

**AML 4242, Section 01G8: Studies in Twentieth Century American Literature and Culture**  
**Happy Days: American Culture in the 1950s and its Discontents**  
**MTWRF, Period 2 (9:30-10:45 AM)**  
**Meeting Location: Turlington Hall, Room 2336**

**Instructor:** Andrea Krafft

**Office:** Turlington 4409

**Office Hours:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

**Email:** [akrafft@ufl.edu](mailto:akrafft@ufl.edu)

**Class Website:** <http://1950slitandculture.wikispaces.com> (invitation only)

**Course Description**

A nostalgic view of the 1950s as a time of widespread prosperity and suburban bliss continues to shape the American popular imagination. However, when we more closely examine the literary and cultural productions of the postwar years, dissenting voices shatter this fantasy of national consensus. In this course, we will examine the works of American writers of the late 1940s through the 1960s, alongside cultural artifacts such as advertisements, songs, popular movies, and government-sponsored instructional films. We will also read nonfiction historical documents in order to better understand the cultural context of the postwar era. Central questions we will explore include: How did the atomic bomb affect American attitudes about national and domestic security? What models of femininity and masculinity emerged during the 1950s? What kinds of challenges did authors and critics pose to postwar institutions, and why? How did the culture of the 1950s sow the seeds for racial, sexual, and literary discontentment?

Please note that your preparation for and participation in class discussion is important for the success of this course.

**Required Textbooks**

I have listed the texts in reading order. Please purchase the same edition (I have listed publisher names and ISBNs).

- Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). New Directions. ISBN: 0811216020
- Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952). Vintage. ISBN: 0679732764
- Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966). Harper. ISBN: 006091307X

Please order your textbooks at Amazon.com (you can find affordable used copies there as well). Search using the ISBN to make sure that you find the right edition. You can also find most, if not all of these books, on the shelves of local bookstores and libraries.

**Note:** The majority of our texts will be available electronically. Please make sure that you have a reliable laptop, iPad, or other device on which you can view these documents (as well as a reliable internet connection).

**See the reading schedule for listings of required short fiction, articles, and historical documents (all available electronically).**

**Required Films**

You should be able to find all of the following films through online services such as Netflix, Amazon instant (24 hour rentals are usually \$2.99), and YouTube. I will provide links for films that I found online for free. I have placed most, but not all, of these films on reserve at Library West for 24 hour checkout. You may also purchase DVDs of any of these films online (just make sure to get the right version).

- *Them!* (1954, Directed by Gordon Douglas)
- *The Stepford Wives* (1975, Directed by Bryan Forbes)
  - o On library reserve
- *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951, Directed by Elia Kazan)
  - o On library reserve
- *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956, Directed by Nunnally Johnson)
- *Doctor Strangelove, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1963, Directed by Stanley Kubrick)
  - o On library reserve

### Assignments (See Class Schedule for Due Dates)

- **Reading Quizzes:** There will be frequent unannounced reading quizzes at the beginning of class about the content of the day's reading. These quizzes cannot be made up if you are late or absent. I will drop your lowest quiz grade.
- **4 Wiki Discussion Entries (2 posts of 2 questions each and 2 comment posts):** Twice during the semester, you will pose **2 critical questions** about the day's reading on the class website. These questions should ideally be open-ended and not have any "correct" answer. **Twice** during the semester, you should also comment on 1 of the posted questions.
  - o The class website will only be viewable to you once you accept my emailed invitation,
  - o Always check that your post appears on the wiki after you post,
  - o Your due date for discussion posts depends on which discussion group you are in.
  - o **Question** posts are due by **8 PM the night before class,**
  - o **Comment** posts are due by **midnight the night before class.**
- **Class Panel Presentation (with 2 page, double-spaced paper and visual element):** Each of you will participate in a class panel, in which you will respond to a set of keywords or questions about the assigned text for that day. You should prepare a two page, double-spaced statement in response to your topic, which you should post to the class wiki and submit on ELearning by **7 PM** on the day **before** the panel. In class, each panelist will read his or her statement, followed by the panelists asking each other questions. We will then open the panel to the class for questions and comments. **In addition** to your paper, locate a **visual element** that is pertinent to the day's discussion or text - this can be an advertisement, magazine cover, music video, civil defense film, YouTube video, or any other visual element. I will provide you with some archives to search in. Post these visual elements on the class wiki when you post your papers.
  - o You do not need to get together with your fellow panelists prior to class, but you can if you like,
  - o I will circulate a panel sign-up sheet during class and post it on our class websites,
  - o I will post panel keywords and questions on the course wiki and ELearning.
- **Final Paper Proposal (1-2 pages, double-spaced):** In this brief document, you should establish which text you will write about for your final paper and a rough sketch of your intended argument.
- **Final Research Paper (8-10 double-spaced pages):** This paper will use reading(s) from class as well as 3-5 relevant scholarly sources about the Cold War or postwar era and your chosen text(s). You should use secondary sources to support an argument about how your chosen text relates to its historical period, author movement, or some aspect of the course's content and theme.

### Grading Scale

The weights for grading are as follows:

- Participation: 10%
- Reading Quizzes: 15%
- Wiki Entries: 20% (5% each)

- Class Presentation + Accompanying Blog Entry + Paper: 25% (10% for presentation, 10% for paper, 5% for blog entry)
- Final Paper Proposal: 5%
- Final Research Paper: 25%

A	93 or above
A-	90-92
B+	87-89
B	83-86
B-	80-82
C+	77-79
C	73-76
c-	70-72
D+	67-69
D	63-66
D-	60-62
E	59 or below

### Grading Rubric for Papers

A brief overview of how I arrive at the grades for all major assignments is below. I will review this overview in more detail closer to your major assignments.

In each paper, I will be looking at:

- 1) Content: How strong is your argument, development, and support?
- 2) Organization: How well-structured are your paragraphs? Do your overall ideas flow well?
- 3) Mechanics: How frequently do you make errors in grammar, style, and spelling?

You should strive to excel in all three areas.

An **A paper** may benefit from some minor improvements in content, organization, and mechanics, but all three areas are strong, and the essay is strongly argued, supported, and well-written. The paper may have a few minor grammar and mechanics issues, but they do not distract from the flow and clarity of the paper.

A **B paper** needs substantial revision. Overall, the paper is solid, but major improvements in one key area will significantly strengthen the paper.

A **C paper** has promise in some areas, but lacks the command, organization, persuasiveness or clarity of the A or B papers.

A **D paper** does not yet demonstrate the basic lower division writing expectations. The paper has major issues in content, organization and / or mechanics.

An **“E”** is usually reserved for students who do not do the assignment or fail to attend class. However, an **“E”** may also be given if an essay blatantly ignores instructions or has major problems in all three areas of evaluation.

Please note that the above rubric is not exact.

If you have a question about a grade you receive on an assignment, please feel free to discuss it with me during office hours (or make an appointment).

### Final Grade Appeals

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available in the English Department, 4008 Turlington Hall, from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade

### **Course Policies**

#### **Absence and Tardiness**

Because of the participatory nature of this course, prolonged absences, including absences for medical reasons, will not be excused. Students who miss **more than four class** periods **will automatically fail** the course. In addition, prolonged absences will affect your participation grade and quiz average (since I do not allow you to make up missed in-class assignments).

All members of the class are expected to adhere to official UF time. For this reason, if you are late, this will count as **a partial absence**. If you are more than 10 minutes late, I will mark you as absent.

If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. I also recommend borrowing another student's notes for the day, or discussing the missed class with me during office hours. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. In-class assignments and quizzes cannot be made up.

If you must miss class because of university-sponsored athletics, music or theater, please let me know about these absences at least 1 week ahead of time. I will allow you to make up missed work, but prolonged absences cannot be excused.

#### **Preparation**

Always bring the assigned reading to class with you, along with materials for taking notes and any assignments that may be due during that class meeting. Be prepared for active discussions. To help with this, I highly recommend that you take careful reading notes and write down potential comments for class ahead of time. I also suggest scheduling your time carefully so you can always complete the reading assignment. I may have unannounced reading quizzes during class time, so don't miss any readings.

#### **Participation**

Being present in the classroom is not enough to succeed in this class. While I may lecture on occasion, many classes will rely on your questions and comments relating to our texts and assignments. If you are frequently quiet during class, I may call on you.

If you sleep during class or are not present mentally in the classroom, I may mark you as absent.

#### **Electronic Devices - Cell Phones, Laptops, iPads, Etc.**

Out of courtesy to myself and your fellow classmates, turn off or your cell phones or set them to silent mode during class time (the vibrate setting is not silent). Keep your phone in your bag or pocket - if I see you texting or surfing the web, I may ask you to leave, resulting in an absence.

We will be using a large number of electronic texts, so I will allow the use of laptops and iPads in the classroom. That being said, do not use your electronic device for purposes outside of class work, as this will result in me asking you to leave and an absence for the day.

#### **Assignment Submission**

Papers and written assignments are due, via electronic copy, in .doc or .docx format, either the day before or the day of class, depending on the assignment type.

Technology failure is not an excuse for a late assignment. If ELearning or the class website are not functioning properly when you attempt to submit a paper, you can always send me an email attachment or bring a hard copy of the paper to class. Always back up your papers on a flash drive or on a cloud service, such as Dropbox. I also recommend saving into a word file anything that you post on the class blog.

### Late Assignments

Timeliness is important for our assignments, especially since many of them will be key parts of our class discussions. My lateness policy for assignments varies by the assignment type. My policies are as follows:

- Wiki Discussion Entries
  - o If your entry is late (i.e. submitted after 8 PM for questions or after midnight for comments), I will reduce it to a **C grade**.
- Class Panel Presentation
  - o You cannot make up the in-class portion of this assignment, so do not sign up for a panel when you know that you will miss class,
  - o I will reduce the grade for your panel and visual element post by 5% for every hour it is submitted late (i.e. submitted after 7 PM the day *before* the panel).
- Final Paper Proposal and Final Research Paper
  - o I will reduce the assignment grade by 10% if I receive it after 9:30 AM on the day that it is due. I will deduct an addition 10% for every additional day the assignment is late, including weekends.

### Academic Paper Format

All essays must be formatted in MLA style. This means that your paper must meet the following guidelines:

- Double-spaced
- 12 point, Times New Roman font
- 1 inch margins, on all sides
- MLA style headers with page numbers
- MLA style citations

For help with MLA format, find a copy of the *MLA Handbook* in the library or refer to the OWL Purdue website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>).

When submitting an electronic copy of an assignment, submit them in .doc, .docx, or .rtf format.

### University Policies

**Statement of student disability services:** The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Statement on harassment:** UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

**Statement on academic honesty:** All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

### Class Schedule

**Please Note:** This schedule is subject to change. If changes occur, I will notify you ahead of time.

The following schedule lists reading **on the days they are due**. This includes films, which you should watch at home. Written assignments are due on the day listed, except for wiki entries, which are due the night *before* class meets (8 PM for questions, midnight for comments), and the panel papers, which are due by 4 PM the afternoon *before* your panel.

ER = Electronic reserve

#### Week 1: Course Introduction: Living in the Shadow of the Atomic Bomb

**M 5/13:** Introductions, Syllabus Review and Course Policies

**T 5/14:** John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (1946), “Publisher’s Note” through “The Fire” (page iv-61)  
Harry S. Truman, August 6, 1945 Press Release

**W 5/15:** John Hersey, *Hiroshima* (1946), “Details Are Being Investigated” through end (page 62-119)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 1  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 3

**Th 5/16:** “About Fallout”  
Ray Bradbury, “There Will Come Soft Rains” (1950)  
Fritz Feiber, “The Moon is Green” (1952)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 5  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 6

**F 5/17:** Cyndy Hendershot, “5: Darwin and the Atom: Evolution/Devolution Fantasies in The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms, Them! and The Incredible Shrinking Man” (ER)  
George Kennan, “The Sources of Soviet Conduct” (ER)  
**Film:** *Them!* (1954)  
**PANEE 1**

#### Week 2: On the Home Front: Domestic Discontent

**M 5/20:** Elaine Tyler May, “Introduction” from *Homeward Bound* (ER)  
Stephanie Coontz, “*Leave It to Beaver* and *Ozzie and Harriet*: American Families in the 1950s” (ER)  
**In-class screening:** *Leave it to Beaver* (1957-1963), episode TBA

**T 5/21:** Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find” (1953) and “A Circle in the Fire” (1954) (ER)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 2  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 4

**W 5/22:** Carson McCullers, “A Domestic Dilemma” (1951) and “The Haunted Boy” (1955) (ER)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 6  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 5

**Th 5/23:** Sylvia Plath, “Morning Song,” “Fady Fazarus,” “Cut,” “Fesbos,” “Daddy,” “Fever 103°” (published in *Ariel*, 1965)  
**PANEE 2**

**F 5/24:** Betty Friedan, “The Problem That Has No Name” from *The Feminine Mystique* (ER)  
Vance Packard, “Babes in Consumerland” (ER)  
**Film:** *The Stepford Wives* (1975)  
**PANEE 3**

#### Week 3: Sexual Containment and Queer Voices

**M 5/27:** NO CUASS - Memorial Day

**T 5/28:** Jane Sherron de Hart “Containment at Home: Gender, Sexuality, and National Identity in Cold War America” (ER)  
Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), Scene 1-3 (page 3-69)

**W 5/29:** Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Scene 4-7 (page 70-128)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 3  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 1

**Th 5/30:** Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, Scene 8-end (page 129-179)  
**Film:** *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951)  
**PANEL 4**

**F 5/31:** Allan Ginsberg, “Howl” (1955) and “Footnote to Howl”  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 5  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 6

**Week 4: Ralph Ellison: Shattering Racial Containment**

**M 6/3:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952), Prologue-Chapter 3 (page 3-97)  
Morris Dickstein, “Ralph Ellison, Race, and American Culture” (ER)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 1  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 3

**T 6/4:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 4-8 (page 98-171)

**W 6/5:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 9-11 (page 172-250)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 4  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 2

**Th 6/6:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 12-15 (page 251-332)

**F 6/7:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 16-18 (page 333-408)  
**FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL DUE by 9:30 AM on ELearning**

**Week 5: Squares and Hipsters: Anxious Masculinities**

**M 6/10:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 19-23 (page 409-512)

**T 6/11:** Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*, Chapter 24-end (page 513-581)  
Irving Howe, review of *Invisible Man* from *The Nation*, May 10, 1952  
Saul Bellow, “Man Underground,” review of *Invisible Man* from *Commentary*, June 1952  
**PANEL 5**

**W 6/12:** Norman Mailer, “The White Negro” (1957)  
Roger Miller, “King of the Road” (1964)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 3  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 1

**Th 6/13:** John Cheever, “The Cure” (1952), “O Youth and Beauty!” (1953), and “The Worm in the Apple” (1958) (ER)  
**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 2  
**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 4

**F 6/14:** Douglas T. Miller and Marion Nowak, “The Paving of America” (ER)  
William H. Whyte, “Introduction” from *The Organization Man* (ER)  
**Film:** *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1956)

**PANEL 6**

**Week 6: Paranoia and the Postmodern Turn**

**M 6/17:** Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966), Chapter 1-3 (page 1-63)

**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 6

**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 5

**T 6/18:** Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, Chapter 4-5 (page 64-119)

**W 6/19:** Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*, Chapter 6 (page 120-152)

Jean Baudrillard, "Simulacra and Simulations" from *Selected Writings* (1998)

**WIKI QUESTIONS:** Group 4

**WIKI COMMENTS:** Group 2

**Th 6/20: Film:** *Doctor Strangelove, or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1963)

**F 6/21: NO CLASS: FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS DUE BY 9:30 AM on ELearning**