Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

“I've spent most of my creative life measuring the distance between that American promise and American reality,” singer Bruce Springsteen said at a political rally in 2008. As if he did not already exist in the line of American troubadour poets, this statement makes explicit how Springsteen sees his role in the late 20th and early 21st Centuries: a man continuing the tradition of poet Walt Whitman, America’s preeminent chronicler, and other writers of several genres. This online course, designed to also meet general literature requirements as per the English Department, seeks to establish what the “American promise,” or American Dream, is and what the “American reality” is, how they have evolved into the 21st Century, and where they may be headed in the future.

Upon completion of this course, students will

- seek to define the American Dream
- be familiar with late-19th, 20th and 21st Century literary texts from various genres and make connections between those genres.
- To connect literature to cultural, political, and historical contexts.
- To be familiar with major literary movements and major theories of literary criticism.
- To demonstrate close critical reading by writing essays that are engaging, clear, persuasive, and, in at least one case, responsive to contemporary criticism and scholarship.
- To demonstrate close critical reading by talking about literature clearly and persuasively in a seminar setting.
- To give an informed, professional presentation and lead a group discussion

Texts:


**Other Materials and Resources:**

• Of course, Internet access and Moodle are necessary.

• For Woody Guthrie and Bruce Springsteen, we’ll rely on *YouTube* and these two websites: [http://www.woodyguthrie.org/](http://www.woodyguthrie.org/) and [http://brucespringsteen.net/](http://brucespringsteen.net/).

• Other, supplemental readings are linked on Moodle.

• Films TBA

**Other Matters:**

*Moodle is the official schedule and assignment document. Refer to it for due dates and assignment information, and discard any tentative hard copy versions. They ARE NOT official!*

(Moodle is on the college website, so you already have it: go to [www.carroll.edu](http://www.carroll.edu) and click on “Current Students” and then click Moodle and sign in—your password is the same as for your Carroll email). I will post all assignments and schedules on Moodle, so monitor it regularly. Moodle may send you announcements for various reasons: if I cancel a class meeting, change a meeting location, forget to tell you something in class, or otherwise need to get word to you outside of class, the message will come via Moodle through your Carroll email. Consequently, you must check that email account regularly, because if an announcement comes through that channel, you will be held responsible for its contents.

Microsoft Word (NOT “Works” or Word Perfect) word processing software. You aren’t required to buy this, but you must use it for all Moodle submissions, of which there’ll be many. Word is fully compatible with Moodle; “Works” is not. Rich Text is a hassle. No exceptions, please.

Note: Always review assignments on Moodle and syllabus, throughout the semester.
Course Requirements:

**Reading:** Completely read the assignments by the due date. On the Moodle calendar, each reading will be listed on a specific date or dates. **Have read the assignment by that date.** Failing to read will harm your grade on several different levels from the online responses to class discussions.

**Discussion Forums:** As per the Moodle schedule, everyone in the class is responsible for generating discussion questions about each week’s texts. Everyone will ask a question, related to the **American Dream** theme. The more complex and thought-provoking the questions, the better.

Everyone will answer an assigned number of other students’ questions and get involved in further, subsequent discussions prompted by the question. There can be no repeat questions, so generate several. First come, first serve. More specific requirements are forthcoming.

**Follow-up Writing Responses:** As per the Moodle schedule, everyone in the class is responsible for various writing assignments, these generated by me. Here, I will cover things that need to be discussed but weren’t touched upon in the forum. These may or may not be necessary.

In all forums and responses, I imagine that good, thorough answers will be at least in the 100-150 word range per question. **These answers must be supported with quotes from the texts:** evidence. **Any answers that are not supported with evidence will receive no more than ½ credit, regardless of how well they are written.**

The following criteria will be used to evaluate your responses:

- Basic logic: Are your interpretations/responses plausible based on the evidence given in the texts?
- Evidence: Are all claims made in your responses supported with textual evidence?
- Competent English grammar, punctuation, and usage.
- Professional appearance.

You must type these answers and post them on the appropriate Moodle links.

**Meeting the minimum requirements of these responses will earn you a C for your discussion question responses. Hence, exceed the minimum.**

**Participation:** You will be evaluated on the amount and quality of your input in forum discussions, group work, preparation, respectful decorum and punctuality.

**Group Work:** Over the course of the term, you will select poems and songs by Whitman, Guthrie and Springsteen for our discussions, so you will collaborate in (physical or online) groups and select the poems and songs for the class to read and/or listen to. You will also compose discussion questions about the poems and songs in relation to the course’s evolving
themes that fall under the umbrella of the theme of the American Dream. Therefore, select two poems/songs (per person in your group) that seem to address explicit/implicit themes that reflect the American Dream. Your group will generate two questions per poem/song that you’ve chosen. The more complex and thought-provoking the questions, the better. In addition, offer a brief intro to your poems and songs, and discuss why you chose them and why you asked your questions. Note: you are invited to run the questions by me prior to your discussion session. Subsequently, the online forums will follow the above-mentioned format.

**Shorter Papers:**

You will write two 3-5 page papers, a comparison/contrast and a critical approach to single, separate stories. More info is forthcoming, as per the schedule.

**Research Paper:**

You will write a final research paper about a historical event relevant to one of our songs, poems, stories, films or novels. More info is forthcoming, as per the schedule.

**Grades (for students in +/- system):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>84-86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>74-76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Otherwise,**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90-100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80-89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70-79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Breakdown:**

- Reading Responses/Forums = 20%
- Shorter Paper 1 = 20%
- Shorter Paper 2 = 20%
- Research Paper = 25%
- Group Work = 10%
- Participation = 05%
- Total = 100%

**Academic Integrity:** As contributing members of the Carroll learning community, students at Carroll College are expected to have high standards of integrity. Any student who cheats or plagiarizes on examinations or assignments, falsifies college records, or fails to give requested academic information on official documents is subject to dismissal or other appropriate disciplinary action by the College. All students of the college are expected to understand and follow the standard outlined in **Article V: Expectations for Student Conduct of the Carroll Code of Student Conduct** which states:

"Any student found to have committed or to have attempted to commit the following misconduct is subject to the disciplinary sanctions outlined in Article VI (B):"
1. Acts of dishonesty, including but not limited to the following:
   a. Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty.
   b. Furnishing false information to any College official, faculty member, or office.
   c. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any College document, record or instrument of identification."
   (Carroll College Student Handbook {Calendar 2011-2012, page 99)

Ignorance of the code is not a valid reason for committing an act of academic dishonesty. Students should realize that their actions may affect other students. In general, students may not obstruct or interfere with other students’ academic work or otherwise undertake an activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other students. Each of the following behaviors violates the high standards of academic integrity and is thus prohibited. Please refer to the student handbook for more detailed definitions of plagiarism, etc.

For this particular course, academic dishonesty, either intentional or accidental, will not be tolerated. The penalties for plagiarism can range from failure in the course for serious academic thievery (i.e., turning in someone else’s assignment as your own) to receiving a zero on the assignment in question.

**Special Accommodations:** If you believe that you may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact Kevin Hadduck, in order to discuss your specific needs and to determine a reasonable accommodation plan. You may contact Kevin Hadduck in the Academic Success and Disability Services Office, Borromeo Hall, Room 118 (phone: x4504; email: khadduck@carroll.edu).

All course materials for Carroll College courses are the exclusive property of the individual(s) who created them. It is illegal to share or sell any course materials you may obtain as a student in this class, whether on paper or in digital form. Unauthorized reproduction and distribution of Carroll College course materials may be grounds for disciplinary and/or legal action.