Syllabus for 5 Week Course Spring 2021, O’ Henry His Life and His Short Stories

Prior to each class, members should receive a copy of the short story that we will be discussing that class.

Lesson 1
William Sydney Porter’s early life in North Carolina, Texas, and Federal Prison
Discuss and listen to a Viticom recording of his first published short story “An Afternoon Miracle”.
Watch and discuss “Jimmy Valentine”, a story written while O’ Henry was in prison.
Discuss O’ Henry’s writing style

Lesson 2
O’ Henry’s life in New York City and the development of his massive collection of 640 short stories.
Read, discuss and watch 3 New York City stories “The Cop and the Anthem”, “The Last Leaf”, and “The Clarion Call”

Lesson 3
Discuss and read “The Caballero’s Way” form Book 2 Heart of the West
Discuss how this story became “The Cisco Kid”.
Compare O Henry’s version to movie version 1927, radio version 1930ies, and the TV series of the 1950ies.

Lesson 4
Discuss and read stories from Book One, The Four Million, read and discuss “After Twenty Years” and read and watch “The Gift of the Magi”.

Lesson 5
O’ Henry’s Legacy
Read and discuss “The Ransom of Red Chief” from Book 10 Whirligigs, (one of my favorites).
Read and discuss O Henry’s last story “The Snowman”
Discuss the O’ Henry Award, museums in Austin, Texas and Greensboro, NC. Discuss efforts since 1910 to get a presidential pardon for William Sydney Porter.