

## EN 2253 – American Literature from the Civil War to the Present

**Section 01; MW 12:30-1:45**

**Mr. Price**

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This class is a survey, a historical excursion through the literature of post-Civil War America. However, my arrangement is thematic. We will begin with poetry and my focus will be on vision or perspective. We will begin with Emily Dickinson, follow with Walt Whitman and a sampling of poets influenced by him, then cast an eye on Robert



Frost, Wallace Stevens, and T.S. Eliot. Our second class segment will deal with fiction, as we work from Mark Twain's discovery of America through some of the currents of American fiction before World War II. My selection will tend toward 'frontier' material, with an emphasis on the grubby elements of the American experience. The cornerstone of our third class segment is a novel of the dispossessed, John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, as we examine, in prose and poetry, those members of American society who find themselves excluded from our supposed opulence and equality: the poor, the black, the immigrant, the 'outsider.' The fourth segment, post WW II, will center on the salesman, with Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman" augmented by a couple very funny short stories which happen to feature salesmen. We will conclude the course with some of the themes of self and self-worth, moving from Hemingway to post-modernism and giving us a taste of current literary concerns.

My hope is that, over the course of the term, all of us will see, through the eyes of a sampling of American writers, a world we have not fully seen before.

### **Texts:**

- *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Package 2 (vol. C,D,E)*
- **Steinbeck, John. *The Grapes of Wrath*. Penguin.**
- **Online resources as provided on myCourses or internet links**

### **Requirements:**

- Three short papers and a take-home final.
- Class participation.
- Online quizzes and two minor in-class tests.