critical analysis, evidence-based argument, and interpretation of literary or cultural artifacts, but inconsistent in doing so. Work meets some expectations for clarity of thought and language, and for edited academic prose, but is inconsistent in doing so.

4. [Work quality falls between 3 and 5]

5. Work meets most or all expectations for analysis and interpretation, argues from evidence, and is written clearly and without significant mechanical errors, showing student awareness and achievement the learning outcomes for the course.

Numeric scores are used to generate snapshots of how well GER courses meet the department’s stated learning outcomes and what, if anything, needs to be altered when the course is next offered.
Projects

**Project #1: Class Blog (40% of course grade)**

**Objective:** Engage the course material through thoughtful weekly reflection in order to synthesis complex information and integrate esthetic, intellectual and ethical challenges posed by various avant-garde movements.

**Description:** Use a common blog host (Wordpress, Blogspot, Tumblr, etc) to create a space dedicated to your weekly writing and posted exercises, as outlined in project descriptions. These should be free (you are not required to spend money to set up a personal blog!) so note that blog “trial offers” should be entertained with suspicion. Send me the url of your blog by the end of the first weekend (Sunday evening) and I will post all urls on D2L. You will, throughout the semester, be expected to post weekly unless otherwise specified. You will find the catalyst questions for any particular week on D2L, though you are welcome to go beyond the questions, or create your own – as long as you focus on the content and ramifications of that week’s readings and presentations. Your blogs are intended to not only focus your thoughts regarding course material, but to also serve as an archive of the semester. Blog posts should be around one to two pages long (normal margins, double spaced: one page single-spaced) or roughly a between 400-500 word count. I generally read these on Monday mornings. Late blog posts posted within the week will be downgraded, and blogposts are not accepted after one week.

A note on the citing of sources: even in informal writing, you still have to say where you get your information. This needn’t be formal. It can be inline (eg. “According to Hopkins, the Dada movement was a response to the chaos unleashed in Europe during WWI.” (Hopkins)...). I generally read every post each week and give feedback in this important aspect of the course.

**Results:** Individual blogs that are dedicated to questions posed throughout the course and that have sustained reflection about the semester’s exploration of various avant-garde movements.

**Blog Grading Rubric (note: individual posts will be graded according to GER rubric in grid above)**

An “A” Blog Project:
The "A" blog demonstrates a full engagement with weekly writing. Work has intellectual depth, sources are cited, and the writing is relatively free of grammatical and spelling mistakes (within reason for informal writing). The topics are addressed with insight and clarity. An “A” blog, over the semester, is consistent, on time and begins to experiment with the form and format itself through pictures, embedded video and links (within reason: content and quality of thinking should be the main focus.)

A “B” Blog Project:
The "B" blog is competent but not striking: the writer engaged analysis in a reasonable manner, and the overall effort is “good” but there has not been deeply insightful thought, or exceptional effort, put into the weekly writing. Posts are generally interesting, but could still use more depth. Writing is good, but at times unclear or fraught with grammatical and/or structural issues. Most posting, but not all, have been on time.

A “C” Blog Project:
The “C” blog has “done the assignment” but without much sustained engagement. Analysis and reflection has not been deep, and insights are infrequent. Writing is sloppy, work has not been on time, or has been too superficial.

A “D” Blog Project:
The “D” blog is incomplete and generally superficial. Real engagement with the course material is not in evidence. Work is late and/or missing and citations have not been itemized.

An “F” Blog Project:
The “F” project is not completed with work chronically late or lacking citation.

**Project #2: Poetic Form: Sonnet Mash-up (5% of course grade)**

**Objective:** Learn the rigors of traditional poetic form through selecting, intermixing and editing lines from various sonnets. Work towards creating a poetic piece through the resolution of the constraints of sonnet meter, rhyme, line and stanza.

**Description:** Select from any number of sonnets, intermix the lines, alter and edit for rhyme, and keep other formal restrictions intact (14 line, traditional sonnet end-rhyme scheme, stanza breaks...). You can be loose with meaning, but should still shape it beyond random cut-and-paste. Make 2 of them. see this link for great sonnets:
Create your own sonnets (2 versions, related to each other) according to traditional sonnet form and format.

**Results:** Two sonnets, either generated through remix or from scratch, in order to better understand the constraints of form (rhyme, meter, line break, stanza, content, metaphor, meaning, etc)

**Sonnet Mash-up Grading Rubric**

**An “A” Project:**
The “A” project demonstrates a willingness to experiment with sonnet form. All form and format issues are resolved. Rhyme and partial rhyme works according to traditional sonnet structure, lines are elegant and thoughtful, and meaning, though loose, is poetic and resonant.

**A “B” Project:**
The “B” project is competent but not striking: the writer engaged the process in a reasonable manner, but has not worked hard transforming those sources or resolving the constraints of the form. The piece is interesting, but could still use more thorough editing. Imagery and poetic qualities are apparent, but not fully developed.

**A “C” Project:**
The “C” project has “done the assignment” but without much poetic result. Language has promise, but the text has not been refined or transformed. Honest attempt, only adequately realized.

**A “D” Project:**
The “D” project is an attempt, but the writer has not understood the intent or purpose of the exercise, and has not bothered to seek clarification. The project is a mish-mash, not indicating an understanding of poetic form and language.

**An “F” Project:**
The “F” project is not completed, or totally misses the mark.

(Note: Late work will be downgraded).

**Project #3: Short Story - Quest** *(5% of course grade)*

**Objective:** Write a “short” short story to learn about the form, experiment with character development, descriptive writing, conflict, and "quest."

**Process:** Create a short story (3-5 pages) that is structured around a “quest” narrative. This could be a travel story, a night out on the town, a week that unfolds, a search for a mundane item. It should be a real thing (no dream quests or drug induced frenzied nights!) that you can observe and describe concretely, though it needn’t be in first person. Make a believable character, or characters. If you choose to use dialogue, you must do it correctly. (See pdf titled “dialogue formatting” on D2L for a review of the rules). Here are some things that might help you structure this creative project:

1) Your story must have a beginning, a middle and an end

2) Plot needs to be driven through believable conflict. During the rising action, tensions build towards a crisis, which is resolved in some way at the story's end. Not all consequences need to be overtly stated. (Remember that you want to trust your readers to connect some of the dots.) You should be able to summarize your plot with clarity. *(Key words: plot, narrative arc, conflict, tension, rising action, turning points, crisis, climax, resolution, consequence.)*

3) Stories typically consist of a combination of scenes, which show characters in action through the use of dialogue and concrete detail. Exposition is used, when needed, to tell or summarize essential background information. (Use exposition sparingly: it can kill a good story!)

4) Characters should interact in some way. Mundane and observable interaction is much more convincing than swashbuckling drama.

5) You need to select a point of view (first, second, third person) and be consistent. Third person omniscient can reveal the perspective of any and all characters. Third person limited omniscient only reveals the perspective of one character.

6) Dialogue should be believable and properly formatted. Punctuation marks go inside quotation marks. Begin a new paragraph for each new speaker. Make dialogue tags (he said) simple, and use proper punctuation and capitalization in tags.

**Results:** A short story, the creating of which helps us understand the writer’s craft, the form, and the creative process involved in all writing projects.
**Quest Grading Rubric**

**An “A” Project:**
The “A” project demonstrates an understanding of the short story form. There are few grammatical mistakes, dialogue (if used) is believable, there is a clear and credible plot structure, language flows and characters are compelling.

**A “B” Project:**
The "B" project is competent but not striking: the writer engaged the process in a reasonable manner, but has not worked hard enough to develop the craft. It is “good” in that it holds together, but writing might be awkward, plot might be not developed or believable, and characters might be almost compelling but stiff or not fully described.

**A “C” Project:**
The “C” project has “done the assignment” but without much poetic result. It is not a compelling story, or is not very well written. The writer hasn’t developed plot and characterization. Language has promise, but the short story is not tight. Honest attempt, only adequately realized.

**A “D” Project:**
The "D" project is an attempt, but the writer has not understood the intent or purpose of the project and has not bothered to seek clarification. The project is a mish-mash, not realizing the much about the form. The writing has few redeeming linguistic or narrative qualities.

**An “F” Project:**
The “F” project is not completed, or incomplete, or totally misses the mark.

(Note: Late work will be downgraded).

**Project #4: Take Home Written Essays (Final) (20% of course grade)**

**Objective:** A series of essay questions, self-selected from set options, will help with the review, synthesis and analysis of the semester’s material. Writing helps structure thoughts, and multiple essays will cover a wide spectrum of subjects.

**Process:** At the end of the last week of classes, I will post a series of questions on D2L, some of which come from the class. You are to choose 3 questions for a take-home written exam. Your responses should be thoughtful, well structured (as with any essay) and well articulated. You should use concrete examples in your responses, compare and contrast among specific ideas and/or writers/artists, analyze and interpret. You will be expected to write 3 to 4 page responses (double spaced, 1 inch margins, no title pages) for each question (not counting footnotes or the reiteration of the question or long block quotes), resulting in a 9 to 12 page project. While this isn’t a formal research paper, MLA citation (footnoting) rules apply, if/when you use scholarly sources, including online sources. Each entry should begin with the question selected. Note that any use of Wikipedia or other web source information must be cited according to MLA rules of copyright. I often check writing for plagiarized sources (via online apps) so please be careful about this. Failure to cite sources will result in “no credit” for that particular essay, or, if an egregious act of plagiarism, failure of the entire test or other academic penalty.

**Results:** A 9 to 12 page document of well structured and articulated essay responses to three separate questions regarding various issues relevant to general forms of English literature, and the content of the specific American literature that we have covered in class.

**General Essay Grading Rubric**

(see GER rubric grid above)

(Note: Late work will be downgraded).

**On MLA Style (for Citation only)**

http://dianahacker.com/pdfs/Hacker-Daly-MLA.pdf
https://owlenglish.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/12/
https://www.library.cornell.edu/research/citation/mla