

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES
EN 361: American Literature
Fall 2018

Professor: Dr. Lin Knutson **Class and Location: MWF 1:00-1:50 TED 108**
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Office Hours: MWF: 12-1; 2-4; Wed 4-5 **Office: TED 161**

Course Description:

This course is a survey of American Literature beginning with the 15 & 16th centuries Colonial Period, to the 17th/18th Century Enlightenment Period, the 19th Century Romantic Period and ending with American Realism at the end of the 19th Century (post-Civil War). The purpose of the course is to familiarize students with the cultural impact of the New World on the development of American Literature. The students will be exposed to the historical forces that shaped American literature, and how this literature reflects the tensions that characterize the development of American oral and written language; these cultures include the Native American, Mexican, African and European peoples; events include explorations and early encounters, colonial settlement; writings include journals, diaries, and other documents that came to define the “American-ness” of American literature. The class will emphasize the diversity of cultures and experiences throughout its literary history. The selections will reflect a diversity of gender, class, ethnic, cultural, and historical perspectives. By continually interrogating the question “What is an American” we will gain a more expansive appreciation for the diversity, blend, and mix of particular experiences and cultures of this nation.

Required Text and Other Recommended Materials:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Shorter Eighth Edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013

Expected Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the historical factors that shaped early American literature by examining early forms of writing such as journals, diaries, tales, short stories, slave narratives, origin stories, and autobiography, among others.
2. Students will be able to identify and understand the various “voices” of American literature.
3. Students will receive the critical criteria for interpreting literature.
4. Students will read and analyze critically the thematic concerns embedded in the early American literary expressions of Puritanism, Enlightenment politics, Romanticism, and American Realism.

5. Students will develop their skills in reading, critical thinking and writing as demonstrated in formal and informal papers, class presentations, and small and large group class discussions.

Class Attendance Policy: Prompt and consistent attendance is vital. For a three credit course that meets three times a week, a total of five (5) unapproved absences are allowed for the semester. The student will fail the course with more than five unapproved absences. The class will begin promptly with attendance being taken. A student is tardy if she enters class after his name has been passed during the roll call; it is then her responsibility to inform me immediately after class has concluded that he was indeed present, when she will receive a tardy instead of an absence. Three “tardies” equals one absence from class. Any one may take a brief restroom break without permission, but if they leave the classroom and do not return for longer than 15 minutes, they are absent for that day. Furthermore, if they miss more than 15 minutes of class by arriving late and/or leaving early, they will be marked absent, even if they are present during roll call. Absences are counted from the first day of class until the end of the semester. Only officially excused absences do not incur attendance penalties. Note: I will occasionally be giving quizzes over vocabulary and over the readings. These will be taking place at the beginning of the class period.

Classroom Demeanor: I hope to have a relaxed, but academic atmosphere. Please be on task when class begins. Have your textbook by the second class period and bring it to class every day. Let me repeat that having a hard copy of the reading is required for every class period. If your text is temporarily misplaced or stolen, you can download a copy of the reading on-line for that day. Students are furthermore expected to read the assigned readings before each class period, and be willing to contribute thoughts and insights into the work. Unannounced quizzes may occur at the beginning of any class period, so be sure that you are prepared by reading the assignments ahead of time.

Please show respect to the professor and other students in this class at all times. I am hoping for lively discussion during most of our class periods, but it is important to keep our discussions focused on the literature for that day. It is furthermore important that you do not carry on private conversations during the class.

There is a no-cell phone policy for the class. All phone or other electronic devices must be turned off and stored out of sight. Studies have shown that students who are texting or focused on a phone cannot also pay attention in class. Students are not permitted to leave the classroom to take a phone call. This may sound punitive, but when distractions are eliminated, we have the opportunity to listen to each other on a whole different level. However, any student in family emergency situation may let me know at the beginning of the hour that you need your phone on “buzz” at the beginning of the hour, and an exception will be made for you for that day.

Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:

A student who engages in intentional plagiarism (copying someone's paper or summaries from e-notes, cliff notes, Wikipedia and the like) will receive a zero for the assignment. If the student engages in intentional plagiarism a second time that student will fail the course.

Make-up Policy:

No late assignments will be accepted. All assignments must be turned in during the class period or by the end of the professor's scheduled hours for that day. Papers turned in after the due date will receive a lowered "late" grade. I do not accept assignments emailed to me, without a prior agreement. If an assignment is accepted as an emailed assignment, that assignment must be turned in as a hard copy by the next class period, or it will not receive credit. Students are always welcome to bring drafts to me before the due date, and I will be glad to talk to you about it. I encourage students to visit me during my office hours for help, or just to chat.

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

Two literary analysis papers of 5-7 pages are required. Students will receive an assignment rubric for each of these papers. The papers must be written on a text discussed in class this semester. The essay should be in the form of a focused, well-organized, grammatically correct paper with an interesting introduction, a focused thesis statement, relevant body paragraphs which incorporate brief, useful citations and solid support, and a satisfactory conclusion, prepared according to Modern Language Association guidelines.

A draft is required several days before the paper is due. Private one on one conferences with the professor are encouraged, and may be required. Any student who does not write an "acceptable" paper will be given an opportunity to revise it within one week. Be sure to keep drafts and peer reviews; they will be turned in with your final paper on that due date.

Students are required to write five (5) "reading critiques," over one or more of the major readings assigned in the class. You will receive a rubric regarding the critiques. Each critique must be an analysis (not a summary); it must include at least one quotation from the selected reading, and it must incorporate two literary terms. Six critiques are listed on the syllabus. You may skip any one of the critiques without penalty; writing all six will result in extra credit for critique #6.

Students are required to give one ten minute oral presentation over the course of the semester, of their choice. The oral presentation must include the following:

- a. A brief bio of the author/ or discussion of the time period
- b. The presenter's own discussion and analysis of the reading by the author for that class period
- c. Present a piece of outside critical analysis they have found over the reading and explain it to the class
- d. Have prepared 5-10 questions over the reading to help us begin a class discussion over the readings.

- e. A “visual” is required: a handout, or power point, or photo story or story board, etc., is required.
- f. Students are expected to follow the presentation rubric supplied.

A mid-term examination and a final examination are each required. Vocabulary and reading quizzes will be given bi-monthly.

Note: Students must complete all major assignments (2 papers, 2 exams, critiques, oral presentation) in order to pass the class.

Technology: We will watch occasional videos in order to enhance our understanding of the literature.

Grading Criteria: Only grades of “A,” “B,” “C,” “D,” and “F” may be earned. No “I” grades will be given, except in emergency situations that may occur at the very end of the semester.

Homework and attendance	10%
5 Reading Critiques	15%
Paper #1	15%
Paper #2	15%
Midterm	15%
Final	15%
Oral presentation	15%
Total:	100%

ADA Statement:

Student must inform the instructor of any special need(s) within first week of class to ensure that those need(s) can be addressed in a timely manner. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the Office of Disability Service at 254-3446 and to submit appropriate documentation prior to receiving services.

I look forward to a great semester with this class! We have the potential to become a close community of readers and writers as we all work toward achieving our best work this semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE: Fall 2016**Week 1:**

M 8/20 Intro to course/ Identity Paper/ writing diagnostic

W 8/22 “Crash”

F 8/24 “Crash”

Week 2: I. Colonial and Native American voices

M 8/27 “Crash” and final discussion

W 8/29 Puritanism Eskimo origin text and Genesis chapters 1&2 (handout) Colonial Period 1-12; New England 136-139; John Smith 125-135 Native American Origin literatures 12-16; Talk Concerning the First Beginning 16-30

F 8/31 Wm Bradford 164-178

Week 3:

M 9/3 Labor day holiday

W 9/5 Columbus 48-57; handout, Essay #1; vocab list #1; **Critique #1: Identity Paper Due**

F 9/7 Bradstreet poetry *The Prologue* 188-190

Week 4:

M 9/10 Bradstreet: *The Author* p. 190; *To My Dear..*p. 194; *In Memory* p. 195; *Upon the Burning* p.197-8; (last day to drop/add a class)

W 9/12 Phillis Wheatley 569-70; *On Being Brought* p. 575; *To His Excellency..* p. 577-8

F 9/14 Edward Taylor 232-234; *The Preface* 235-6; *Huswifery* 236-7; **vocab quiz #1**

Week 5:

M 9/17 Mary Rowlandson 206-8; *The Captivity* p.208-220; vocab list #2; **Critique #2 Early American Lit poetry due**

W 9/19 Rowlandson 221-232; **draft essay #1 and memo/ conferences over draft**

II The “Slavery” Question

F 9/21 Crèvecoeur p. 435-453 video as intro to slave narratives

Week 6:

M 9/24 Equiano *From the Interesting Life* p. 526-554

W 9/26 Frederick Douglass *The Narrative of the Life..*p. 866-898; **vocab quiz #2**

F 9/28 Douglass p 898-931

Week 7:

M 10/1 Harriet Jacobs *Incidents in the Life* p841-860; **Essay #1 due**

W 10/3 Harriet Beecher Stowe from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* p. 1033-1055; **critique #3 Slave Narrative due**

F 10/5 **Midterm Exam**

Week 8: III The “Woman” Question

M 10/8 The Grimke Sisters p. 812-825; vocab list #3

W 10/10 Elizabeth Cady Stanton 861-866
 F 10/12 Sojourner Truth (handout); Essay #2 handout

Week 9: IV. American Romanticism

M 10/15 Edgar Allen Poe 988-990; *The Fall of the House of Usher* p.1001-1014
 W 10/17 Poe, poetry: *The Raven*1028; *Annabel Lee* p. 1032; **vocab quiz #3**
 F 10/ 19 Poe, *The Philosophy of Composition* (handout); vocab list #4; **critique #4 Poe**

Week 10:

M 10/22 Nathaniel Hawthorne p.953-955; *Young Goodman Brown* p. 968
 W 10/24 Hawthorne, *The Birthmark* p. 977
 F 10/26 Essay #2

Week 11:

M 10/29 Herman Melville p. 1055-1057; *Bartleby, the Scrivener* 1058-1071;
critique #5 Hawthorne
 W 10/31 *Bartleby* p. 1071-1083; **vocab quiz #4**

V. American Transcendentalism

F 11/2 Emerson 689-691; *Self Reliance* p. 707-723; **Essay draft #2 due (This is the presentation day for the Cotton symposium)**

Week 12:

M 11/5 Thoreau 749-751; *Resistance to Civil Government* p.751-765
 W 11/7 from *Walden* “Where I Lived” 765-775; “Conclusion” 792-800

VI. American Realism

F 11/9 Walt Whitman 1209-1211; preface to *Leaves of Grass* p.1211-1225;

Week 13:

M 11/12 Whitman, *Song of Myself* p. 1225-1230; **Essay #2 due**
 W 11/14 Whitman, *One’s Self I Sing* p. 1276-7; *When I Heard* p. 1284;
When Lilacs Last 1286-1287
 F 11/16 Emily Dickinson p. 1295-1297; poems 1298-1303

(Week 14: Fall Break/ Thanksgiving Week/ no classes held Nov 19-23)

Week 15:

M 11/26 Dickinson poems 1304-1309
 W 11/28 Dickinson poems 1310-1313; **critique #6 Whitman or Dickinson**
 F 11/30 last class “cast of characters”

Final Exam: tba