

## EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY AMERICAN FICTION

### Syllabus

#### INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century was notable for the number of American authors writing critically acclaimed and popular fiction; and for its range and diversity. The literature of the period includes such significantly different works as *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald's book of elegant, lyrical prose; Anderson's unsettling, disturbing, and surprisingly modern psychological portraits of misfits and the emotionally marginalized; Lewis' and Dreiser's stories of strong, determined women and their lives; London's spare prose about life in the North and the philosophical insights gained from surviving in an unremittingly harsh land and his metaphorical insights about human nature; and Frank Norris's Naturalist realism.

The course will focus on each novel as a unique, separate, and particularly noteworthy work but will suggest the ways in which it shares elements with the other authors of the period.

#### CLASS SCHEDULE

- WEEK 1 – *Introduction*
- WEEK 2 – *The Great Gatsby* (Fitzgerald)
- WEEK 3 – *The Call of the Wild/To Build A Fire* (London)
- WEEK 4 – *Winesburg, Ohio* (Anderson)
- WEEK 5 – *Main Street, Part I* (Lewis)
- WEEK 6 – *Main Street, Part II*
- WEEK 7 – *Dodsworth* (Lewis)
- WEEK 8 – *McTeague* (Norris)
- WEEK 9 – *Sister Carrie, Part I* (Dreiser)
- WEEK 10 – *Sister Carrie, Part II*

#### CLASS FORMAT

The class will be combined lecture and discussion, approximately 50-50 percent. The lecture will be based on literary criticism, with frequent references to relevant critics, and the instructor's own reading and interpretation.

#### READING

It is expected that the books to be discussed will be read before class. Most of the books are of reasonable length but some are longer and may require more time.

## PARTICULARS

Ronald (Ron) Parlato

202.255.5283 (cell)

Blog site (literature, social trends, political philosophy) [www.uncleguidosfacts.com](http://www.uncleguidosfacts.com)

Email [ronaldparlato@yahoo.com](mailto:ronaldparlato@yahoo.com)