

Norman Mailer's America

Novelist, journalist, director, provocateur, pugilist—love him or hate him, Norman Mailer was an integral part of the culture of twentieth-century America.



LitMUSE

Oct 16, 2012 · 3 min read



Peter Keen

T

his section of Studies in Culture will look at the latter half of the twentieth century America

I through the eyes of one of its most controversial artists and public intellectuals. We will examine “America” as it grew out of World War II, through the turmoil of the sixties and seventies, the conservative wasteland of the eighties, the growing fundamentalism of the nineties to 9/11—all though Mailer’s novels, films, journalism, and other cultural texts. This is the country that Mailer loved and hated, the country that made him who he was, and the country that all his efforts tried to make better. This is Norman Mailer’s America.

Required Texts

- Mailer, Norman. *An American Dream*. (1964)
- — . *The Armies of the Night: History as a Novel, the Novel as History*. (1968)
- — . *The Executioner’s Song*. (1979)
- — . *Why Are We at War?* (2006)
- Various handouts. [On Google drive](#).

Recommended Texts

- Mailer, Norman. *On God*. (2008)
- Mailer, Norman and John Buffalo Mailer. *The Big Empty*. (2006)

Course Policies

Students are held accountable for knowing and practicing each of the [course policies](#). Consider them like the law: the excuse “I didn’t know” will carry no weight.

As a Middle Georgia State student and as a student in any of my classes, it is your responsibility to read, understand, and abide by the MGS Student Code of Conduct from the [Student Handbook](#) (PDF).

Requirements

This section of HUMN 4472 has three requirements.

Research / Response Essay (40%)

Students will be responsible for completing one research/response essay. See schedule below for due dates.

Participation (30%)

Regular class attendance, question posing, library assignments, tweeting, and active participation in classroom and online discussions are required. Participation, effort, and attitude will count significantly in this course, even if your technical proficiency is lacking. Quizzes, other class activities, and homework assignments will be considered participation.

Exams (30%)

Two exams will be given that will test your knowledge of the subject matter (texts, lecture material, and vocabulary), your ability to synthesize this material, and your creativity in going beyond the discussion and lecture materials. The exams will include vocabulary, concepts, and interpretation. All exam grades will be based upon objective knowledge of the material, thoroughness, depth of insight, precision, and originality.

Schedule

The dates correspond with the first day of the week, not necessarily the day(s) of class meetings. This schedule gives only a general overview of assignments, activities, and important dates. Specific assignments will be given in class. This schedule is tentative and subject to change. All files below marked as “PDF” are stored on Google drive that you must be granted access to. Follow the link to complete this process from your Google account.

MailerWk1–01/07/13

Course introduction and overview.

MailerWk2–01/14/13

Presentation; Excerpts from *Advertisements for Myself*.

MailerWk3–01/21/13

Advertisements (cont.)

MailerWk4–01/28/13

An American Dream ([#AmDream](#)) and a visit by Phillip Sipiora

MailerWk5–02/04/13

Beyond the Law (In-class viewing)

MailerWk6–02/11/13

Armies of the Night ([#MailerArmies](#)) and a visit by J. Michael Lennon

MailerWk7–02/18/13

Review on Tuesday; [highlight]Midterm Exam[/highlight]—partially given in-class on Thursday with a take-home section distributed Tuesday; bring your own pen and paper

MailerWk8–02/25/13

No class: read *The Executioner's Song*; work on survey of criticism

03/04/13

[highlight]Spring Break[/highlight]—no class

Week 09–03/11/13

Maidstone ([#MStone](#)) (In-class viewing)—Twitter discussion



Gerald Lucas

@drglucas

For [#MailerWk9](#) try to find some background on MAIDSTONE. Tweet. We'll be watching [#MStone](#) in class next week [#MailerClass](#)

MailerWk10–03/18/13

The Executioner's Song ([#ExSong](#))

MailerWk11–03/25/13

The Executioner's Song ([#ExSong](#)) Continued

MailerWk12–04/01/13

Tough Guys Don't Dance ([#TGDD](#)) (In-class viewing)

MailerWk13–04/08/13

[highlight]Research/Response Essay Due[/highlight]; informal reports; *On God* ([#NMGod](#))

MailerWk14–04/15/13

The Two Mailers (a play by Ronald K. Fried) ([#TwoMailers](#)); *The Big Empty* ([#BigEmpty](#)); Visit by John Buffalo Mailer ([#JBMailer](#)) (4/18)

MailerWk15–04/22/13

Why Are We at War? ([#WhyWar](#))

Final Exam—05/07/13

10:30am-12:30pm; Also absolute last day to submit term papers.

[#MailerClass](#) | 27027 HUMN 4472.01 TR 11a-12:20p H/SS-118:
Studies in Culture | permalink: <http://litmuse.net/mailer>