

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature Survey English 2308E (001) Fall/Winter 2013-14

Instructor: Dr. Joshua Schuster

Date/Time: Tuesday 6:00pm-9:00pm

Location: Kresge Building K203

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 is a survey of American literature, from Columbus to the contemporary. We will read a wide variety of poetry and fiction, as well as some philosophy, political theory, and personal narratives.

Objectives:

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

- Offer an understanding of the importance of historical/national perspectives, and how social norms and customs and the construction and consumption of literature are products of time, events, and context;
- Explain how the dominant concerns/ thematics in an historical period may be used to signify social status, subjectivity, cultural identity, gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, political power, and state nationalism;
- Develop further their ability to analyze texts critically, and formulate and produce essays which have an effective thesis with a clear, well-articulated intent, and a logical argument supported by adequate evidence from the text(s) under discussion.

Course Materials

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, shorter 8th edition, eds. Nina Baym et al.
James Fenimore Cooper *Last of the Mohicans* (Oxford)
Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter* (Penguin)
M. NourbeSe Philip *Zong* (Wesleyan)
Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Harper)
Sylvia Plath *The Bell Jar* (Faber)

Jack Kerouac *On the Road* (Penguin)
Octavia Butler *Parable of the Sower* (Grand Central)
(x) = handouts

Methods of Evaluation

First Term Essay (4 pages - December 4)	10%
Second Term Essay (8 pages - April 9)	20%
Midterm	10%
Final	35%
Participation	15%
Position Papers (two each semester - 2 pages each)	10%

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>.

Timetable:

Sep	10	Introduction; Christopher Columbus, from <i>Letters</i> ; excerpt from Bartolomé de las Casas
	17	John Winthrop "A Model of Christian Charity"; Roger Williams "A Key Into the Language of America"; Mary Rowlandson "A Narrative of the Captivity" (include seventh, eighth, ninth removes [x])
	24	James Fenimore Cooper <i>Last of the Mohicans</i>
Oct	1	finish <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> ; William Apess "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man" Due: position paper
	8	Benjamin Franklin <i>The Autobiography</i> , part II; Phillis Wheatley "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To the University of Cambridge, in New England," "On the Death of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, 1770," "To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works"
	15	Thomas Jefferson <i>Declaration of Independence</i> ; excerpts from <i>The Federalist</i> (#1, #10); Nathaniel Hawthorne <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (chs. 1-7; skip "The Custom-House") Due: position paper
	22	Nathaniel Hawthorne <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> , finish
	29	Frederick Douglass <i>Narrative of the Life</i>

- Nov 5 M. NourbeSe Philip *Zong*
Due: position paper
- 12 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow "A Psalm of Life"; Walt Whitman "Song of Myself"; Ralph Waldo Emerson, letter to Whitman (x)
- 19 Emily Dickinson: 207 "I taste a liquor never brewed," 260 "I'm Nobody! Who are you?," 339 "I like a look of Agony," 340 "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," 372 "After great pain, a formal feeling comes," 409 "The Soul selects her own Society," 598 "The Brain - is wider than the Sky," 760 "Pain H has an Element of Blank," 1263 "Tell all the Truth but tell it slant"
due: position paper
- 26 Mark Twain *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Dec 3 Mark Twain *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
due: first term essay
- Jan 7 T.S. Eliot "The Waste Land";
****Mid-Term Exam****
- 14 Ezra Pound "In a Station of the Metro," "The Encounter" (x), "Portrait d'une Femme"; William Carlos Williams "The Red Wheelbarrow," "Portrait of a Lady," "To Elsie," "This is Just to Say"; Flossie William's response (x); Robert Frost "Mending Wall," "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "Nothing Gold Can Stay"
- 21 Wallace Stevens "Anecdote of the Jar," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "The Snow Man"; Gertrude Stein "Objects," from *Tender Buttons*, "If I Told Him" (x); Baroness Elsa von Freytag Loringhoven "A Dozen Cocktails - Please" (x)
- 28 W.E.B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*, ch. 1, III; Paul Lawrence Dunbar "Sympathy," "We Wear the Mask," "Frederick Douglass"; Claude McKay "If We Must Die," "America"; Langston Hughes "I, Too," "The Weary Blues"
due: position paper
- Feb 4 Zora Neale Hurston *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, "Characteristics of Negro Expression"(x)
due: position paper
- 11 finish *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
- 18 Reading Week
- 25 Sylvia Plath *The Bell Jar* (1-187)
- Mar 4 Sylvia Plath *The Bell Jar*, finish; Richard Wilbur "Cottage Street, 1953"; Allen Ginsberg "Howl"

- 11 Jack Kerouac *On the Road* (1-212); Jack Kerouac "Belief & Technique for Modern Prose" (x)
due: position paper
- 18 Jack Kerouac *On the Road* (213-finish); Gil Scott-Heron "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" (x)
- 25 John Ashbery "The Instruction Manual" (x); John Cage, excerpt from "Writing through Howl," "Lecture on Nothing" (x); Ron Silliman, excerpt from "Sunset Debris" (x); Jackson Mac Low, excerpt from "Antic Quatrains"; Kenneth Goldsmith *Traffic* (online);
due: position paper
- Apr 1 Octavia Butler *Parable of the Sower*
- 8 finish *Parable of the Sower*; John Ashbery "The One Thing That Can Save America" (x); review
due: second term essay

Assignments:

Term Essays: Topics will be handed out in class. Late essays are not accepted. We will use Owl.

Midterm and Final Exams: The format will include quote and character identifications, a few short answer questions, and (on the final exam) some short essays that will require you to compare different authors on a given topic.

Position Papers: You can choose to respond to two of the four possible topics given for each semester. Position papers are short, tight arguments. Toss out the long introductions and conclusions. Get to the point as quick as possible - that is, make your argument quick and sharp, and use quotes to support your contention or interpretation. Never summarize the text.

Participation: Your participation is central to this class and is a key component of your growth as a student. Participation includes: being involved in class discussion, participating in group work, and putting real energy into all assignments and readings. Also there will be some in-class writing assignments. **Read the texts before the day they are discussed.**

MLA Documentation: Undergraduate research papers written in Arts and Humanities follow the formatting procedures outlined by the Modern Language Association. The complete guide to this format can be found in the latest edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2009). This guide can be found On Reserve in the D. B. Weldon Library, call no: LB2369.M57 2009. The Department of English also offers an overview of MLA documentation, at: <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/guidelines.html>

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory and obviously counts for your grade in participation. It is imperative to arrive to each class on time. No unexcused absences are permitted (I am not crazy and I do know that problems arise during the semester - but please supply a legitimate written excuse - see Western policy on this). If you miss a certain number of courses, I will warn you, but already you risk getting a zero in participation and/or dropped from the course.

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.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

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

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>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

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