Readings in American Literature—English 6321  
Spring 2015

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Office Hours MWF: 11:00-12:00; 2:00-3:00  
TTh: 11:00-1:00; and by appointment

Texts:  
John Updike, *Rabbit, Run; Rabbit Is Rich.*  
Alice Munro, selected stories from *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage; Runaway.*  
Philip Roth, *Goodbye, Columbus; The Plot Against America; Nemesis.*

Course Objectives:  
- To read two novels by John Updike; ten short stories by Alice Munro; and three novels by Philip Roth.  
- To gain detailed appreciation and understanding of the language, stylistics, and themes of three of the greatest North American writers of the twentieth and twenty-first century.  
- To explore the audacity, genre-expanding qualities, and transgressive nature of each writer: Updike revolutionized the possibilities for naturalism in the American novel at the end of the 1950’s; Munro expanded and enlarged previously limited conceptions of the short story and the short story cycle; and Roth broke taboos, defied conventions of Jewish American literature, and debunked mythologies of assimilation in the reading of American immigrant experience.

Course Requirements:  
Homework and in-class recitation from this homework at the end of each novel or group of short stories. The homework will be graded after the final class discussion of each work, or group of works. A mid-semester exam will be given after our reading of *Rabbit, Run, Rabbit Is Rich,* and the first five of the Munro stories. Once into the course, each of us will be assigned the Updike novels, the Roth novels, the first five of the Munro stories, or the second five Munro stories. Then as we finish each unit of the class (and each writer that comprises these units) each student will teach a thirty-minute portion of the class on their writer about five topics to write about in Updike, Munro, or Roth. Pivotal to your teaching of the class that evening will be your reading of three scholarly articles on your writer and the works we have been reading. A week prior to your teaching the class you will send each of us the three articles about the novels and stories that we will discuss that evening. A final exam in which each of you will contribute SOME of the questions about the final five Munro stories and two of the Roth novels will be given during the university appointed period for a Wednesday evening class.
PLEASE READ AND ADHERE RESPONSIBLY TO THE FOLLOWING UNIVERSITY RULES AND REGULATIONS:

• The following Academic Integrity statement:

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.

• The following Americans with Disabilities Act statement:

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 Support Services, 450-3613.

• The following Building Emergency Plan statement (to be discussed in class/lab during the first week of the semester):

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.

• The following Title IX disclosure:

If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: https://uca.edu/titleix. *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.

• Direct students to familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the following:
  - Sexual Harassment Policy
  - Academic Policies
KEYS TO SUCCESS IN THIS COURSE: ALTHOUGH THIS IS A GRADUATE COURSE, I ASSUME THAT YOU HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF UPDIKE, MUNRO, OR ROTH. BUT WHAT I DO REQUIRE IS THAT YOU HAVE CONSISTENTLY EXCELLENT ATTENDANCE. THERE ARE FIVE OF US STRONG IN HERE. THAT MEANS, OF COURSE, THAT YOUR ABSENCE WILL BE VERY MUCH NOTED BY ALL OF US AND FROWNED UPON BY YOURS TRULY. WE ALL HAVE SOMETHING INTERESTING, VALID, AND PERSUASIVE TO SAY ABOUT EACH OF THESE THREE GREAT WRITERS. SO, IN YOUR WAY, MAKE YOUR PRESENCE KNOWN. I’D LIKE TO CONSIDER MYSELF A REASONABLY AMIABLE, ENTHUSIASTIC INSTRUCTOR WHO TRIES TO MAKE HIS CLASSES ENJOYABLE AND INSIGHTFUL. IF YOU HAVE ANY ACADEMIC PROBLEMS IN THIS CLASS, OR SOMETHING YOU DON’T UNDERSTAND OR I HAVE FAILED TO CLARIFY, PLEASE CONSULT WITH ME, AND I WILL DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO RESOLVE YOUR DIFFICULTIES. BESIDE MY EXTREME AVERSION TO PLAGARISM, THERE ARE NO STRICT RULES OR REGULATIONS OTHER THAN THAT WE RESPONSE AND REACT TO ONE ANOTHER WITH CIVILITY, RESPECT, AND A SENSE OF HUMOR. THAT BEING SAID, I AM PREPARED TO DO A FAIR AMOUNT OF WORK IN TEACHING THIS CLASS. YOU DO THE SAME IN PREPARING FOR IT, AND I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THIS COURSE WILL BE ENJOYABLE, EVEN EXCITING.

Here is a rough outline of how we will venture through these texts or my speculative reading schedule

January 14  Introduction to the course, John Updike and Rabbit, Run

Week 1    Rabbit, Run

Weeks 2 & 3    Rabbit is Rich

Weeks 4 & 5    Introduction to Alice Munro, 5 stories

Week 6    Mid-semester Examination

Week 7    5 more Munro stories

Weeks 8 & 9    Introduction to Philip Roth, Goodbye, Columbus

Weeks 10 & 11    The Plot Against America

Weeks 12 & 13    Nemesis

Week 14    Catchup week and presentation of topics for final paper

Week 15    FINAL PAPER DUE AND FINAL EXAMINATION