

Wilfrid Laurier University
Department of English and Film Studies

Twentieth Century American Literature Reading List

Updated: October 24, 2014

FICTION

Stephen Crane: *The Red Badge of Courage*
Theodore Dreiser: *Sister Carrie*
Charlotte Perkins Gilman. "The Yellow Wallpaper."
Edith Wharton: *House of Mirth*
Jack London: *The Call of the Wild*
Willa Cather: *My Ántonia*
Gertrude Stein: *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, Three Lives*
F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*, "Babylon Revisited"
Sherwood Anderson: *Winesburg, Ohio*
Djuna Barnes: *Nightwood*
Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Dashiell Hammett: *The Maltese Falcon*
William Faulkner: *The Sound and the Fury, Light in August*
Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises*
John Steinbeck: *The Grapes of Wrath*
Richard Wright: *Native Son*
Vladimir Nabokov: *Pale Fire*
Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*
Katherine Anne Porter: *The Collected Stories of Katherine Anne Porter*
Jack Kerouac: *On the Road*
Norman Mailer: *The Naked and the Dead*
James Baldwin: *Another Country*
J.D. Salinger: *Catcher in the Rye*
Flannery O'Connor: *The Complete Stories*
Saul Bellow: *Herzog*
Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar*
William Burroughs: *Naked Lunch*
Hubert Selby, Jr.: *Last Exit to Brooklyn*
Thomas Pynchon: *The Crying of Lot 49*
Joseph Heller: *Catch-22*
Donald Barthelme: *60 Stories*
John Barth: *Lost in the Funhouse*
John Updike: *Rabbit, Run*
Eudora Welty: *The Optimist's Daughter*
Don De Lillo: *White Noise*
Michael Herr: *Dispatches*

Philip Roth: *American Pastoral*
Kathy Acker: *Great Expectations*
Cormac McCarthy: *The Road*

POETRY

Robert Frost: "The Pasture," "Mowing," "Mending Wall," "The Death of the Hired Man," "Home Burial," "After Apple-Picking," "The Wood-Pile," "The Road Not Taken," "The Oven Bird," "Birches," "Out, Out—," "Fire and Ice," "Nothing Gold Can Stay," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Departmental," "Desert Places," "Design," "Neither Out Far Nor In Deep," "Provide, Provide," "The Gift Outright," "Directive."

T.S. Eliot: *The Waste Land*, "The Hollow Men," *Four Quartets*.

Ezra Pound: "In a Station of the Metro," *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, *The Cantos* (I, XVII, XLV), "The River Merchant's Wife: A Letter."

Edna St. Vincent Millay: "Recuerdo," "I Think I Should Have Loved You Presently," "[I, being born a woman]," "Apostrophe to Man," "I Too beneath Your Moon, Almighty Sex," "The Snow Storm," "I Forgot for a Moment."

e.e. cummings: "Thy fingers make early flowers of," "in Just—" "O sweet spontaneous," "Buffalo Bill's," "the Cambridge ladies who live in furnished souls," "next to of course god america i," "I sing of Olaf glad and big," "somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond," "anyone lived in a pretty how town," "my father moved through dooms of love," "pity this busy monster, manunkind."

Marianne Moore: "Poetry," "A Grave," "To a Snail," "What Are Years?" "The Paper Nautilus," "The Mind Is An Enchanting Thing," "In Distrust of Merits."

Wallace Stevens: "The Snow Man," "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman," "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock," "Sunday Morning," "Anecdote of the Jar," "Peter Quince at the Clavier," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "The Death of a Soldier," "The Idea of Order at Key West," "A Postcard from the Volcano," "Study of Two Pears," "Of Modern Poetry," "Asides on the Oboe," "The Plain Sense of Things," *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*.

Langston Hughes: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "Mother to Son," "I, Too," "The Weary Blues," "Mulatto," "Song for a Dark Girl," "Genius Child," "Visitors to the Black Belt," "Note on Commercial Theatre," "Vagabonds," "Words Like Freedom," "Madam and Her Madam," "Silhouette," "Theme for English B," *Ask Your Mama: 12 Moods for Jazz*.

William Carlos Williams: *Paterson*, "The Red Wheelbarrow," "The Dance," "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus."

Robert Lowell: "For the Union Dead," "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket," *Life Studies*.

Allen Ginsberg: *Howl*, "A Supermarket in California," "Sunflower Sutra," "Aunt Rose," "On Burroughs' Work," "Ego Confession."

Frank O'Hara: "To the Harbormaster," "Why I Am Not a Painter," "A Step Away From Them," "The Day Lady Died," "A True Account of Talking to the Sun at Fire Island."

Gwendolyn Brooks: *A Street In Bronzeville*

Elizabeth Bishop: "The Fish," "Over 2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance," "The Bight," "At the Fishhouses," "Questions of Travel," "The Armadillo," "Sestina," "In the Waiting Room," "The Moose," "One Art."

Adrienne Rich: "Diving Into The Wreck," "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law," "I Am in Danger—Sir—," "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," "Power," "Transcendental Etude," "Shattered Head," "Five O'Clock, January 2003," "Wait."

John Berryman: *77 Dream Songs*

Sylvia Plath: *Collected Poems, Ariel*

John Ashbery: *Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror, The Tennis Court Oath*

Charles Olson: "I, Maximus of Gloucester, to You," "Maximus, to Himself," "[When Do Poppies Bloom]," "Celestial Evening, October 1967."

Imamu Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones): "An Agony. As Now." "Legacy," "Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note," "Black Bourgeoisie," "A Poem for Willie Best," "Will They Cry When You're Gone, You Bet."

Denise Levertov: "Hypocrite Women," "The Ache of Marriage," "Our Bodies," "To the Snake," "The Jacob's Ladder," "In Mind," "September 1961," "What Were They Like?" "Caedmon."

Audre Lorde: "Father Son And Holy Ghost," "Coal," "October," "Sisters in Arms," "The Woman Thing," "Black Mother Woman," "Outlines," "Call."

Rita Dove: "Geometry," *Adolescence I, II, III*, "Banneker," "Parsley," *Thomas and Beulah*, "Poem In Which I Refuse Contemplation," "Missing," "Rosa," "Fox Trot Fridays."

Li-Young Lee: "The Gift," "Persimmons," "Eating Alone," "Eating Together," "Mnemonic,"
"This Room and Everything In It."

DRAMA

Eugene O'Neill: *Long Day's Journey into Night*, *The Hairy Ape*

Lillian Hellman: *The Children's Hour*

Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Arthur Miller: *The Death of a Salesman*

Lorraine Hansberry: *A Raisin in the Sun*

Thornton Wilder: *The Skin of Our Teeth*

Amiri Baraka: *The Dutchman*

Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*

Sam Shepard: *True West*, *Buried Child*

David Mamet: *American Buffalo*

David Henry Hwang: *M. Butterfly*

John Guare: *Six Degrees of Separation*

MINORITY LITERATURES

African American

Sojourner Truth: "Ar'n't I a Woman?"

Harriet E. Wilson: *Our Nig*

James Weldon Johnson: *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

Jessie Redmon Fauset: *Plum Bun*

Nella Larsen: *Quicksand*

Jean Toomer: *Cane*

Malcolm X: *The Autobiography of Malcom X*

Paule Marshall: *Brown Girls, Brownstones*

Maya Angelou: *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo*

Jamaica Kincaid: *Lucy*

Native American

Oral Material: "The Iroquois Creation Story" (David Cusick version), "Pima Stories of the Beginning of the World" (Thin Leather and J.W. Lloyd version), Native American Trickster Tales: Winnebago: *The Winnebago Trickster Cycle*, Sioux: "Ikto Conquers Iya, the Eater" (Ella C. Deloria transcription), Koasati: "The Bungling Host" (Bel Abbey and Selin Williams), Clatsop Chinook: "Coyote—His Myth" (Franz Boas and

William Bright, trans.), Navajo: "Coyote, Skunk, and the Prairie Dogs (Barre Toelken, trans.)

Sherman Alexie: *Indian Killer*

Louise Erdrich: *Tracks*

N. Scott Momaday: *House Made of Dawn*

Leslie Marmon Silko: *Ceremony*

Gerald Vizenor: *Interior Landscapes*

Chicano American

Rudolfo A. Anaya: *Bless Me, Ultima*

Tomas Rivera: *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*

Sandra Cisneros: *The House on Mango Street*

Cherrie Moraga: *Loving in the War Years*

SECONDARY SOURCES: THEORY AND BACKGROUND

Richard Chase: *The American Novel and its Tradition*

Leo Marx: *The Machine in the Garden*

Roy Harvey Pearce: *The Continuity of American Literature*

Richard Slotkin: *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth-Century America*

Helen Vendler: *A Part of Nature, a Part of Us*

Houston A. Baker: *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*

Judith Fetterley: *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction*

Paul Gilroy: *The Black Atlantic*

Sacvan Bercovitch & Myra Jehlen, eds.: *Ideology and Classic American Literature*.

Russel Riesing: *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature*

Henry Louis Gates: *The Signifying Monkey*

Werner Sollors: *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*

Arnold Krupats: *The Voice in the Margin: Native American Literature and the Canon*