

Course Objectives/Course Outline
Spokane Community College

Course Title: Studies in the Novel
Prefix and Course Number: ENGL 261

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, a student should be able to:

- Describe the conventions of the novel as a literary form, as well as elements of longer fiction as plot, sub-plot, symbolism, point of view, setting, tone, and theme; employ these elements appropriately in analyzing novels
- Identify relevant characteristics of literary periods, and of novel genres, and appropriately reference these characteristics in analyzing individual works
- Trace patterns of continuity and discontinuity through the history of the novel, or within a particular period or genre as specified by the instructor
- Describe ways in which novelists have commented on, and influenced, cultural changes; assess cultural work performed by novels
- Interpret ways in which novels have addressed cultural and philosophical questions on issues such as the nature of identity and the relationship between language and reality
- Locate, and demonstrate an understanding of, relevant critical or scholarly findings about novels, and use these findings to advance insights about primary texts

Course Outline:

(Note: Authors and titles are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.)

- I. Conventions of the Novel
 - A. Narrative
 1. Plot
 2. Subplots
 3. Chronology
 - B. Characterization
 - C. Theme, subthemes
 - D. Point of view
 1. Reliable and unreliable narrators
 2. Authorial presence and intent
- II. Literary Periods
 - A. Romanticism, Transcendentalism
 1. Imagination
 2. “Noble Savage”
 - B. Realism, Naturalism
 1. Ethical dilemmas
 2. Social Darwinism
 - C. Modernism

1. Fragmented reality
 2. Disillusionment
 3. Regionalism
 - D. Post-modernism
 1. Erasing reality
 2. Self-preferentiality
- III. Genre Theory
 - A. Action/adventure/thriller
 - B. "Memoir"/Autobiographical Novel
 - C. Mystery/Detective Novel
 - D. Romance
 - E. Speculative Fiction
 - F. Graphic Novel
- IV. Tensions in and around the Contemporary Novel
 - A. The Canon: implications for marginalized authors
 1. Literary vs. popular novels
 2. The rise of identity politics: Race, class and gender
 - B. Her to Anti-hero
 - C. Correlation or Causation: Do novels reflect cultural change or drive it?
 - D. Novles "in Translation": Via language, medium, popular culture
 - E. Effects of Modality: verbal, graphic, electronic
 - F. What is Truth?: "Truth" in fiction