###### **Introduction to Literature: The Literature of Baseball**

###### **ENGL 1350**

#### **Spring 2014**

#### **TTH 12:15-1:30 Hughes Residential College**

## **Brian James**

**Office: Hughes Hours: T/TH 9-10:45**

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“Baseball, it is said, is only a game. True. And the Grand Canyon is only a hole in Arizona.” George F. Will

“Baseball is like church. Many attend, few understand.” Leo Durocher

“That's why he was here, to surrender himself to longing, to listen to his host recite the anecdotal texts, all the passed-down stories of bonehead plays and swirling brawls, the pitching duels that carried into twilight, stories that Marvin had been collecting for half a century--the deep eros of memory that separates baseball from other sports.” Don DeLillo

**Course Description:**

In this class, we will study great works of literature that examine the human condition and how we interact with the world around us. This course will discuss poems, plays, stories, and essays by America’s greatest writers on the topic of baseball. No sport has permeated the American consciousness like the game of baseball. Our readings will focus not merely on the history and lore of the game, but will explore ideas of nationalism, ethics, and the power of sports and entertainment to shape our sense of individual and collective identity. If you have little or no knowledge of the game of baseball, do not fear! If you like reminiscing about the past, if you like to enjoy life to the fullest, and if you have hopes and dreams for a better future, this class is for you!

**Course Objectives:**

To read carefully in order to understand the different levels of meaning in a text.

To be able to articulate your ideas with clarity through both writing and class discussion.

To develop an appreciation for literature and to understand why it is important to study.

To explore what relevance these works have in our lives today.

To gain a greater understanding of the greatest game ever created.

**Course Texts:**

*Baseball: A Literary Anthology,* Nicholas Dawidoff ed., Library of America

*Fences*, August Wilson, Plume

*The* *Natural*, Bernard Malumud, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux

“Shoeless Joe Comes to Iowa” - W.P. Kinsella (handout)

**Course Requirements:**

Class point breakdown: **Quizzes 20%**

**Journal 15%**

**Exams 50%**

**Essay 15%**

**Total: 100%**

**Quizzes**: Throughout the semester we will have a variety of quizzes and in-class writing assignments. Some of the quizzes will be unannounced quizzes, which will be given at the beginning of the class period. There will be some take-home quizzes as well, for which you may use your book. At the end of the semester, I will drop your lowest score. Therefore, regardless of the reason, I do not allow quizzes to be made up.

**Journals:** You will keep a journal that will be turned in periodically throughout the semester. I will give you a prompt to write about that is either a personal reflection or a response to something that we read in class. There will be approximately ten journal entries. These should be typed.

**Exams**: There will be two exams, a midterm and a final. The exams will consist of an ID section and an essay/short answer section. Any student who misses an exam will not be allowed to make it up except under extraordinary circumstances, and unless arrangements have been made in advance.

**Lit Essay**: You will write one essay that is about four pages in length. You may choose which stories you write about. NO research will be allowed on this essay; it will be entirely your personal reflections. Ten points will be deducted for each class period the essay is late. I will give you more information about the essay several weeks in advance. Essay should be formatted according to MLA guidelines. .

**Other Components of the Course**: We will watch one or two films during class time and two to three additional films outside of class time. You will be required to attend at least one film viewing outside of class time. I will give you a schedule with all of the details in advance of each film screening.

**Field Trip**: There will be a field trip to North Little Rock on April 11 or 12 to see a Travelers minor league baseball game (AA). This trip will be optional. It will also be awesome.

\*I do not discuss grades via email.

**What do I expect of you?**

READ!! Seriously! If you don’t do all of the required reading, you will not only be unable to participate in class discussions, but you will miss out on a wealth of wisdom and insight. (And your grades will be less than satisfactory.)

Treat your classmates and your teacher with respect. Much of this course is structured around sharing personal ideas and opinions, so be respectful of those that you may disagree with.

Participation. Discussing these texts together as a class is a crucial component of the course. Let your voice be heard! I believe that each one of you has important contributions to make in this class. Ask questions and make observations. I **strongly** encourage you to feel free to **disagree** with each other and with me (in a constructive way, of course). It’s a good idea to use textual support as the basis for your argument, and to be respectful of other peoples’ ideas that may be different from your own. Bullying and scoffing will not be tolerated.

Come to class. According to the UCA Handbook, “students are expected to attend all class meetings,” therefore regular attendance is essential. *Attendance* in this class is defined as being present, engaged, and alert the entire **75 minutes of class**. If you are late, it is *your* job to make sure that I change your absence to a tardy. Three tardy days equals one absence. If you miss more than **four** classes, you may be dropped from the course with a “WF”. If you arrive more than ten minutes late, you will be counted absent. In addition, you will be counted absent if you sleep in class or cause disruptions in class. Seriously disruptive behavior (including, but not limited to, disrespect for another classmate, the instructor, or a substitute instructor) may result in expulsion from the course.

Please silence any gadgets that may potentially make noise and disrupt class. Cell phones going off in class really annoy me, and so does texting in class. Laptops will not be permitted unless requested with a letter from the Office of Disability Services.

**Communicating with me**

Please do not hesitate to come see me if you have questions or concerns about the class. I know some of these texts can be tough, and I am here to help you.

**University Policies**

The university’s two academic bulletins – the University of Central Arkansas *Undergraduate Bulletin* and *Graduate Bulletin* – are the official publications for all academic programs and policies. Students are urged to study these bulletins. In addition, students should familiarize themselves with the various policies in the *Student Handbook*, some of which are outlined below. The Handbook may be accessed online at <http://www.uca.edu/student/dean/documents/Student_Handbook_2010-2011_FINAL.pdf>

**Academic Misconduct/Plagiarism**. (*Student Handbook* 36-41) According to the Handbook, “The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of this university policy” (37).

**Sexual Harassment**. (*Student Handbook* 102-105) Sexual harassment by any faculty member, staff member, or student is a violation of both law and university policy and will not be tolerated at the University of Central Arkansas. Sexual harassment of employees is prohibited under Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and sexual harassment of students may constitute discrimination under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

**Americans with Disabilities Act**. The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

**Building Emergency Plan** An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Evaluations** Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

##### Tentative Schedule

T 1/14: Introduction to the course

Th 1/16: “Casey at the Bat” (p.13-15), “Take Me Out to the Ballgame” (p.18-19), “Analysis of Baseball” (p. 396), “Rain Delay: Toledo Mud Hens, July 8, 1994” (p. 705-706), *An American Childhood* (p. 586)

T 1/21- “Inside the Inside” (152-164), “Perfect Day-A Day of Prowess” (260-263)

Th 1/23- “America’s National Game” (46-52), “My Grandmother Goes to Comiskey Park” (264-268), “God’s Country and Mine” (256-260)

T 1/28- “Hub Fans Bid Kid Adieu” (301-318)

Th 1/30- “No Cheering in the Pressbox: Richards Vidmer” (114-119), “Coming to the Plate, One Family’s Ethos” (643-650)

T 2/4- “Shoeless Joe Comes to Iowa” (handout)

Th 2/6- “Rules for Staying Young” (318), “Pitcher” & “The Base Stealer” (299-300), “The crowd at the ball game” (119-120), “Hits and Runs” (102), “Polo Grounds” (193-194)

T 2/11- “A Minors Affair” (650-653), “Always the Young Strangers” (102-107), “Of Time and the River” (144-151)

Th 2/13- *Sugar* film

T 2/18- *Sugar* film

Th 2/20- *Fences*

T 2/25- *Fences*

Th 2/27- *Fences*

T 3/4- **Midterm Exam**

Th 3/6- *Pure Baseball* (707-712), “Yankee Ends Real Corker of a Mystery” (712-715)

T 3/11- “Shine Ball” (219-226)

Th 3/13- *Underworld* (656-705)

T 3/18- *Underworld* (656-705)

Th 3/20- TBA

T 3/25- Spring Break

Th 3/27- Spring Break

T 4/1- “Glory” (654-655), *Autobiography of Leroi Jones* (538-542), “It Was a Great Day in Jersey” (195-200)

Th 4/3- *Baseball When the Grass Was Real: James “Cool Papa” Bell* (129-139)

T 4/8- *The Natural,* **Essay Due**

Th 4/10- *The Natural*

T 4/15- *The Natural*

Th 4/17- *The Natural* film

T 4/22- *The Natural* film

Th 4/24- “The Green Fields of the Mind” (490-494)

T 4/29- **Final Exam 11-1**

**Schedule of Film Screenings (7pm in Hughes): You must attend at least one of these**

T 1/28- *The Sandlot*

T 2/11- *Field of Dreams*

T 2/25- *A League of Their Own*

T 3/18- *Moneyball*

T 4/15- *42*