Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature Survey
English 2308E (650)
Summer 2014

Instructor: Ross Bullen

Prerequisites
At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite(s): English 2341E, 2342F/G, 2343F/G, 2344E, 2345F/G, 2346F/G and 3664E.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description
This course offers a survey of important texts and authors from the Puritan and Revolutionary periods to the present. It addresses not only the major movements and styles of American literature associated with such authors as Poe, Dickinson, Twain, Hemingway, and Morrison, but also the innovative work of less familiar Indigenous and ethnic authors.

Objectives:
Successful students who complete the course will be able to:

• Think critically about American literature and culture, and understand the historical and literary contexts of works;
• Be able to distinguish between periods, movements, and styles and discuss the differences between colonial, nineteenth century, modern, and contemporary American literature;
• Develop further the ability to analyze texts critically, and to formulate and produce essays which have a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion;
• Research critical commentary on literary texts and evaluate the relevance, reliability, and usefulness of research sources, especially those obtained through the internet;
• Write a research essay using secondary sources documented using the Modern Language Association (MLA) method.
Course Materials

Required Texts:

Methods of Evaluation

Study question 10%
Essay # 1 15%
Essay # 2 15%
Essay # 3 25%
Final Exam 35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. Please note: The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at [http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade](http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade).

Timetable:
WEEK 6: Melville, *Moby-Dick*.
WEEK 7: Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" and *Song of Myself* and Emily Dickinson, poetry selections (see Study Notes for assigned poems - please note that some of the poems in the lectures are not in the new *Norton Anthology*, but you can find these poems in the library or on the web).

WEEK 10: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man.*
WEEK 11: Morrison, *Beloved.*
WEEK 12: Don DeLillo *White Noise.*

**NOTE:** EXCEPT FOR THE FOLLOWING NOVELS -- *MOBY DICK, INVISIBLE MAN, BELLOVED, AND WHITE NOISE* -- ALL READINGS ARE IN THE NORTON ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE.

Reading and working with these specific editions is preferred, especially for essays. If you already have some or all of the texts in different editions, then inform me what edition you will be using on your essays. The UWO Bookstore will have these texts in stock, and you can order them on-line from the Bookstore. You may also find the books at a local bookseller. During the course, you are expected to read the online lectures in combination with the texts.

**Assignments:**

**STUDY QUESTIONS:** Students are required to complete ONE of the study questions. Responses should be three pages 1750 words. Study questions are due within one week after the author was presented in the lectures. Please email me the questions.

1. Trace the imagery of nurturance and provision in Anne Bradstreet's lyrics (do not use the poems on the reading list) and examine with particular attention the maternal and paternal imagery and references.
2. Crevecoeur was one of the first writers to see America as a place where dogmatic disputes and sectarian violence could be permanently overcome-not by other idea systems but by the landscape and life within it. Describe this argument.
3. Melville considered Hawthorne's work to be marked by a "blackness," an ambiguity and darkness that was difficult to clearly determine. How is this "blackness" reflected in "My Kinsman, Major Molineux."
4. Identify the contradictions implied in Dr. Flint's promise to Linda in Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl that if she moves into the house he built for her, he will "make her a lady."
5. Choose one of the following quotations from Song of Myself and discuss it by suggesting how it describes what Whitman is attempting in the poem: (1) "I know I am solid and sound, /To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow, /All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means;" and (2) "I am the acme of things accomplished, and I am an encloser of things to be."
6. Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" features one of the most enigmatic (and perhaps unreliable) narrators in all of American literature. What do you think "happens" to the narrator in this story? Who (or what) is the woman in the wallpaper?

**Essay # 1:** The first essay requires students to respond to the following topic: It can be argued at it is possible to sort major writers from the Puritan period to the late nineteenth century into two groups: those who advance particular doctrines and systems of thought, and those who question or critique those doctrines or who suspect any systematic or totalizing view of the world. Discuss this conflict between those who advance systems of thought and those who question totalizing views of the world.

**Essay # 2:** The essay questions and the due date will be posted on the course web site.

**Essay # 3:** The essay questions and the due date will be posted on the course web site.
Submitting Assignments: Submit your essays via the Web drop off box for the course, or if you have difficulties email your paper to my UWO address.

Late Assignments: Essays submitted late will receive a penalty of 1% per day, including weekends.

Accommodation
Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student’s Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf).

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

Academic Offences
Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at [http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf)

Plagiarism:
Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:
All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com [http://www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com).

Support Services
Registrarial Services [http://www.registrar.uwo.ca](http://www.registrar.uwo.ca)
Student Support Services [https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login](https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login)
Services provided by the USC [http://westernusc.ca/services/](http://westernusc.ca/services/)
Student Development Centre [http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/](http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/)

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: [http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/](http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.