

# American Literature

## Syllabus

### Course Description:

Students in this course will analyze primary texts covering the genres of poetry, drama, fiction and non-fiction, and will discuss them from different critical stances. They will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by responding to questions focusing on the works, authors, themes, and motifs.

### Textbook(s):

The text for this course will be available through the Online Library, which will provide students access to selected journal articles, book chapters, and reference materials.

### Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the major authors, trends and forms found in the subject of the course.
2. Identify distinguishing features of the literature in the course topic.
3. Analyze the relationship between literary texts and the particular historical, social, cultural, and biographical contexts of their production.
4. Research and critically evaluate historical, social, cultural, or biographical criticism relevant to the analysis of specific literary texts.
5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating a one or more specific literary texts to the historical, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of its production.
6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.
7. Write coherent literary arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

### Course Goals:

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world literature and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse literary traditions the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
3. To provide an overview of literary analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.
4. To read widely and critically in a variety of literary forms found in different genre studies and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.
5. To do library research on a particular work of literature, an individual writer, or an issue in the area of genre studies and to write a critical essay which incorporates this research.

### Course Content:

1. Literary works that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
2. Discussion of the historical, social, cultural and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
3. Literary movements in various periods.
4. Discussion of the theoretical issues and questions related to historical, social, cultural, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
5. Figurative, archetypes, and stylistic considerations.

6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in literature.
7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary global issues.
8. Critical analysis and interpretation.
9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

**Course Outline:**

For the detailed course outline, please see the calendar.

**Course Readings:**

For a list of course readings, please see the Readings page on the course website

**Course Preparedness:**

This course is a literature course. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in world literature and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. The California Department of Education "English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" offers context for understanding the standard for writing at the college level. Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the "English-Language Arts Content Standards" will not pass this course. In short, this course assumes that students already "write with a command of standard English conventions, write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument, and use clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies" (California Standards, Grades Nine and Ten). This course focuses on literary texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

**Course Workload:**

In accordance with accreditation standards, requires approximately two hours of outside work for every contact hour. For a 3-hour course, there are 48 contact hours, plus a minimum of 96 hours outside work. For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework.

**Activities**

1---READING

Please read the textbook assignments in your reading lists.

2---REVIEW

Students will review Study Guide questions to develop a deeper understanding of the text and the concepts. Keeping careful notes or a journal will help them write the essays.

3---WRITING

Students are required to write a total of five (5) unit essays and a final essay. The unit essays will be at least 1,250 words in length, and will be turned in at the end of each unit. The final essay will be at least 5,000 words in length and will be turned in at the end of the course.

Type of Essay	Minimum Word Count	Percentage of Grade	Due Date
Unit Essay	1,250	10% per unit	End of unit
Final Essay	5,000	50%	End of course

The essays are comprehensive literary analyses and should contain the following elements:

Clear thesis statement  
Analysis of the text, with supporting textual evidence  
Insights and interpretations  
Clear conclusion  
Works Cited (use MLA style: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>)

### Definition of Grades:

#### Graduate Courses

- A Outstanding Achievement
- B Commendable Achievement
- C Marginal Achievement
- F Failing \*

\* Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

- I **Incomplete** A grade given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

- W **Withdrawal** Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. **Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses.** Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

### Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>

### Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

### Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

### Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

**Civility:**

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

**Students with Disabilities:**

Students seeking special accommodations due to a disability must submit an application with supporting documentation, as explained under this subject heading in the General Catalog. Instructors are required to provide such accommodations if they receive written notification from the University.

**Writing Across the Curriculum:**

Students are expected to demonstrate writing skills in describing, analyzing and evaluating ideas and experiences. Written reports and research papers must follow specific standards regarding citations of an author's work within the text and references at the end of the paper. Students are encouraged to use the services of the University's Writing Center when preparing materials.

The following website provides information on APA, MLA, and other writing and citation styles that may be required for term papers.

**Online Library:**

Our Online Library supports academic rigor and student academic success by providing access to scholarly books and journals electronically.