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
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](http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade).

**Timetable:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading and Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sep 10</td>
<td>Introduction; Christopher Columbus, from <em>Letters</em>; excerpt from Bartolomé de las Casas</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>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])</td>
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<td>Oct 1</td>
<td>finish <em>Last of the Mohicans</em>; William Apess “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man”</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Benjamin Franklin <em>The Autobiography</em>, 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”</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>Thomas Jefferson <em>Declaration of Independence</em>; excerpts from <em>The Federalist</em> (#1, #10); Nathaniel Hawthorne <em>The Scarlet Letter</em> (chs. 1-7; skip “The Custom-House”)</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Nathaniel Hawthorne <em>The Scarlet Letter</em>, finish</td>
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<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Frederick Douglass <em>Narrative of the Life</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov 5</td>
<td>M. NourbeSe Philip Zong</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Henry Wadsworth Longfellow</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
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<td>Dec 3</td>
<td>Mark Twain</td>
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<td>Jan 7</td>
<td>T.S. Eliot</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Ezra Pound</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>Wallace Stevens</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>W.E.B. Du Bois</td>
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<td>Feb 4</td>
<td>Zora Neale Hurston</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Sylvia Plath</td>
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<td>Mar 4</td>
<td>Sylvia Plath</td>
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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.**


**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.