

Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature

English 2308E (001)
Fall 2015 - Spring 2016

Wednesday, 6:00–9:00 pm, AHB 2R21
Instructor: Prof. Kate Stanley
Office: AHB 3G04
Office Hours: Wed 12:30–1:30 pm, 4:30–5:30 pm
& by appt
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this survey of American literature we will read personal narratives, essays, poems, speeches, and novels that span various genres, perspectives, and styles from the colonial period to the contemporary. Particular emphasis will be given to emerging languages of spiritual, psychological, national, and racial identity.

At the same time, we will develop four skills essential to literary scholarship:

- *Close Reading*: relating form to content; noticing how a given writer evokes a particular feeling, tone, and achieves other literary effects; examining how a work is structured and how the narrative voice positions itself in relation to its subject and its audience.
- *Engaged Discussion*: remaining attentive and responsive to the work we are reading and the conversation it sparks; expressing ideas and questions to classmates (even when our thoughts or questions might still be in process).
- *Clear and Persuasive Writing*: composing ideas into lucid prose that makes a cogent argument supported by textual evidence.
- *Scholarly Research*: engaging with critical scholarship and exploring strategies for entering into ongoing critical discussions and debates around American literature.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. describe major movements in the development of American literature from Plymouth Rock to the present day;
2. discuss and contextualize the key concerns, themes, and formal features of an array representative works of American literature;
3. develop adept close readings into persuasive arguments;
4. write a well-researched essay, which engages with literary critical sources in the service of an original thesis.

REQUIRED TEXTS

ENGLISH 2308E Course Reader

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vols. I and II (shorter 8th ed), eds. Nina Baym et al.

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Bantam)

Henry James, *Washington Square* (Oxford)

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson and Those Extraordinary Twins* (Modern Library Classics)

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing* (Rutgers UP)

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Graywolf Press)

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Participation	10%	
In-Class Writing	5%	DUE: at end of each semester
Close Reading Paper	5%	DUE: Oct 14 (700 words)
Short Essay	10%	DRAFT: Nov 18; FINAL: Dec 2 (1500 words)
Mid-Year Exam	10%	IN-CLASS: Jan 6
Position Paper	5%	DUE: Feb 3 (700 words)
Prospectus & Bibliography		DUE: Feb 24 – Completion grade (5% deduction from Research Essay grade if not submitted)
Research Essay	20%	DRAFT: Mar 17; FINAL: Mar 31 (2400 words)
Final Exam	35%	TBA

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES

Attendance, Participation & Preparation:

Attentive reading and reflective discussion are at the heart of this class. Your attendance, preparation, and participation are essential. Being prepared means you have completed the reading, reflected on it, and have come to class with your assigned reading in hand, ready to discuss your thoughts, questions, and any passages that struck you as important. Each absence without prior explanation will result in a 0.5% deduction from your participation grade. A pattern of lateness will likewise affect your participation grade. An absence will be excused if you supply legitimate documentation to the Academic Counseling office.

University policy states: if unexcused absences continue after due warning, the student will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course. Students who are frequently absent you risk disbarment from the exam (which means failing the course). An absence will be excused if you supply legitimate documentation to the Academic Counseling office.

Technology:

Computers are not permitted in class. For special dispensation, please come and talk to me.

You can expect a response to your email within 48 hours. If you haven't received a response within two days, please resend your message.

Late Assignments:

Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted. Late essays and assignments will be deducted by 2% per day. Submit late papers through the drop-box outside of AHB 2G02.

Grading:

Grades are assigned on a scale of 1-100. At the end of term letter grades are assigned according to the following scale:

A+	90-100	Outstanding, original work that exceeds expectations in both style and content, not only fulfilling the assignment but also expanding on it in a new way.
A	86-89	Superior work which is clearly above average, developing nuanced and complex ideas in graceful, clear prose.
A-	80-85	Excellent work displaying strong organization, mechanics, thoughtful ideas, and compelling presentation.
B+	77-79	Very good work, meeting all requirements of the assignment but may not achieve the originality, complexity, or insight of A-range papers.
B	74-76	Competent work, meeting all requirements of assignment, but leaving room for improvement in execution and development of ideas.
B-	70-73	Solid work showing potential, but with some problems in development and expression of ideas.
C	60-69	Adequate work which has positive qualities but is still searching for an organizing idea or may be struggling with its expression.
D	50-59	Minimally acceptable work, poorly organized and written.
F	> 50	Fails to meet the minimum expectations for assignment.

I do not negotiate grades, but am happy to discuss your work and correct computational errors.

Except in unusual circumstances, I return graded work within two weeks.

WESTERN POLICIES***Prerequisites:***

Students are responsible for ensuring that their selection of courses is appropriate and accurately recorded and that all course prerequisites have been successfully completed. If the student does not have the prerequisites for a course, the University reserves the right to remove the student from the course and to delete it from the student's record. This decision may not be appealed and there will be no adjustment to fees paid.

Value of Term Work and Exam:

Students must pass both term work and the final examination in order to pass the course. Students who fail the final examination (regardless of their term mark) will automatically fail the course.

Academic Accommodation:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 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 Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found here:

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

The full policy is set out here:

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

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of text 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 offense. If plagiarism is proven the student may fail the course or receive zero on the assignment (see Academic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Borrowed ideas, not just quotations, must be appropriately acknowledged (this includes borrowings from internet and library sources). The documentation of your sources is an essential part of university writing. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask me.

Western uses software for plagiarism checking.

RESOURCES

Mental Health:

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

Disabilities:

I am happy to make academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities who have registered with Student Development Services: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

The Student Development Centre offers resources and support for students, including one-on-one tutoring sessions to help with writing: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

Further Information:

Departmental and university policies related to course work, grades, plagiarism, appeals, etc. are available on the English Department website:

<http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES & READINGS

You are expected to have done the assigned reading prior to the first class in which a work is being discussed. Bring hard copies of assigned readings to class. (R) = Reading in Course Reader

I. ERRAND INTO THE WILDERNESS		
16 Sep	<i>Introduction: Puritans in America</i> John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (Norton)	
23 Sep	John Winthrop, "Reasons to Be Considered for ...the Intended Plantation in New England" (R) Thomas Hooker – "The Soul's Preparation for Christ" (R) John Cotton – "A Treatise of the Covenant of Grace," "Sixteen Questions of Necessary and Serious Consequence" (R) "The Examination of Mrs. Anne Hutchinson" (R) "Anne Hutchinson's Creed" (R) Roger Williams, "Bloody Tenet of Persecution," "A Key Into the Language of America"	
30 Sep	Mary Rowlandson, from <i>A Narrative of Captivity</i> Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "The Author to Her Book," "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House," "To My Dear Children," from "Meditations Moral and Divine" (hand-out)	
7 Oct	Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> ("The Custom-House," ch 1-6)	
14 Oct	Hawthorne cont. (to the end)	CLOSE READING
21 Oct	Jonathan Edwards, from <i>Personal Narrative</i> , "A Divine and Supernatural Light," "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," from <i>Religious Affections</i> (hand-out), from "The End for which God Created the World" (hand-out)	
II. THE GREAT AWAKENING & DECLARATIONS OF LITERARY INDEPENDENCE		
28 Oct	Benjamin Franklin, from <i>The Autobiography</i> Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence", from <i>The Federalist</i> (#1, #10), from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> 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"	
4 Nov	Ralph Waldo Emerson, selections from <i>Nature</i> , "The American Scholar," "Self-Reliance," "The Poet," "Circles" (R), "The Divinity School Address" (R)	
11 Nov	Henry David Thoreau, from <i>Walden</i> "Resistance to Civil Government"	
18 Nov	Frederick Douglass, from <i>Narrative of the Life of an American Slave</i> Peer Editing Session	SHORT PAPER DRAFT

III. INTENSIVE AND EXTENSIVE AMERICANS		
25 Nov	Walt Whitman, from “Song of Myself,” “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” from “Democratic Vistas” (hand-out) Ralph Waldo Emerson, letter to Whitman (1098)	
2 Dec	Emily Dickinson, 259 [287] [A Clock stopped -], 260 [288] [I'm Nobody! Who are you?], 269 [249] [Wild Nights - Wild Nights!], 320 [258] [There's a certain Slant of light], 339 [241] [I like a look of Agony], 479 [712] [Because I could not stop for Death -], 519 [441] [This is my letter to the World], 591 [465] [I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -], 598 [632] [The Brain - is wider than the Sky -], 760 [650] [Pain - has an Element of Blank -], 764 [754] [My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun -], 1263 [1129] [Tell all the Truth but tell it slant -], 1668 [1624] [Apparently with no surprise]	SHORT PAPER FINAL
9 Dec	Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener,” “A Squeeze of the Hand” (from <i>Moby Dick</i>) (hand-out) Review Session	
IV. REALISM & NATURALISM		
6 Jan	MID-YEAR EXAM William Dean Howells, from “Novel-Writing and Novel-Reading” Henry James, from “The Art of Fiction” Henry James, <i>Washington Square</i>	
13 Jan	James cont.	
20 Jan	James cont. Mark Twain, <i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i>	
27 Jan	Twain cont. Library Research Session	
V. AMERICAN MODERNISM		
3 Feb	William James, from <i>Pragmatism</i> (R), “On a Certain Blindness in Human Beings” (R) W. E. B. Du Bois, from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>	POSITION PAPER
10 Feb	Gertrude Stein, from <i>Tender Buttons</i> , “If I Told Him” (R), from <i>Lectures in America</i> (hand-out), from “Composition as Explanation” (hand-out) Wallace Stevens, “Anecdote of the Jar,” “The Snow Man,” “The Idea of Order in Key West,” “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” “The Man on the Dump” (R) Robert Frost, “The Mower,” “Mending Wall,” “The Wood-Pile,” “The Death of the Hired Man,” “The Road Not Taken”	
17 Feb	READING WEEK	

24 Feb	Ezra Pound, "Portrait d'une Femme" (789), "In a Station of the Metro," from "A Retrospect" (800), "Imagisme" (R) H.D., "Oread," "Mid-Day," "Sea Rose," (R), "Garden" (R) William Carlos Williams, "Portrait of a Lady," "Spring and All," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus," "This Is Just to Say," from <i>Spring and All</i> (804) Flossie Williams's reply to "This Is Just to Say" (R), "The rose is obsolete" (R) T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (R)	ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY + PROSPECTUS
3 Mar	Modernist Poetry cont. Hart Crane, "Chaplinsque" (hand-out) Charlie Chaplin, <i>Modern Times</i>	
10 Mar	Nella Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i> Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (1038), "I, Too," "The Weary Blues," from "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (806)	
VI. VARIETIES OF EXPERIENCE		
17 Mar	Allen Ginsberg, "Howl," "Footnote to Howl," "A Supermarket in California" Jack Kerouac, "Belief & Technique for Modern Prose," "Essentials of Spontaneous Prose" (R), From <i>On the Road</i> (R) John Ashbery, "The Instruction Manual" (R) John Cage, "Writing Through Howl" (R), "Lecture on Nothing" (R) PEER EDITING SESSION	RESEARCH PAPER DRAFT
24 Mar	John Berryman, "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet," from "The Dream Songs" Sylvia Plath, "Morning Song," "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy," "Ariel" (R) Anne Sexton "Sylvia's Death" (R) Robert Lowell, "Mr. Edwards and the Spider" (R) Art Spiegelman, from <i>Maus</i> Alison Bechdel, from <i>Fun Home</i> (R)	
31 Mar	Claudia Rankine, <i>Citizen</i>	RESEARCH PAPER FINAL
7 Apr	Review Session FINAL EXAM TBA	