

**Course Number:** 09820-FL-400200 (3 credits)

**Course Title:** The Literature of American Empire, Part II (美國文二)

**Instructor:** Aaron Winter (冬安文); [aaron.mclean.winter@gmail.com](mailto:aaron.mclean.winter@gmail.com)

**Meetings:** 人文社會館 C-522; 星期二 15:20-18:10,

**Office:** 人文 B-507; 星期二 12:30-13:30, 星期三 15:00-16:00, or 預約

**Teaching Assistant:** 陳思涵 (Sophia); [airasothis@gmail.com](mailto:airasothis@gmail.com)

**Course Blog:** [empireforliberty.blogspot.com](http://empireforliberty.blogspot.com)

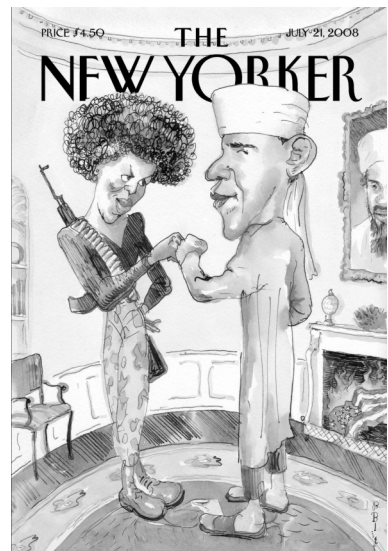
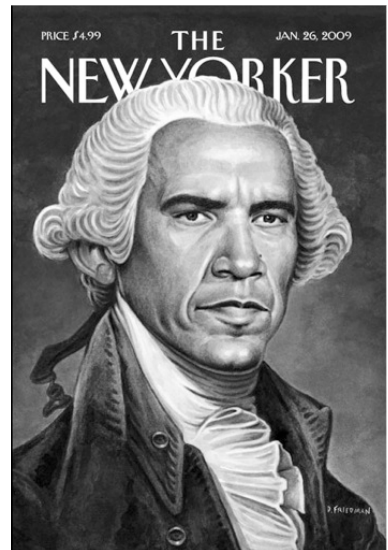
**Textbooks:** - Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*  
- Thomas Pynchon, *The Crying of Lot 49*  
- *Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Shorter 7<sup>th</sup> Ed.)  
- Photocopies provided by instructor

**Course Overview:** We will return to our question of “empire,” but in an expanded sense. My major thesis last semester was that the United States may be unique in some ways, but that we can still find asymmetrical distributions of American power operating both inside and outside the nation’s borders. In other words, there remains a gap between the theory and practice of Jeffersonian egalitarianism that demonstrates the U.S. to be rather more like other nations than it claims to be. American fiction, poetry, film, political rhetoric, and related culture forms sometimes work to draw attention to this gap, but just as often work to deny its existence.

You will begin by watching two key works of American cinema. In formal terms, *The Jazz Singer* was the first “talkie,” meaning a movie with a full soundtrack. In thematic terms, it indicates that the 19th-century racial paradigm would remain central to the nation’s development even as new groups immigrated who did not belong to its original “triangle.” Conversely, *Modern Times* was perhaps the last significant “silent” movie; this fact seems to harmonize with its anti-technological argument, but you may find the case more complicated, especially once we try to racially identify its protagonist, the Little Tramp.

We will then devote some time to exploring the Chinese-American experience in a cluster centered on Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*; my hope is that some of the cultural structures our authors discuss are familiar enough to you that you can help me strengthen my analysis of the book. After that we will address the most glaring “gap” from last semester by reading key texts written by American women. This will overlap with an examination of American homosexual identity and a brief introduction to Hispanic-American authors.

Because American Indian and African-American “negotiations” with U.S. empire continue to develop in new ways throughout the 20th century, we will continue to investigate them. We will then consider the radical alterations that industrialism and post-



industrialism pose for American concepts of environmental nature and human nature, which will overlap with a discussion of the relationship between capital and labor in “modern times.”

Because so many of you expressed an interest in reading more fiction and poetry last semester, we will devote more time to analyzing the question of literary form. But the most difficult formal conundrum will be our concluding novel, Pynchon’s *Crying of Lot 49*. And to understand this we will need to think not only about the literary context of our previous course texts, but also about the political context of the Cold War era, in which the United States defines itself as a perfect middle ground between the two evil empires of a defeated Nazi fascism and a triumphant Soviet communism. (Sound familiar?)

**Course Style:** I was satisfied with our format last semester, but my hope is that we will continue to move towards more student discussion. This will take effort on your part as well as mine!

**Attendance Policy:** As last semester, you are permitted one absence during the term; I don’t need to know the reason, but it would be helpful if you notify me ahead of time. Two absences and above will damage your participation grade. Four absences and above will seriously damage your overall grade for the course. (If you have a serious medical or family emergency that will cause you to miss class, please notify me.) If you habitually arrive late and/or leave early, this will carry a penalty similar to absence because it disrupts the other students.

**Course Blog:** The blog will remain mostly the same as last semester. But I hope y’all can reverse the drift toward submitting the posts later and later on Tuesday morning. It’s fine for me to read your question or answer in the hour before class, but it’s not ideal. It’s better for me to have more time, and it’s better for your classmates to be able to read and consider your post before class. So please make an effort to post on Monday night. I also be experimenting with a new collaborative writing technology called Google Wave and may try to incorporate it into the class somehow.

**Evaluation:** You will be graded on the basis of your blog homework and participation in the class discussion (20%), a 1500-2000 word essay (35%), a presentation (10%) and a final exam (35%). The essay will relate to *Woman Warrior*. The presentation can be a short recitation and analysis, unless you prefer to do something creative like art, music, or video. We’ll decide in more detail when the semester begins. The final exam will be similar to last semester’s midterm and final, with at least one question that require you to make a comparison that encompasses course texts from course I and II both.

**Office Hours:** I want to encourage all of you to attend my office hours. I had positive sessions with several students last semester, including discussions about course texts, graduate school, career plans, and all sorts of other topics. If you can’t make one of the scheduled times, just email me and we’ll make an alternate arrangement. Tuesdays and Wednesdays are much better, though, because I’ll be commuting from Taipei. There will be a required conference session to discuss your first draft essays in my office on 4月27日 or 4月28日. These will likely be conducted in small groups of three or four students; I will guide you to analyze each other’s essays and suggest revisions.

**Academic Honesty Policy:** I will repeat my legal formula from the previous syllabus; I think it is more relevant than last semester because you will be submitting an essay composition. *The goal of the class is for you to produce personal interpretations of the texts we read. I encourage you to make use of sources that help you do this, but you should always proper give citation to any source you use, whether it’s a person, a webpage, a book, etc. If you are unsure what constitutes a good source or a proper citation, please ask me! You do not need to cite your instructor as a source, since I will remember what I said to you, but by the same token I urge you to consider my views as a starting point for your own thinking rather than a definitive solution of some kind. You will receive higher grades in the course if you generate substantive disagreements with or reorientations of my interpretations.*

**Course Schedule:** The schedule on the next page is subject to addition and alteration; always check the blog for updates. We will not meet during the first week of classes. For the second week, Ms.

Chen will distribute the finalized syllabus and supervise a movie screening; you will answer questions about the movies on the blog. The Emperor will then return to his throne for the third week, meaning we will have 15 normal class meetings. But as the schedule indicates, I am considering a split session for the week of 5月2日.

The reading assignments below advance our chronology from where we left off last semester (*circa* 1903年), all the way up to the current decade. But due to our emphasis on certain themes and identity groups, they also double back to some texts from the middle 19th century. Or perhaps triple back. Or quadruple back. It's a little loopy, is what I'm saying. Most of the course readings come from the *Norton Anthology*. So although I encourage you to use it as a doorstop during your vacation, you must not use it as fuel for your fireplace! I will notify you when *Woman Warrior* and *Crying of Lot 49* become available in the campus bookstore. Any other readings I assign will be provided a week early via photocopied handouts and/or weblinks.

### 3月2日 < The New Language(s) of Empire >

- Read course syllabus thoroughly
- Norton headnotes on World War era (頁1881-96)
- *The Jazz Singer*, starring Al Jolson
- *Modern Times*, starring Charlie Chaplin

### 3月9日 < Chinese-American Negotiations with Empire I >

- Bierce, "The Heathen Chinese" + Norton 頁1475-76
- Pound, "The River Merchant's Wife" (頁2018-19, 2022)
- Far, "In the Land of the Free" (頁1720-27)
- Song, "Lost Sister," "Heaven" (頁2840-45)
- Lee, "Persimmons" (頁2846-47)

### 3月16日 < Chinese-American Negotiations with Empire II >

- Kingston, *Woman Warrior* (first half + Norton 頁2743-44)

### 3月23日 < Chinese-American Negotiations w/ Empire III >

- Kingston, *Woman Warrior* (second half)

### 3月30日 < Does American Liberty Have a Gender? I >

- Adams, "Remember the Ladies" letters + Norton 頁300-01
- Fern, "Male Criticism," *Fresh Leaves Review* (頁799-803)
- Fuller, "The Great Lawsuit" (頁736-47)
- Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (章26: "Death") + Norton 頁764-67
- Dickinson #112, 207, 260, 348, 620, 764, 788 (頁1197-1219)

### 4月6日 < Does American Liberty Have a Gender? II >

- Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (頁1682-95)
- Stein, *Tender Buttons* (頁1939-51)
- Stevens, "Snow Man," "Christian Woman," "Ice-Cream," "Ten O'Clock," "Blackbird," (頁1990-99)
- H.D., "Fragment 113," "Helen" (頁2025, 2028-30)
- Crane, "Chaplinesque," "Melville's Tomb" (頁2236-39)

### 4月13日 < Does American Liberty Have a Gender? III >

- Norton headnotes on Contemporary era (頁2305-19)
- Bishop, "The Fish," "One Art" (頁2398-2400, 2407)
- Rich, "Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law" (頁2619-26)
- Plath, "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy" (頁2651-58)
- O'Connor, "Good Country People" (頁2568-83)
- Bender, "The Case of the Salt and Pepper Shakers"

### 4月20日 < Hispanic-American Negotiations with Empire >

- Anzaldúa, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (頁2762-71)
- Alvarez, "¡Yo!" (頁2791-2800)
- Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek" (頁2819-27)

### 4月25日 - First draft of essay due

### 4月27日 < African-American Negotiations w/ Empire IV >

- Hughes, "Rivers," "I, Too," "Song for Dark Girl," "Commercial Theatre," Theme for English B" (頁2263-71)
- Hurston, "Colored Me," "Gilded Six-Bits" (頁2157-2169)
- Cullen, "Incident," "Heritage" (頁2283-87)
- Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" (頁2287-97)
- Conferences for essay (alternate day: 4月28日)

### 5月2日 - Final draft of essay due

### 5月4日 < African-American Negotiations with Empire V >

- Brooks, "the mother," "Real Cool," "Quatrain" (頁2537-41)
- Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man" (頁2556-68)
- Baraka, "A Poem for Willie Best" (頁2695-96, 2698-2702)
- Morrison, "Recitatif" (2638-2651)

### 5月11日 A < American Indian Negotiations w/ Empire IV >

- Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (頁2702-13)
- Silko, "Lullaby" (頁2784-91)
- Harjo, "Call it Fear" (頁2805-08)
- Louise Erdrich, "Dear John Wayne" (頁2828-30)
- Alexie, "Tribal School," "Do Not Go Gentle" (頁2851-57)

### 5月11日 B < Empire of the Mind: American Gothic >

- Poe, "Ligeia" (頁671-74, 79-88) + "The Imp of the Perverse"
- James, "The Beast in the Jungle" (頁1491-94, 1550-79)
- Wallace, "Brief Interviews with Hideous Men"

### 5月18日 < Imperial Gardens: American Pastoral >

- Whittier, "Snow Bound" (652-70)
- Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine"
- Jewett, "A White Heron" (頁1590-98)
- Faulkner "A Rose for Emily" (頁2216-24)

**5月25日 < Imperial Machines: American Industrial >**

- Norton Headnotes, "Marketplace" + "Realism" (頁1258-63)
- Melville, "Paradise and Tartarus" + Norton 頁1089-92
- Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* (excerpt of 頁1225-53)
- Ginsberg, "Howl" (頁2590-2600)
- Lowell, "For the Union Dead" (頁2526-28, 2535-37)

**6月1日 < The Machine in the Garden >**

- Thoreau, *Walden* (章4: "Sounds")
- Whitman, "Song of Myself" (頁991-95, excerpt of 1010-55)
- Crane, "The Blue Hotel" (頁1777-79, 1795-1814)

**6月8日 < The United States as Global Empire IV >**

- Pynchon, *Crying of Lot 49* (first half)

**6月15日 < The United States as Global Empire V >**

- Pynchon, *Crying of Lot 49* (second half)

**6月22日 < Summer Begins at Empire's Fall >**

- Final exam

