English 343 Contemporary Fiction

I. The purpose of this course is to read, study, and discuss important works of contemporary fiction published, in the main, since 1950, with an emphasis on living authors. Readings will be set in the context of the great changes that have taken place in Western society, mostly in the United States, since World War II.

II. For appropriate participation, students will read select material, take part in class discussions, lead one class discussion, participate in one panel, take one in-class exam and a final, and write a research paper on a topic approved in advance. For the grade in the course, the first class discussion will be worth 10%, the panel, the in-class exam, and the final will be worth 20%, and the research paper will be worth 30%.

III. All students are expected to view the video THE SOURCE, an 89 minute film about The Beat Generation. Students are also expected to attend a lecture relevant to the class. Date and time will be announced after the term begins.

IV. Attendance policy for English 343 is based on the attendance statement in the 2006-2008 Moravian College Catalog: read, date, sign, and submit the accompanying paper. Attendance includes viewing THE SOURCE and the lecture.

V. All papers and tests are expected to adhere to a minimum quality of standard English.

VI. All students must adhere to the revised policy on academic honesty that appears in the College Student Handbook and the 2006-2008 Moravian College Catalog.

Seven Contemporary Short Novels (1982)


2. W Au 29 A-V History: #10 "Into the Eighties"; Jackson, "The Lottery,"(9) & Singer "The Spinoza of Market Street"(25); Basic Literary Elements.

3. F Au 31 Basic Literary Elements. Introduction(1), Olsen "I
Stand Here Ironing"(36) & Ellison "Battle Royal"(42)

4. W Sp  5 Basic Literary Elements; Taylor "The Old Forest"(103) & Yamamoto "Seventeen Syllables"(246)


15. M Oc  1 Gass “In the Heart of the Heart of the Country”(274) & Carver “What We Talk About, When We Talk About Love”(724)


17. F Oc  5 Apple “The Oranging Of America”(420) & Boyle “Greasy Lake”(557)

18. W Oc 10 Jones “Cold Snap”(817) & Gaitskill “Girl On A Plane”(861)

19. F Oc 12 Williams “Health”(603) & Gardner “Come On Back”(355)

20. M Oc 15 THE BEATS and Their Influence,
21. W Oc 17 Stone “Helping”(789) & Dilillo “Videotape”(813)
22. F Oc 19 Visit from Prof. Naomi Gal.

23. M Oc 22 Exam I.

24. W Oc 24 Mason “A New Wave Format”(521) & Mukherjee “The
Management of Grief" (611)
25. F Oc  26 Erdrich “Saint Marie (1934)” (680) & Alexie “This Is What It Means to Say Phoenix, Arizona” (825)

26. M Oc  29 Chin “The Only Real Day” (690) & Barrett “The Littoral Zone” (855)
28. F Nv  2 "Ballad of the Sad Café."

29. M Nv  5 Research Paper Subject Due – Office Interview
31. F Nv  9 "Seize the Day"

33. W Nv  14 "Goodbye, Columbus."

35. M Nv  19 "Slaughterhouse-Five."
37. W Nv  28 "The Bluest Eye."

39. M Dc  3 "Being There".
40. W Dc  5 SEVEN, Atwood, "Surfacing." 1972; Research Paper Due
41. F Dc  7 "Surfacing."
42. M Dc  10 Course Evaluation Forms.

OUTCOMES FOR ENGLISH 343 CONTEMPORARY FICTION

At the conclusion of English 343 the student should be able to:

1. Provide a basic definition of contemporary fiction and the forces-historical, cultural, social, philosophical, critical-that contributed to its creation;

2. Understand how and why literary artists of exceptional ability emerged during the post-WWII period;

3. Understand how and why the term ‘‘contemporary’’ includes a greater variety of literary artists-men and
women, races, religions, cultures—than previous eras of literary creativity;

4. Understand the basic elements of fiction and how an individual work can be interpreted by examining it in terms of these elements;

5. Have a fundamental knowledge of the variety and breadth of critical and philosophical works that define and analyze contemporary fiction.

6. Demonstrate competence in participating in and working well with others in panel presentations, preparing effective oral and written analyses by careful and exact reading and employing the tools of literary analysis and library research.