



**Instructor:** Mark Crimmins

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**Course Number:** ENG365H5F

**Course Title:** Contemporary American Fiction

**Course description:** This course will examine a plethora of fictions by a wide range of contemporary American authors. Our readings will include two novels, one short story collection, and an anthology of short stories featuring work by many of Contemporary American Fiction's most widely admired short story writers. For our longer selections we will read Don DeLillo's masterfully complex historical novella about baseball's 'shot heard around the world,' *Pafko at the Wall*; Maxine Hong Kingston's postmodern adaptation of one of the four great classical Chinese novels, *Tripmaster Monkey*; and David Foster Wallace's arcane, formidable, and brilliant reinventions of fictional form in his collection, *Oblivion*. We will also examine some flash fictions by authors who excel in this form, including Donald Barthelme, Jamaica Kincaid, Ann Beattie, Rick Moody, David Foster Wallace, Sandra Cisneros, and Lydia Davis. Our short story selections will include innovative and influential fictions by Jhumpa Lahiri, Sherman Alexie, Percival Everett, Raymond Carver, Annie Proulx, Ursula LeGuin, Lorrie Moore, and T. C. Boyle, and Ann Spence.

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**Required Reading:**

Shreve and Nguyen: 30/30: *Thirty Stories From the Last Thirty Years*; Maxine Hong Kingston: *Tripmaster Monkey*; David Foster Wallace: *Oblivion*; Don DeLillo: *Pafko at the Wall*.

**First Authors to be Studied:** Kincaid: "Girl"; Moody: "Boys"; Cisneros: "The House on Mango Street."

**Method of Instruction:** Lecture and discussion

**Method of Evaluation:**

Short Paper/Written Assignment: 15%; Long Paper: 30%; Test: 15%; Final Exam: 30%; Participation: 10%.