

Overview of quarter: Culture through Literature

week	In class	homework
1	Sharing US memories, discuss plan and requirements Sharing observation reports Go through NY package and pictures (beamer)	Finish your novel, do your research about the time-period and place. Complete your reading diary (just write your reflections on the blank back of the text samples in the NY package.)
2	Continue ... finish N.Y. package + text samples? Lee Stringer, <i>Grand Central Winter</i> , groupwork: Reading and sharing information	Write your literature essay by session 3
3	Working with the literature essays: Students post their thesis statements, then form groups of similar themes: (e.g. by times, by places, by main atmosphere (loneliness, hectic life, crime, the god of money...)) Plan presentations	Prepare presentations
4	Presentations and discussion of New York novels and the picture they paint of society.	Write your short story by next week (S5)
5	Finish presentations Deadline for short stories: peer conferencing	Revise your short story Finish your poetry page by session 6. Nice layout!
6	Poetry: read sample poems and share students' haikus. Get feedback... then revise at home Collect short stories 2 nd drafts.	
7	Test: write a short story from an impulse (pictures, poems...)	Revise your short story (3 rd draft) if necessary.
8	Woody Allen, Manhattan: What does he say about N.Y. and its people? Collect quotes and impressions.	Revise your poems, reprint and hand in next week.
9	Round-up and tying up loose ends	

Year 8: Culture through Literature

Literature reflects various aspects of the life and culture of a society. Let's look at people, places, issues and trends through the eyes of writers. What do they have to say about their social environment and culture?

We will use our trip to America as a basis for this topic.

Assignments:

1. Project: *A Literary Mosaic of New York City :In the footsteps of...*

Read one novel that plays in New York. In what places and areas of NYC does the story play?

Keep a **regular reading diary** – include your own experiences in New York wherever suitable.

Analyze the role of the setting in the story. Authors use settings very consciously to convey a certain atmosphere. Every setting carries lots of connotations, be aware of these. Find the settings on the map. Find out background information about each setting and the time-period. Collect pictures (your own or internet pictures) or draw/paint your own based on the descriptions you find in the novel.

List the different places and prepare an **illustrated story map** following the main character through the city. **Present** the character's wanderings through the city to the class. Make a poster, or use OHTs or powerpoint to illustrate your presentation.

What do(es) the setting(s) say about the society and time? (values, problems, wishes...) Why do certain episodes happen at certain places?

Answer all these questions in a **2 page essay-paper + the story map**(12pt). Find a clear thesis statement that explains what the story says about New York and its society at a certain time. Could the novel play somewhere else? If so, where?

2. Reading Short Stories and Poetry

Read the assigned literature and keep a regular reading diary. Focus mainly on the importance of the settings. What do the settings imply? What are the connotations? Why has the writer chosen this setting? What atmosphere is conveyed? What is the tone? Does the text say anything about the society of the time? What do you know about the time (politics, social problems, historical events)? Be ready to discuss these issues in class. Always bring your reading diary to class. We will also watch a few movies that play in New York.

3. Snapshots of Life in America: Poetry Project and Short stories

a: Observations: This step has to be done during our trip!!!!

Choose a place in New York or Rapid City that you find especially interesting. Take 10 minutes to observe the place in detail and take notes of your observations.

Note the following info:

What is the atmosphere right now?

What contributes to this atmosphere? Jot down bits and pieces, what are people doing, what do you see, hear, smell? What is the temperature and weather? You might also want to take a few pictures. (Please respect people's privacy. Do not behave like a paparazzo!)

Collect bits of information that will help you write a poem (a haiku or a short free verse poem) and a short story about this place.

b: Back home: Write a haiku or a short free verse poem about your experience. Prepare a well designed, illustrated page that will be "published" in our book of *Snapshots of Life in America*. See the two haiku pages for details.

c: Short story: Use one of the characters in your observation in a brief short story. The main purpose of your story is to recreate and convey the atmosphere of the moment. Bring your short story for a peer conference. Then revise it carefully and hand it in in your writing folder. Write a 3rd draft and illustrate your story if possible (use photos you took in New York). We will publish the stories in our *Snapshots of America* book.

List of New York Novels:

Choose one of the following novels. Read it carefully and keep a regular reading diary. Mark all the references to the New York settings for your literature essay and presentation.

Please buy one of the books **before you go to America**. It will be a great experience for you to really see the places you are reading about. If you do not have time to read the book before the trip, start reading on the plane. You will have plenty of time to kill. Bring a pencil to mark interesting passages – otherwise you will have trouble finding them later.

Most of the novels will be available at the English Bookshop. If you order from Amazon – do it now – don't wait till it's too late to get them.

- J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye*
- Paul Auster, *The New York Trilogy*
- Henry Roth, *A Diving Rock on the Hudson*
- Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
- Scott F. Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
- Truman Capote, *Breakfast at Tiffany's*
- Ernesto Quinonez, *Bodega Dreams*
- Bret Easton Ellis, *American Psycho*
- Jay McInerney, *Bright Lights, Big City*
- Jay McInerney, *Brightness Falls*
- Tom Wolfe, *The Bonfire of Vanities*
- John Dos Passos, *Manhattan Transfer*
- Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*
- Henry Roth, *Call it Sleep*
- James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain*
- Sister Souljah, *The Coldest Winter Ever*

Non-fiction:

- Gwen Kinkead, *Chinatown, A Portrait of a Closed Society*

Assessment and Course Requirements

1. Writing Skills:

- test
- short story
- poetry page
- Literature essay

2. Reading and Speaking

- knowledge and understanding of the short texts (stories, essays, poems): Show this in your regular reading diary and active participation in class discussions.
- understanding and background knowledge of your New York novel and the relevance of the settings (knowledge and understanding of the novel, presentation skills)
- presentation skills and effort

3. Language improvement

- **Vocab work:** Choose 5 new phrases in every text. Highlight them in your texts and copy them into your **vocab. book**. Your vocab book can be any format (A5, A4, but no loose sheets). ALWAYS bring it to class and make sure it is up to date. Therefore choose a thin, light-weight format. I will check 3 random vocab. books EVERY lesson. Study the phrases regularly

Phrases (5-7 words long)	Translation	page reference e.g.: Sonny's Blues 57
.....		

- **Text improvement and effort:** Collect all your written work (short story, essay-paper, little texts we'll write in class, other little homework) in a **thin writing folder** (Schnellhefter). Whenever I will collect your work I will collect the whole folder in order to check your text improvement and corrections. Correct each text on two levels:
 - **Language level editing:** correct grammar, spelling and vocab mistakes and write the difficult phrases out so that you'll remember them
 - **Content level revising:** Use the feedback you get from your classmates and teacher and revise your text carefully. Write a new draft where you **mark all changes**. Print your changes boldface, underline them or highlight them manually and write a very short reflection explaining what you have changed and why you think this improves your text.

Warning: I will give each of you 1 free feedback. Every further feedback you want to have depends on your careful correction and revision of the previous assignment. I will invest my time as long as you invest yours!!! Otherwise I'll only read your texts and assess them without giving you detailed feedback.

Test	50
Short Story	10
Poetry project	10
Reading and understanding of novel + essay	10
Presentation and reading diary	10
Text improvement	5
Vocab. improvement	5

Writing Haikus

A haiku is a minimalist form of poetry. The writer has 17 syllables through which to convey an experience.

A haiku is like a written snapshot. It recreates the atmosphere of a moment in 3 lines (5 syllables, 7 syllables, 5 syllables). Modern English haikus do not always follow this rule very strictly.

The content of a haiku is typically, but not always, focused on a small but important moment in a person's everyday life. Part of writing a haiku is finding the 'awe' that is usually passed by without notice – the act of creating a haiku is the act of focusing our attention more closely than we might otherwise do. It is like a picture in close-up.

Sometimes haikus deal with important realizations (epiphanies) in a person's life. Read the following examples and try to visualize the scenes and take in the atmosphere or understand the important realization.

midday hush
the rasp of a mallard
calling his mate

Ray Rasmussen

on every icicle's tip
a drop
of sunlight

Alexey Andreyev

street musicians resting –
red maple leaf
lands on the keyboard

a supermarket:
in someone's cart – beef, beer,
flowers and a child

Alexey Andreyev

Tompkins Square –
an old man teaches Tai-Chi
to a crowd of pigeons

hand counting ballots.
who is your president now?
no Y2K bug.

Paul Mena

what is that building?
cobble-stoned streets, glass canyons.
I'm tired. my feet hurt.

with a flourish
the waitress leaves behind
rearranged smears

Margaret Hinchcliffe

Dee Evetts

sunrise:
I forget my side
of the argument

second husband
painting the fence
the same green

George Swede
thundering surf
seagull cries on the
bitter winds

Carol Montgomery p.
the smell of the iron
as I come down the stairs
winter evening

Stonecrow

Lee Gurga



What it's about

The Sunflower Project NYC started in the Spring of 2002 as a living memorial planting project to remember the people lost on September 11th, to honor their families, to thank the people everywhere who contributed to the recovery, and to make our world better, one patch at a time.

The idea is for individuals, groups and communities to create their own sunflower memorials everywhere-- to remember and honor life with living, growing symbols of renewal and hope.

☀️ A fork in my bag.
Next to my comb some wet seeds.
Armed and dangerous.

☀️ Armed with black seeds
I glance around furtively
then complete my task

☀️ Dig hole with chopstick
Make sure seed goes into hole
Mission accomplished

☀️ Look at me strangely
Wonder why I'm poking dirt
Doesn't everyone?

☀️ Watering something?
Not me, I just spilled water...
for the seventh time

☀️ Planting sunflowers.
Large Federal Agent says
"Let's see some ID".

☀️ In New York, Cher can
strut nude--no notice. Plant seeds?
People stop. What's that?

☀️ Small dog and small mind
in tow, local Tree Lady
watches me closely.