

Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature Survey
English 2308E (002)
Fall/Winter 2016-17**Instructor:** Alyssa MacLean**Date/Time:** Monday 3:30-5:30pm,
Wednesday 3:30-4:30pm**Location:** Thames Hall 3101**Antirequisite(s):** English 2341E, 2342F/G, 2343F/G, 2344E, 2345F/G, 2346F/G and 3664E.**Prerequisite(s):** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both of English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

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

A survey of American literature from the period of imperial exploration and contact in North America to the postmodern era. In this class, we will read some of the most fascinating literary works of the United States in a variety of modes and genres—from novels to abolitionist propaganda to sentimental poetry. We will consider the aesthetic and formal properties of each text and consider how writers were inspired by the social conditions, ideological conflicts, economic forces, and political developments of their times, such as Indian Removal and slavery. As we study the evolution of major artistic movements and periods, we will also trace the development of important assumptions, myths, and fundamental beliefs about the United States that still influence American discourse today.

In this survey, we will also pay close attention to the voices that are heard—and not heard—in different moments of US history. The pressure of attempting to read 400 years of literary history will force us to pose some difficult questions about the limits of the American literary canon. Why do we read what we read, and who benefits from that? How have ideas of what constitutes “literature” (or “America,” for that matter) changed over time? What could lesser-known writers contribute to our understanding of the US nation and its literature? And is it possible to read so-called canonical writers in a way that produces new kinds of knowledge?

Readings will include novels such as Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Ernest Hemingway’s *In Our Time*, Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*; short fiction by Herman Melville, William Faulkner, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henry James; personal narratives such as Harriet Jacobs’ *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and Zitkala-Sa’s “Impressions of an Indian Childhood”; and poetry by Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, and Allan Ginsberg.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be better able to:

- Trace the development of different literary traditions in the US, identify their main qualities and their historical contexts, and discuss how they emerged in relation to each other;
- Explain how social, political, and economic realities affected the production and consumption of literature;
- Describe how key works both conform to and diverge from important literary traditions and literary modes in the United States;
- Confidently express nascent ideas and questions, both in oral and written contexts;
- Develop confident close reading skills in a variety of literary modes and genres;
- Write persuasive, clear essays with a compelling thesis and a logical argument supported by textual evidence;
- Summarize scholarly readings of literary works and situate their ideas within the context of an existing critical discussion.

Course Materials

N.B. All materials are required.

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Eighth Edition, 2 volumes. Eds. Nina Baym et al.
ISBN-13: 978-0393918885

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*.

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*

Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time*

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Short Essay #1 (2 pages).....	5%
Fall in-class test.....	5%
Fall term paper (5 pages).....	15%
Short Essay #2 (2 pages).....	10%
Winter in-class test.....	5%
Research paper proposal.....	5%
Research paper (7 pages).....	20%
Participation and attendance (cumulative).....	5%
Final exam (cumulative).....	30%

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>.

Further course policies will be available in the official syllabus at the beginning of the fall term.

Timetable (tentative):

You are expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to the first class in which a work is being discussed. Readings are subject to change. Please bring hard copies of assigned readings to class. (Norton) = Find reading in Norton anthology. (OWL) = Find reading on course website.

Please note that readings may be added, dropped, or modified:

1. ORIGINS	
Mon. Sept 12:	Introductions. Bradford and Winslow, from "Mourt's Relation" (Norton) Álvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, from "The Relation..."
Wed. Sept. 14:	Excerpt from John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" (Norton) Roger Williams, "A Letter to the Town of Providence" (Norton) Letter from indentured servant Richard Frethorne (OWL)
Mon. Sept. 19 :	Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "The Author to Her Book," "Before the Birth of One of Her Children," "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet," "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House" (Norton) Hawthorne, "The Minister's Black Veil" (Norton)
Wed. Sept. 21:	Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (Norton)
Mon. Sept. 26:	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>
Wed. Sept. 28:	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i>
2. THE AMERICAN PROJECT: PROMISES AND BETRAYALS	
Mon. Oct. 3:	Thomas Jefferson et al. "The Declaration of Independence" (Norton) Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (Norton)
Wed, Oct. 5:	Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To The Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth," "To His Excellency General Washington" (Norton) First short paper due
Mon, Oct. 10:	THANKSGIVING—NO CLASS
Wed, Oct. 12:	William Apess, "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man" (Norton) Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Letter to President Martin Van Buren" (Norton)

3. NEW VISIONS OF AMERICA: TRANSCENDENTALISM, ABOLITIONISM, AND SENTIMENTALITY	
Mon, Oct. 17:	Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance," "Nature" Ch. 1-5 (Norton)
Wed, Oct 19:	Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> Ch. 1-3 (Norton)
Mon, Oct. 24	Walden Ch. 5-7 (con't) "Resistance to Civil Government" (Norton)
Wed, Oct. 26:	Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (Norton)
Mon, Oct 31:	"Bartleby" con't
Wed, Nov. 2:	In-class test
Mon, Nov. 7:	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (read entire novel, not the excerpts provided in Norton)
Wed, Nov. 9:	Jacobs con't
Mon, Nov. 14:	Zitkala-Sa, "Impressions of an Indian Childhood" (posted on OWL—do not use the excerpts in Norton)
4. LITERATURE AND THE CIVIL WAR	
Wed, Nov. 16:	Longfellow, "The Arsenal at Springfield" (OWL) Sigourney, "The Suttee," "Indian Names"
Mon, Nov. 21	Whitman, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" Whitman, "Song of Myself" sections TBA
Wed, Nov. 23	Whitman, "Song of Myself" con't
Mon, Nov. 28	Emily Dickinson, "There's a certain Slant of light", "After great pain, a formal feeling comes", "I'm Nobody! Who are you?,"; other poems TBA Peer-review session
Wed, Nov. 30	Dickinson, selected poems TBA
5. RECONSTRUCTION, RACE AND GENDER	
Mon, Dec. 5	Twain, <i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i>
Wed, Dec 7:	<i>Pudd'nhead Wilson</i> FALL TERM PAPER DUE
Winter Break	
Mon Jan. 9:	Henry James, "Daisy Miller: A Study" (Norton)
Wed Jan 11:	Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (Norton) Sui Sin Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" (Norton)
6. MODERNIST EXPERIMENTS	
Mon Jan. 16:	F. T. Marinetti, From "Manifesto of Futurism" (Norton) Ezra Pound, From "A Retrospect," "In a Station of the Metro", "Portrait d'une femme" (Norton) William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow", "This is Just to Say" (Norton)
Wed Jan 18:	Modernists con't T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Norton) "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (Norton)
Mon Jan 23:	T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" (Norton)
Wed. Jan. 25:	Eliot, "The Waste Land" (con't)

	Second short paper due
Mon. Jan. 30:	Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar," "The Snow Man," "The Idea of Order in Key West," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (Norton)
Wed. Feb 1:	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i>
Mon. Feb. 6:	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i>
Wed. Feb. 8	<i>In Our Time</i> (con't)
Mon. Feb. 13:	Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (Norton)
Wed. Feb. 16:	In-class test
Mon. Feb. 20:	READING WEEK
Wed. Feb. 22:	READING WEEK
7. THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE	
Mon. Feb. 27:	Library Research Session W.E.B. DuBois, from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , ch. 1, 3 (Norton) Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "Sympathy," "We Wear the Mask," "Frederick Douglass" (Norton) Langston Hughes, "I, Too," "The Weary Blues", "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (Norton)
Wed. Mar. 1:	Harlem Renaissance con't Nella Larsen, <i>Passing</i>
Mon. Mar. 6:	<i>Passing</i> (con't)
Wed. Mar. 8:	<i>Passing</i> (con't) Research paper proposal due
8. POSTWAR AND POSTMODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE	
Mon. Mar. 13:	Sylvia Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>
Wed. Mar. 15:	Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i> (con't)
Mon. Mar. 20:	Allan Ginsberg, "Howl" (Norton)
Wed. Mar. 22:	Ginsberg, "Howl" (con't), "A Supermarket in California" (Norton) Jack Kerouac, "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose" (Norton)
Mon. Mar. 27:	Research paper draft peer-review session Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>
Wed. Mar. 29:	<i>Beloved</i>
Mon. Apr. 3:	<i>Beloved</i>
Wed. Apr. 5:	Wrap-up RESEARCH PAPER DUE
	Final Exam (cumulative): Time and Date TBA

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.