

## APPALACHIAN FICTION

ENGL 252  
Spring 2019  
TR 2:30-3:45  
CLARK 317  
Email: Ann.Pancake@mail.wvu.edu

Dr. Ann Pancake  
Office: 138 Colson Hall  
Office Hours: T 4-5 and by appointment

Welcome to English 252, a course that introduces you to the extraordinary literary tradition of this place where we all live. This semester we'll be reading a lot of fiction, along with a good bit of poetry and nonfiction, written by people who are native to Appalachia. We'll explore what the literature of West Virginia and other Appalachian states has to say about pressing topics like

- Stereotypes: Where they originate, the cultural work they do, and how writers resist and rewrite them
- Labor history (right up to last year's WV teachers' strike)
- What it's like to be Appalachian and also a person of color
- The intersection between Appalachia and LGBTQ issues
- Class identities
- Gender identities
- Appalachians' complicated relationship with place and the environment
- The opioid epidemic

Most of all, I want this course to challenge you (and me) to think more deeply and critically about our own relationships with this very complex place and culture that many of us call home. This is the part of the course that most excites me, and I hope it will you, too.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

When you successfully complete the course, you should have

- An understanding of and appreciation for the literature, history, and culture of Appalachia
- Improved close reading skills, writing skills, and speaking skills.
- Sharper literary analysis skills. These include an understanding of the conventions of literary analysis; the ability to analyze literary texts in discussion and in writing; and the ability to draw connections between literary texts themselves and between literary texts and your own experiences.

- A different perspective on the place where you now live and a place that has shaped many of you all your lives.

## COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

This is a literature class! For the class to function and for your own success, you must read all assigned material before class and then bring physical copies of that material to class.

The five books listed below are at the WVU Bookstore.

### Required:

Long and Van Gundy, eds. *Eyes Glowing at the Edge of the Woods* (Vandalia (WVU) Press, 2017)

Denise Giardina, *Storming Heaven* (Random House, 1988)

Silas House, *Southernmost* (Algonquin, 2018)

Henry Louis Gates, *Colored People* (Knopf, 1995)

Robert Gipe, *Trampoline* (Ohio University Press, 2015)

In addition to these five books, you will be reading material on handouts and material that I send you via email.

**You must bring to class the handouts assigned for that day and you must print out and bring to class a paper copy of any emailed assignment for the day.** Not doing so will affect your participation grade.

Phones and laptops are not allowed in class except with advance permission. **You will not be able to read emailed assignments in class on phones or laptops.**

## REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

20% Participation and Attendance

20% Reading Checks (sometimes quizzes, sometimes in-class writes)

40% Four formal short papers (Each worth 10% of course grade)

20% Course Project (due last day of class)

### 1. Attendance and Participation (20% of final grade).

English 252 is a **discussion-based** class and will include in addition small-group work, in-class writing, and in-class reading checks. Consequently, your on-time attendance and your active participation is necessary for your personal success and for the success of the class community.

**More than four unexcused absences will result in a zero for attendance and participation.** Small-group work, in-class writing, and reading checks cannot be made up except in rare and

special circumstances that will require a conversation with me and written proof of illness, family emergency, etc.

**If you miss more than 8 classes, for any reason, you will fail this course.**

**Lateness to class will not be tolerated.** Three tardies will count as one absence.

**Your participation grade will be based on the following:**

Your asking and answering questions in class, contributing valuable insights to discussion, and listening respectfully and attentively to what others say in class.

Your active participation (speaking, listening, note-taking, serving as spokesperson for the group) in small-group work.

Your completion of all assigned reading before coming to class. We can't function as a class unless everyone has read the material. (See "Reading Checks" below.)

Your bringing to class physical copies of all reading and pens and paper. Laptops, phones, and any other electronics must be turned off and put away.

As part of your participation grade, **you'll also write two informal papers which will be responses to out-of-class experiences.** One will respond to a Silas House event. The other will be a reflection on your browsing in the Appalachian Collection in the library. I'll grade these as I do reading checks, with a plus, check, or minus.

**Silas House visit:** Author Silas House will visit WVU on February 21-22. He will give a reading the evening of February 21 at 7 p.m. in the Milano Reading Room in Wise Library. **You are required to attend this reading unless you have a class conflict.** If you have a class conflict, you can instead attend the screening of the film *hillbilly* on February 22 at 7 p.m. in the Gluck Theater in the Mountainlair. Silas will take part in a discussion after this film. Please start planning now so you can attend at least one of those two events.

Here are criteria for how I will grade participation:

- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>■ <b>A:</b> You are prepared for every class period and contribute to class discussion every (or almost every) day; this preparation includes bringing the course materials on a daily basis. You have insightful and relevant contributions and clear engagement with the day's readings/activities. You respond to your peers' comments and questions, ask questions of your own, and help facilitate dialogue.</p> |
| <p>■ <b>B:</b> You are prepared for every class period and contribute to most class discussions; you usually have the course materials. Comments are relevant and insightful and demonstrate a careful reading of the texts assigned. You respond to other's comments on a regular basis and take on an active role in class activities.</p>                                                                             |
| <p>■ <b>C:</b> You are typically prepared for class and contribute to class discussion approximately half of the time; you bring the course materials about half of the time. Sometimes your contributions are off-topic or prevent dialogue from moving forward. During group work, you take on a quiet role.</p>                                                                                                       |
| <p>■ <b>D:</b> You rarely comment or add insight to class discussion; you rarely bring the course materials. You do not display your preparedness for class, which is reflected in your lack of contributions and/or</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

low quiz scores. You may show little interest in the material or may be off-task during class (reading non-relevant material, sending texts, etc.).

- **F:** You arrive late to class, are unprepared for class discussion or activities, distract others, or disrupt productive work; you often fail to follow the classroom policies and procedures and/or have missed five or more classes.

See more about participation at the end of this syllabus under “Classroom Community”

1. **Reading Checks** (20% of grade) We will have regular unannounced reading checks to make sure you’re keeping up on the reading and to reward people who are doing so. Some of these checks will be in the form of short-answer quizzes and some will be in the form of in-class writing. These reading checks cannot be made up.
2. **Four Formal Short Papers** (each paper is worth 10% of your course grade for a total of 40%). Throughout the semester, you will write formal short papers—350-500 words—responding to prompts that I will give you. The prompts will be related to our readings and discussion. The last formal paper will be due at the time of our final exam, Friday, May 3, 8 to 10 a.m. (You are welcome (and encouraged) to email it to me early.)
3. **Course Project** (20% of course grade). A course project will be due the last day of class, April 25. You will have a lot of freedom determining what this project will be. You can do a traditional literary analysis of a text or texts we’ve read for the course if you want to. You can also do a creative project; a historical research project; an interview project; or something entirely different if you can explain to me what you want to do and its value and relevance to our class. A proposal for your project will be due on March 26<sup>th</sup>. The length of the project will depend on the project itself. If you do a traditional literary analysis, the paper should be at least 1200 words (at least 4-5 pages).

See handout “Criteria for Evaluation of Formal Papers” for information on how I’ll grade your formal papers and the project (if the paper/project is a traditional academic paper).

Grading Scale:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F 0-59

## CLASS POLICIES

Punctual attendance is required.

Late work is not acceptable. Any assignment handed in after the class period in which it is due will lose a letter grade for each day it is late, including the day it was due. No assignment will be accepted more than four days after the due date. If you have a personal emergency, speak to me as soon as possible about your situation. Plan ahead for computer mishaps: always keep a back-up file of your work, and give yourself plenty of time to print. Reading checks can't be made up.

Assignments will not be accepted by email (except for the final formal paper and under special circumstances when you have made an advance arrangement with me).

Laptops and cell phones cannot be used in class except under special circumstances and with advance permission from me. All electronic devices must be put away during class. If I see you using a cell phone, I'll ask you to leave the classroom to complete your business and you'll receive an unexcused absence.

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You plagiarize if you submit work that contains any material or ideas that are not fully your own. If you quote or paraphrase the work, published or unpublished, of another person without acknowledging that other person, then you have plagiarized. If you quote, paraphrase, or "borrow" ideas or language from any publication, student, professor, the Internet, etc., **you must cite your source** or you will be plagiarizing. This is required even when you put the idea "into your own words."

Please talk with me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. I can also explain how you cite a source.

I've been a writer almost all my life. I know how hard it is to produce original writing and I know how serious it is when someone steals another's writing. I have zero tolerance for plagiarism. **A proven case of plagiarism will result in an F for this course.**

---

The following policies come directly from the University:

## Academic Integrity Statement

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, instructors will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of their courses. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing

sanctions, please see the West Virginia University [Academic Standards Policy](http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification) (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification>). Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor before the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

## Inclusivity Statement

The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>)

More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well. [adopted 2-11-2013]

West Virginia University is committed to **social justice**. WVU does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, disability, age, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. I welcome any suggestions about how I might promote a positive, open, and inclusive environment in this class.

Adverse Weather Commitment Statement. In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact me as soon as possible. Similarly, if I am unable to reach our class location, I will notify you of any cancellation or change by 10:30 a.m., four hours before class starts, by email to prevent you from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, I will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.

---

## Classroom Community

This course's content will require us to discuss issues that may cause moments of discomfort and moments of disagreement. Some ideas may challenge your own beliefs or values. We'll be exploring issues of politics, race, social and environmental justice, and sex and gender identity. I will work hard to create a climate of civility and respect, and I ask you to do so as well.

Our class will be a community, not a collection of separate individuals receiving information from a professor. I want us to get to know each other, talk with each other, and listen to each other. I expect you to be thoughtful and respectful during class discussion. Be conscious of your tone and speak to others the way you like to be spoken to. You do not have to agree with each other—but disagree in the spirit of intellectual exchange and be sensitive about other people’s ideas and feelings. Please talk with me outside of class if you are having problems with controversial course material or if you are uncomfortable with the way class discussion is going.

I hesitate to even bring this up because it shouldn’t be necessary for me to state it, but doing things like talking with people around you when others are talking, reading the newspaper or materials from other classes, sleeping in class, and packing up early to leave distract everyone in class and undermine classroom community. Such activities will also have an impact on your participation grade.

### **SCHEDULE, Spring 2019**

The schedule is subject to changes with advance notice from me.

**You must have read all material before the class for which it is assigned, and you must bring to class the appropriate book and a physical copy of handouts and emailed assignments.**

“Eyes” after a title means the piece is from the *Eyes Glowing* anthology. If your WVU email address is not one you check often, let me know so I’ll be sending emailed readings to the right place.

### **Week One Exploitation or Exploration? Surface or Depth? Stereotypes and Realities**

**T Jan. 8** Introduction to class and each other

**R Jan. 10** What is Appalachia? Who is Appalachian?

Reading: Breece Pancake, “First Day of Winter” (email) (download, print, read, bring to class)

**Due:** Start-of-Semester Survey. (Please see the Survey Questions at the very bottom of this syllabus.)

### **Week Two**

**T Jan. 15** Popular Narratives, Fiction and Facts.

The Local Color Movement. The JT Leroy Hoax. The JD Vance phenomenon.

Reading: Irene McKinney, “To My Reader” [Eyes]

Lee Maynard, from *The Pale Light of Sunset* [Eyes];

Joy Castro, “The Dream of the Father” [Eyes]

Ed Davis, “The Boys of Bradleytown” [Eyes]

**R Jan. 17** Reading: Jayne Anne Phillips, from *Lark and Termite* [Eyes]  
 Kevin Stewart, “Her” [Eyes]  
 Marc Harshman, “With No Questions” [Eyes]

### **Week Three History and Labor**

**T Jan. 22** Reading: Jessica Salfia, Introduction to *55 Strong* [email]  
 Sheryl Monks, “Robbing Pillars” [Eyes]

**R Jan. 24** View *Matewan*. **Class meets in Colson 130.**

### **Week Four**

**T Jan. 29** Finish viewing *Matewan*. **Class meets in Colson 130.**

**R Jan 31** Reading: Giardina, *Storming Heaven*. Parts 1 and 2. (First nine chapters)

### **Week Five**

**T Feb. 5** Reading: *Storming Heaven*. Parts 3 and 4. (Chapter 10 to the end)

**R Feb. 7** Finish discussing *Storming Heaven*.  
**Due: Formal paper 1.**

### **Week 6: Place and Environment, Take One**

**T Feb. 12** View excerpts from **Black Diamonds**. Discuss stripmining and mountaintop removal.

Reading: Ida Stewart, “Point Blank” [Eyes]  
 William Woolfit, “Absentee” [Eyes]  
 Marc Harshman, “Last Dog Dead” [handout]

**R Feb. 14** Reading: poems from Victor Depta, *Azrael on the Mountain* [email]



**Week 7: LGBTQ life in Appalachia**

**T Feb. 19** Class visit by Jenny Johnson  
Reading: Jenny Johnson poems (Handout)

**R Feb. 21** Reading: Silas House, *Southernmost*, Parts One and Two (pp. 3 through 156)  
**Tonight, Attend Silas House Reading, 7 p.m., Milano Reading Room, Wise Library**

**Week 8:**

**T Feb. 26** Reading: *Southernmost*, pp. 159-254  
**Due:** Informal paper, Response to Silas House reading or film discussion

**R Feb. 28** Reading: Finish *Southernmost*, 255 to the end.

**Week 9 The WV and Regional Collection and the Appalachian Books Collection**

**T March 5** Library visit (Half of class will tour the WV and Regional Collection on Floor 6 and half the class will spend time with the Appalachian Books Collection in the Milano Reading Room)  
**Due:** Formal Paper 2

**R March 7** Library visit (Half of class will tour the WV and Regional Collection on Floor 6 and half the class will spend time with the Appalachian Books Collection in the Milano Reading Room)

**Spring Break Week**

March 12 and 14

**Week 10: The Non-European Appalachian Experience**

**T March 19** Reading: Excerpts from Henry Louis Gates, *Colored People*. Specific chapters TBA

**Due:** Response Paper to visiting the Appalachian Books Collection

**R March 21** Reading: Excerpts from *Colored People*. Specific chapters TBA

### **Week 11**

**T March 26** Reading: Rahul Mehta, “Quarantine” [Eyes]

Norman Jordan, “Appalachian Ghost” [Eyes]

Marilous Awiatka [Email]

Crystal Good poems [handout]

**Due**: Course Project proposal

### **Addiction**

**R March 28** View *Heroin(e)*

Reading: Crystal Good poems [handout]

William Brewer poems [handout]

Scott McClanhan, “Picking Blackberries” [Eyes]

### **Week 12**

**T April 2** Reading: Pancake, “Me and My Daddy Listen to Bob Marley” [Eyes]

More reading TBD

**R April 4** Class Cancelled. I have to be out of town.

### **Week 13: Place and the Environment: Take Two**

**T April 9** Reading: Julia Kasdorf, poems from *Shale Play* [email]

Anita Skeen, “In the Chemical Valley” [Eyes]

Crystal Good, “Valley Girl” “Boom Boom” [handout]

**Due**: Formal Paper 3

### **Pulling It All Together**

**R April 11** Reading: Begin Robert Gipe, *Trampoline*, Act I, pp. 1-49

### **Week 14:**

**T April 16** Reading: *Trampoline* Act II and Act III, pp. 53-187

**R April 18** Reading: *Trampoline* Act IV, pp. 191-245

**Week 15:**

**T April 23** Reading: Finish *Trampoline*, Act V

**R April 25** Last Words and Last Thoughts

**Due**: Course Project

**Final Exam Slot: Friday, May 3, 8-10 a.m.**

**Formal Paper 4 is due by 10 a.m. on May 3 at the latest. You are welcome (and encouraged) to hand in the paper early by email.**

---

**Start-of-Semester Survey, English 252, Appalachian Fiction Due Thurs. 1/10/19**

Please answer the questions below as completely and honestly as possible **on a separate sheet of paper**. I'd appreciate it if you really take your time because your answers will help me teach the class. Handwritten responses are fine if your writing is legible.

1. Where are you from?
2. What is your major? Your year in school?
3. What do you like to do with your free time? What activities or issues are you especially interested in?
4. Have you taken any college-level literature courses before?
5. Have you taken any Appalachian Studies courses before?
6. Why did you decide to take this class?
7. What are you looking forward to in this class?
8. What, if anything, are you worried about?