Required Books:

*A Pocket Style Manual* (5th ed.) by Diana Hacker

*100 Best Loved Poems* (Dover Thrift) edited by Paul Smith

*101 Great American Poems* (Dover Thrift) edited by the American Poetry and Literacy Project

*Song of Myself* (Dover Thrift) by Walt Whitman

*Fences* by August Wilson

*The Awakening* by Kate Chopin (Norton Critical edition)

*Hamlet* (Dover Thrift) by William Shakespeare

Films:

*Death of a Salesman*

*Gospel at Colonus*

*Hamlet*

*Il Postino*

*Thelma and Louise*

You can find these books at Manhattan Books on Chambers Street, as well as many other stores and web sites. There will also be essays, poems, and fiction scanned or downloaded and posted to our Blackboard site throughout the semester. The films will be available on line through ER es on the college’s web page under “Library.” You will find instructions and an ER es password in Course Information.

Objectives for the class:

*In English 201, you will hone the critical writing skills you worked on in English 101.

*You will strengthen your hold on the MLA system of parenthetic citation and your ability to write researched papers.

*I will introduce you to important writers, issues and literary developments from the time of Sophocles up to the present, including the evolution of literary forms.

*I hope you will find characters, words, images, ideas, stories, and poems to live by.
Your grade will be based on the discussion boards (33%), the quizzes (33%), and papers (33%--six short ones and a final essay). The discussion boards and quizzes are due a few days before the end of the module as indicated, and the papers are due by midnight of the last day of the module because it makes sense to begin with the quizzes, which are not too hard, and the discussion boards, which are more challenging and good preparation for writing the paper. The quizzes are self-evident, and the papers should be done in standard Modern Language Association (MLA) format—double spaced, in the literary present, with a parenthetic citation for every quotation and paraphrase and a works-cited list at the end. What you say and how well you say it will be the basis of your paper grades. If you don’t have a handbook to check on matters of grammar, punctuation and citation, I recommend Diana Hacker’s A Pocket Style Manual. The point in writing about literature is to illuminate what you read, to work your way beneath the surface, which always entails explaining, giving examples, quoting and paraphrasing, rewriting, polishing and tightening. Good written work about complicated books begins for most mortals with notes and ends with rewriting, polishing and tightening. Students who show the most improvement learn to write more effectively and to tap the richness of the works we’re studying to flesh out their ideas.

The discussion boards (DBs) are the equivalent of class discussions, the chief difference being you have to participate to participate in a dl class. There are no silent partners. For each DB, I would like you to initiate at least one post and to read all your classmates’ posts and to respond with some substance to at least two of those posts. A good post runs from a paragraph to three or more, and a good response is at least a paragraph. Everyone benefits if you explain your ideas and back them up with examples from the stories, poems and essays we’re reading. The DBs become collective notebooks, making it easier for everyone to write good papers. For each module you will receive a DB grade of an F, C and A. Good writing and good thinking usually go together, but I will grade your DB work as best I can on your ideas, not correctness. However, I would recommend that you compose your posts and responses in Word and cut and paste them into the DB dialogue box so that you don’t lose work if you lose your connection.

Please make sure that your work is on time. Put differently, since this isn’t a correspondence course and we can’t work together unless we’re on the same page, I will not accept late work for any reason, including computer problems. So pace yourself and make sure you back your work up and have a plan B in case you have a problem with the computer you usually work on. You should check your BMCC email every day, and you should read the new posts for the current module’s DBs every day.

Attendance: BMCC’s official attendance policy is as follows: “At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the number of hours a class meets in one week. If you arrive late for class, the instructor may mark you absent. (I will do so after the second late arrival, and most of you will never get there.) In the case of excessive absence, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an "F" or ‘WU" grade.” The principle of attendance is the same for a distance-learning class—too many absences and your grade will suffer—but it takes a different form. You attend when you log on and read, write discussion board posts, take quizzes and submit and review graded, corrected papers. There are deadlines listed here in the syllabus and on blackboard. If you miss more than two week’s work, your grade will at the very least be lowered, but I may require you to retake the class. Let’s not get too
involved with the university’s regulations. Clearly the best way to do well in this class is to do your best work and submit it on time.

**Making Contact:** I want to make one-on-one contact with you at least twice before the midterm. It can take the form of coming to talk during office hours, an email exchange about an assignment, or dialing into the conference-call office hour I will hold each week. This isn’t a formal requirement, but I think it’s a good idea.

**BMCC Policy on Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas, words, or artistic/scientific/technical work as one's own creation. A student who copies or paraphrases published or on-line material, or another person's research, without properly identifying the source(s), is committing plagiarism.

Plagiarism violates the ethical and academic standards of our college. Students will be held responsible for such violations, even when unintentional. To avoid unintended plagiarism, students should consult with their instructors about when and how to document their sources. The library also has both print and digital guides designed to help students cite sources correctly.

Plagiarism carries a range of penalties commensurate with severity of the infraction. The instructor may, for example, require the work to be redone, reduce the course grade, fail the student in the course, or refer the case to the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee (see Article 15.4 of the Bylaws of the Board of Trustees). Cases referred to that committee could result in suspension or expulsion from the college.

**BMCC Services for Students with Disabilities:** The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities offers a range of reasonable accommodations and academic adjustments to qualified students with disabilities. The Office of Services for Students with Disabilities fosters independence and self-advocacy. In addition, the office serves as a liaison and resource to members of the BMCC community regarding disability issues. All of BMCC’s faculty and staff support the work of the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, but as a parent of a child with autism, I am particularly devoted to their mission.

**Introduction to English 201: January 28-30.**

Reading and watching: please read John Updike’s “A&P,” Gwendolyn Brooks’ “We Real Cool,” and Edwin Arlington Robinson’s “Richard Cory” and watch *Death of a Salesman*, which is on reserve in ERes at the BMCC library page (please see the ERes document in Course Information about logging on and watching a film).

Writing: go to the first Discussion Board and write about what these four works say about the American dream. Your post should be a few paragraphs long, and your responses should be substantial—a fat paragraph or two.

**Module One: Introduction to Poetry, February 1-14.**

Reading and watching: watch *Il Postino*, a film the celebrates the Nobel laureate Pablo Neruda, on reserve at ERes, and read the small anthology of Neruda’s poetry in Course Documents, Module One. I would also like you to read the following poems in *101 Great American Poems* and *100 Best Loved Poems*: Shakespeare’s “Sonnet 18” and “Sonnet 129,” John Donne’s “Holy Sonnet 14,” William Blake’s four poems, Shelley’s “Ozymandias,” Edwin Arlington Robinson’s “Richard Cory,” Robert Frost’s “Design” and “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy

Review grammar and punctuation by reading the chapters on those issues in Diana Hacker’s *A Pocket Manual of Style* (pp. 25-90). Also, read about quoting and parenthetic citations in Hacker on pp. 110-27. Also, study the poetry terms in Course Documents, Module One, and read the brief lectures on William Carlos Williams’ “Red Wheelbarrow” and Black art.

Writing: do the small-group poetry Discussion Boards, submit the poetry quiz as a Word or Open Office file in Course Documents, Module One and do the online quiz on the poetry of the Harlem Renaissance by midnight, February 11. Submit a short paper on *Il Postino* by midnight, February 14.

**Module Two: Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself*, February 15-March 6.**

Reading: Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself* and the short lectures and articles on Whitman in Course Documents, Module Two. Please listen to the National Public Radio podcast on Whitman in Course Documents and study “MLA List of Works Cited” in Hacker (pp. 127-54).

Writing: take the online quiz on Whitman and do the Whitman DB by March 2nd. The Whitman papers are due by midnight, March 6.

**Module Three: Introduction to Drama (3.7-3.21)**

Reading and watching: see *The Gospel at Colonus* at ERes and watch and read *Hamlet*. Study drama terms and take the quiz on those terms just for fun, and read the excerpt from Aristotle’s *Poetics*. Also, look at Hacker’s chapter on clarity (pp. 1-19).

Writing: submit the quiz on *Hamlet* and do the DB on Oedipus and Hamlet. No paper for module three.

**Module Four: Willy and Troy and Today’s Tragedy (3.22-4.4)**

Reading and watching: review *Death of a Salesman* and read August Wilson’s *Fences* and the interviews with Wilson in Course Documents, Module Four. Look at the slide show of Jacob Lawrence’s Great Migration series, also in Course Documents, Module Four, and read Brent Staples’ review of *Fences*.

Writing: take the online quiz on *Fences*, do the Discussion Board on *Fences and Death of a Salesman* by 4.1, submit part one of the midterm on 4.3 and part two on 4.4.
Module Five: Short Fiction (4.12-4.25)

For the first part of the fifth module, I would like you to read "The Lesson" by Toni Cade Bambara, "A&P" by John Updike, "The Necklace" by Guy de Maupassant, and "The Lady with the Pet Dog" by Anton Chekhov. Complete and submit the quiz on these stories as a Word or Open Office Document by Sunday, April 18th, and submit a 4-6 paragraph post to the Discussion Board on "A&P" and "The Lesson" by Friday, April 16th, and respond to at least two and preferably more classmates by Sunday, April 18th. Your responses, which should go beyond generalities and should contain examples and quotations, should be two paragraphs or more.

For the second part of the fifth module, I would like you to read “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Story of an Hour” by Kate Chopin, “Winter Dreams” and “Babylon Revisited” by F.Scott Fitzgerald, and the paper and lectures on Fitzgerald. Please complete the multiple choice quiz by Sunday, April 25th. Post to the DB by Friday, April 23rd, and respond to two and preferably more classmates by Sunday, April 25th.

Module Six: The Novel (4.26-5.20)

We will read *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, a few of her short stories and about ten of the essays in the back of the Norton Critical edition of the novel. We will complete two quizzes, participate in two Discussion Boards, and write a research paper complete with many secondary sources from the back of the book. In other words, I will ask you to paraphrase and quote the insights and theories of the critics who wrote about Chopin’s novel, in addition to making and developing your own thoughts about the book. Dates and details to follow. The research paper will be the final exam for English 201.

Part one (4.26-5.5): read the novel and Chopin’s short stories “Story of an Hour,” “The Storm,” “Desiree’s Baby.” I’d also like you to read the brief lecture “Women and the Nineteenth Century.” Please post to the DB by 5.3 and respond to at least two classmates and do the quizzes on Chopin’s short stories and on Chaps. 1-22 of *The Awakening* by 5.5. Optional reading: the Charlotte Perkins Gilman story “The Yellow Wallpaper.” There is also an extra-credit quiz on the second half of *The Awakening*.

Part two (5.6-5.20): Read Toth (113-19), Showalter, Spangler, Ziff, Gilbert, Leary, Chametzky, Veblen and Gilman at the back of the Norton critical edition of *The Awakening*. Leary, Chametzky, and Veblen (also in the back) are optional reading. I’d also like you to see *Thelma & Louise* and skim the contemporary reviews and contextual material: 122-145, and 159-173. Do the quiz on the critics and the DB by 5.14, work with your partner on the final research paper on *The Awakening*, and submit your paper by midnight of May 20th.