

Mapping American Literature

ENGL 3330: Place and Time in American Literature



Literary Map of the USA, Geoff Sawers and Bridget Hannigan (2011)

Professor: Donal Harris

T/Th: 1:00-2:25 pm // Patterson Hall 331

This class looks at the literature and art of three great American cities (New York, Memphis, and Los Angeles) and asks what makes each unique. We'll study writers from across the 20th and 21st centuries, with an eye to the ways they recreate the particular feel of their chosen location. We will study the ways that authors attempt to capture the specifics of a given place by way of literary form, as well as how cities look similar or unique from the point of view of individual authors. Then, taking the opposite approach, we'll think about how the rise of the metropolis, postwar suburbanization, "urban revitalization," and new media impact the content, form, and circulation of literature.

Possible authors include Stephen Crane, Anzia Yezierska, Edith Wharton, Jessie Fauset, William Faulkner, Richard Wright, Peter Taylor, Tara Stringfellow, Raymond Chandler, Joan Didion, Hector Tobár, and Nathanael West. Course assignments will consist of a close reading, an event response, a midterm, and a final research or creative assignment.