

English 346: Contemporary American Fiction

Dr. Susan Farrell
26 Glebe Street, #205

E-Mail: farrells@cofc.edu
Class Website: <http://blogs.cofc.edu/engl346>

Mid-Term Exam Preview

I. Identify terms/concepts/people

(answer 5 out of 6; 4 points each; 20 points total)

II. Short passages—Identify author/work/context/significance

(answer 5 out of 6; 8 points each; 40 points total)

III. Take-Home Essay Question

(40 points)

Choose one of the following questions and write a well-organized essay in response. Be sure to use multiple examples and details from at least 3 of the 4 novels we've read so far in class. Your response may be **no more** than 3 typed, double-spaced pages. It is due at the Mid-Term Exam (Wednesday, October 17).

- 1. Postmodernism.** Think about some of the characteristics of postmodernism that we discussed early in the semester. (You'll probably need to look back at the power point on postmodernism, which is on the class website). How do the works that we have read so far seem stylistically, structurally, or thematically "postmodern" to you? (Or maybe they don't seem postmodern at all...)
- 2. History.** Think about ways that the writers we have read so far this semester use history or the past in their works. Can we know the past, understand it? Or must our knowledge of the past always be limited? Who controls history? How does history shape and inform our current reality? What is the relationship between history and story, between history and myth?
- 3. The Individual.** How do the writers we read this semester treat the subject of individuality? Are they skeptical about the possibilities of individuality in a postmodern world? Or do they assert that human beings may indeed become fully realized individuals? Do they believe in the possibility of free will, or do they believe that individuals are shaped mostly by societies and controlled by forces larger than themselves? Is an entirely individualistic ethic even a good thing, or do some of the works challenge the ideology of individualism, perhaps suggesting that a collective or communal identity should be valued more highly?