

C A P I L A N O UNIVERSITY COURSE OUTLINES		
<b>TERM:</b> FALL 2015	<b>COURSE NO:</b> ENGL 311	
<b>INSTRUCTOR:</b>	<b>COURSE NAME:</b> Studies in American Literature	
<b>OFFICE: LOCAL: E-MAIL:</b>	<b>SECTION NO:</b>	<b>CREDITS:</b> 3
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b> TBA		

### COURSE FORMAT

Three hours of class time, plus an additional hour delivered through on-line or other activities for a 15 week semester, which includes two weeks for final exams.

### COURSE PREREQUISITES

45 credits of 100-level or higher coursework including 3 credits of 200-level ENGL

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course explores aspects of American literature through selected works of literature written by authors from or based in the United States from the past to the present day. Topics covered might include the birth of a nation, race relations, the West and Manifest Destiny, or the post-9/11 novel. See the Department of English website for the focus of the course in a specific term.

This section of English 311 examines the many American writers who have been drawn to Buddhism as a guide to the perplexities of modernity. An alternative to Freudian psychology, to Judeo-Christian morality, and to Western scientific materialism, Buddhism has attracted a wide range of contemporary American writers. Reading a variety of Buddhist-inspired texts, from fiction to memoir and poetry, we shall examine what Buddhism has to offer in response to contemporary issues faced by Americans as global subjects. For example, in Lynda Barry's graphic memoir *One Hundred Demons*, we shall investigate the use of Buddhism as a mode of psychotherapy. In Gary Snyder's *A Place in Space*, we shall explore the relevance of Buddhism to a global twenty-first century threatened by eco-catastrophe, a world far removed from Buddhism's birthplace in the Himalayan foothills 2,500 years ago. In Allen Ginsberg's *Illuminated Poems*, we shall examine the allure of Buddhism as a counter-cultural movement in the West, a movement that has attracted adherents as diverse as Leonard Cohen, David Bowie, and literary theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick. And in Charles Johnson's *Oxherding Tale*, we shall consider an African American Buddhist's take on race relations. Knitting together our literary investigations, we shall interrogate the Buddhist thesis, taken up in some form or another by all these texts, that "with our mind we make the world."

### COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Articulate the basic elements of the major Buddhist conceptual systems and trace their deployment in Buddhist-inspired literary texts.
- Situate a variety of theoretical perspectives in relation to current debates in the discipline.
- Produce theoretically informed interpretations of texts in a variety of genres.

### COURSE WEBSITE

Moodle

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- Barry, Lynda. *One Hundred Demons*. Seattle: Sasquatch, 2005. Print.
- Ginsberg, Allen. *Illuminated Poems*. Philadelphia: Running Press, 2006. Print.
- Iyer, Pico. *The Lady and the Monk*. Toronto: Knopf Canada, 1992.
- Johnson, Charles. *Oxherding Tale*. New York: Scribner, 2005.
- Kerouac, Jack. *The Dharma Bums*. Toronto: Penguin Canada, 1981. Print.
- Ozeki, Ruth. *My Year of Meats*. New York: Penguin USA, 1999. Print.
- Salinger, J.D. *Franny and Zooey*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1991. Print.
- Smith, Huston and Philip Novak. *Buddhism: A Concise Introduction*. Scarborough: HarperCollins Canada, 2004. Print.
- Snyder, Gary. *A Place in Space*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2008.
- Whalen-Bridge, John and Gary Storhoff, eds. *The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature*. New York: SUNY Press, 2010. Print.

## COURSE CONTENT

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| Week 1        | Introduction<br><i>The Dharma Bums</i> , Jack Kerouac<br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 1-37   |
| Week 2        | <i>The Dharma Bums</i><br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 38-62<br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> : "Keeping Vision Alive: The Buddhist Stillpoint in the Work of Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg," pp. 123-138 |
| Week 3        | <i>My Year of Meats</i> , Ruth Ozeki<br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 63-116  |
| Week 4        | <i>My Year of Meats</i><br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 121-142  |
| Week 5        | <i>A Place in Space</i> , Gary Snyder<br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 143-160<br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> : "Illumination Through the Cracks," pp. 139-154   |
| Week 6        | <i>A Place in Space</i><br><i>Buddhism: A Concise Introduction</i> , pp. 161-184<br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> : "Gary Snyder's Selective Way to Cold Mountain," pp. 45-62  |
| Week 7        | <i>The Lady and the Monk</i> , Pico Iyer  |
| Week 8        | <i>The Lady and the Monk</i>  |
| Week 9        | <i>Oxherding Tale</i> , Charles Johnson<br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> : "Opening the Hand of Thought," pp. 207-228  |
| Week 10       | <i>Oxherding Tale</i><br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> , pp. 229-242   |
| Week 11       | <i>Franny and Zooey</i> , J.D. Salinger   |
| Week 12       | <i>Illuminated Poems</i> , Allen Ginsberg<br><i>The Emergence of Buddhist American Literature</i> : "The American Poetic Diamond Vehicle," pp. 155-176  |
| Week 13       | <i>One Hundred Demons</i> , Lynda Barry   |
| Weeks 14 & 15 | – EXAM PERIOD   |

**EVALUATION PROFILE**

<b>10%</b>	Participation
<b>15%</b>	Group presentation
<b>25%</b>	Literary analysis (5 pages)
<b>15%</b>	Annotated bibliography
<b>35%</b>	Research paper (15 pages)

**100% Total**

**GRADE PROFILE**

A+ = 90 - 100%	B+ = 77 - 79%	C+ = 67 - 69%	D = 50 - 59%
A = 85 - 89	B = 73 - 76	C = 63 - 66	F = 0 - 49
A- = 80 - 84	B- = 70 - 72	C- = 60 - 62	

**OPERATIONAL DETAILS**

*Capilano University has policies on Academic Appeals (including appeal of final grade), Student Conduct, Cheating and Plagiarism, Academic Probation and other educational issues. Copies of these and other policies are published each term as part of the Registration Guide, and they are always available on the University website.*

<u>Attendance:</u>	Successful class participation presupposes <u>regular attendance</u> and involves preparing for class discussion by doing all the reading, formulating questions, and developing interpretations of key passages.
<u>Late Assignments:</u>	Except in justifiable circumstances (such as illness), late assignments are penalized one letter grade for each day they are late.
<u>Missed Exams:</u>	Make-up tests are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crisis. Students should be prepared to provide proof of inability to write the test on the scheduled date (e.g. letter from doctor).
<u>English Usage:</u>	It is the responsibility of students to proof-read all written work for any grammatical, spelling and stylistic errors. Marks will be deducted for incorrect grammar and spelling in written assignments.
<u>Incomplete Grades:</u>	Given at the discretion of the instructor. Generally given only in medical emergencies or severe personal crises.
<u>Electronic Devices:</u>	No personal electronic devices (cell phones, pagers, calculators, electronic dictionaries, etc.) may be used during an examination without prior approval from the instructor. During an exam, turn off all cell phones and pagers and remove them from the desk.
<u>Emergencies:</u>	Students are expected to familiarise themselves with the emergency procedures posted on the wall of the classroom.