

**Hana Ulmanová (1967)** is a senior lecturer in American literature at Charles University. She studied Czech and English and American language and literature both in Olomouc and in Prague, where she earned her PhD (1995). She also received an M.A. in American civilization from George Washington University (1992). Next to Czech and English, she speaks Russian, German, French, Spanish and elementary Yiddish and Hebrew.

Ulmanová's chief areas of expertise are contemporary American literature, American Jewish literature and literature of the American South. In those fields, she has offered several advanced classes and supervised numerous M.A. theses and PhD. dissertations. In the academic year 1997-98, she was a Fulbright scholar at NYU in New York City, researching contemporary prose, and she attended quite a few conferences and workshops (such as Salzburg Seminars or CEU summer programme in Budapest).

Ulmanová is a regular contributor to MFDnes, the most widely read serious Czech newspaper, and the prestigious political and cultural weekly Respekt. She has written close to 100 book reviews and essays and conducted interviews with leading American literary figures (e.g. Arthur Miller, William Styron, Edward Albee or Gore Vidal). She is a translator, too: her main works include short stories by Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, Eudora Welty, Arthur Miller, Bernard Malamud and Isaac B. Singer, Nicole Krauss's *The History of Love* and Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*, but she has done also poetry (Emily Dickinson) and drama (David Ives).

Course schedule time: Mo 10.30 – 11.50 am, We 10.30 – 11.50 am

Springl TERM 2010 – DR. HANA ULMANOVÁ, M.A.

## AMERICAN LITERATURE – EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES

### TEXTBOOK

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, volume 2, fifth edition (Nina Baym, ed.). While there are readers at the library, the students are encouraged to have their own books (so that they can read more, underline certain passages, make a few notes in the text, etc.).

### DESCRIPTION

This class is devoted not only to „close reading“ of the selected texts, but also to relevant broader issues (as indicated in Outline). While the approach and methods are interdisciplinary, the main emphasis is on literary theory (explaining and applying basic literary terms), literary history (both American and European), and literary criticism (analyzing different responses to given works). Every class starts with the oral presentation delivered by a student, then there is a minilecture by the teacher, and a discussion follows.

### OBJECTIVES

The objective of this class is to study canonical works of American literature, stressing European perspectives. We shall not proceed chronologically, but focus on the individual topics listed below, and see how the individual works were translated and received in the Czech cultural context.

### REQUIREMENTS

Although no prior experience with literary classes is required, the students must be willing to read, analyze and discuss all the assigned texts for every single class. Should we split the class due to a large number of students, it would be reasonable to divide the group into beginners and advanced.

### OUTLINE

During the entire semester, the following topics will be covered (the numbers indicate the given weeks):

1/ THE RECEPTION OF AMERICAN LITERATURE IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC /lecture/

2/ HENRY JAMES AND THE INTERNATIONAL THEME

Daisy Miller: A Study

Beast in the Jungle

3/ NATURALISM IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Stephen Crane: The Blue Hotel

4/ THE 1920S IN AMERICA AND IN EUROPE

Ernest Hemingway: The Snows of Kilimanjaro

5/ AMERICAN /AND EUROPEAN/ MODERNISM IN PROSE

William Faulkner: As I Lay Dying

6/ AMERICAN /AND EUROPEAN/ MODERNISM IN POETRY

Wallace Stevens

Ezra Pound

E.E. Cummings

T.S.Eliot

7/ THE IDEA OF THE AMERICAN WEST

Bret Harte: The Outcasts of Poker Flat

8/ THE IDEA OF THE AMERICAN SOUTH

Flannery O'Connor: Good Country People

Eudora Welty: Petrified Man

Tennessee Williams: A Streetcar Named Desire

9/ THE IDEA OF AN AMERICAN JEW

Bernard Malamud: The Magic Barrel

Philip Roth: Defender of the Faith

10/ THE IDEA OF AN AFRICAN AMERICAN

Ralph Ellison: Invisible Man /Prologue, Chapter I/

Amiri Baraka

Michael S. Harper

11/ THE IDEA OF AN AMERICAN MIDDLE CLASS

Arthur Miller: Death of a Salesman

John Updike: Separating

12/ THE IDEA OF AN AMERICAN WOMAN

Charlotte Perkins Gilman: The Yellow Wallpaper

Adrienne Rich

Sylvia Plath

13/ THE IDEA OF AN ETHNIC WOMAN

Alice Walker: Everyday Use

Audre Lorde

14/ POSTMODERN LITERATURE

Thomas Pynchon: Entropy

#### ASSESSMENT

Next to regular attendance (only one class may be missed without a proper excuse) and active participation, a substantial oral presentation, a mid-term written paper about 10 pages long (while the topic is chosen by the student, it must be relevant to the work done during the semester, and approved by the teacher), and a final in-class essay.

#### GRADING POLICY

Regular attendance and active participation - 25% of your final grade

A substantial oral presentation - 25% of your final grade

Mid-term paper - 25% of your final grade

Final in-class essay - 25% of your final grade

#### OFFICE HOURS

By appointment