

## OLLI at DU Central Syllabus –Fall 2024

**Chenneville by Paulette Jiles: A novel of vengeance and redemption** – Subject Area Literature  
Writing and Language

Thursday Mornings Online; Eight weeks

Instructor: Gracie and Don Batt

### 1. **SUMMARIZE YOUR COURSE**

Consumed with grief, driven by vengeance, John Chenneville undertakes an unrelenting odyssey across the lawless post–Civil War frontier, seeking redemption, in this fearless novel from the award-winning and New York Times bestselling author of *News of the World*.

We approach reading as discovery in a reading community; therefore, some of the reading is done in class so that, together, we encounter the text as a group, allowing multiple insights from the class. PLEASE DO NOT START READING THE BOOK BEFORE CLASS BEGINS.

Historical fiction allows readers to discover not only what happened, but also why it happened. *Chenneville* gives readers a chance to understand the forces that drove people into action and places characters in an emotional, geographical, and historical context.

The class is based upon contemporary critical literary theory that posits readers create meaning when encountering a text. To that end, facilitators create a reading community where, based on readers experiences, multiple views are shared. Class size is kept small so that these exchanges can occur. Members take turns reading, allowing class members to analyze the text in real time. This method fosters an in-depth analysis of the text and encourages engagement not only with the text but also with class members.

### 2. **BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE ORGANIZED BY CLASS SESSION:**

We begin with each class member introducing themselves, providing a brief background, and telling why they are interested in the class. We then give the ground rules, which will be included in the course syllabus. We utilize Zoom options, such as the hand raising to contribute a comment, so that everyone has a chance to engage with the class. For a typical class, we spend the first half discussing the last reading, encouraging members to mark passages that resonated with them or which they have questions about. The second half of the class involves reading aloud together and discussing the text as we encounter it together. In the final class, members are given the opportunity to present some issue or aspect that the novel provoked. This could include developing some aspect of Western or post Civil War experiences.