

ENGL 2201W -- American Literature to 1880

Section 002 | Fall 2019

T/TH 12:30pm-1:45pm | GENT 101

Class Details

Instructor: Kari Daly

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Office: AUST 155

Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 2-3pm

Course Description: This course provides a glimpse into the formation of American literature to 1880. As a young nation determined to prove its cultural worth, the United States struggled in the nineteenth century to establish a literary tradition. Transcendental writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Walt Whitman, attempted to answer this call by establishing what they felt was a uniquely American tradition of writing. The work of these writers would be described as part of the “American Renaissance” by F.O. Matthiessen in his 1941 work, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Whitman*. According to Matthiessen, the writers of this period strove to embody the “possibilities of democracy.” Yet alongside this tradition there existed a body of literature devoted to exposing the evils of slavery, a deeply undemocratic system that ruined the lives of millions. Among the writers who forced the American public to confront this evil are Harriet Beecher Stowe and Frederick Douglass. Our course aims to reconcile the injustices of slavery with the work of the writers on which our literary tradition is founded. How can we read about the self-reliance promoted by Emerson alongside the tragic facts of Douglass’s autobiography? How can we continue to revere the work by white, middle-class men who, in some cases, blatantly ignored the men and women suffering around them? There is no easy answer.

This course, as a “W” course, requires 15 pages of revised writing, which we will split across two separate essay assignments. In addition, shorter, “lower-stakes” writing will be required to enable you to investigate a variety of ideas about the texts. Please note that, according to university policy for W courses, you *cannot* pass this course unless you receive a passing grade for the writing assignments.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, I hope you will:

- Be able to recognize major works of nineteenth-century American Literature
- Develop a basic knowledge of nineteenth-century historical contexts so as to be able to discuss American Literature
- Critique the canon of nineteenth-century literature and make suggestions for improvements to future American Literature syllabi
- Utilize close reading and scholarly research so as to interpret a chosen piece of American Literature in a research paper

Required Texts

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol B (1820-1865) 978-0393264470

Uncle Tom's Cabin (Broadview, 978-1551118062)

The House of the Seven Gables (Penguin Classics, 978-0140390056)

Other readings as assigned on HuskyCT

Grading

Short 4-5 page close reading essay and final 11-12 page research paper: 50%

Reading responses (4 per student; your choice, but must be submitted prior to class discussion of the text; about 200 words; submitted through HuskyCT discussion board) and other shorter writing assignments: 15%

Midterm: 15%

Class participation, presentations, and quizzes: 20%

Because of the collaborative nature of this course, turning in assignments on time is essential. Please be aware that late papers will result in *half* a letter grade being subtracted from your final grade for the assignment. This includes rough drafts as well as final drafts, which means that submitting both a rough draft and a final draft late for an assignment will result in the loss of a full letter grade.

Extensions may be granted, but only with advanced notice. *Please note that essays submitted online must be in Microsoft Word format (.doc or .docx). This is a free download so no excuses! Essays submitted in other formats will be treated as late papers and will be docked accordingly.*

Participation and Electronic Devices

Class participation in a course such as this one is essential. Students are expected to take part in class discussions, which will be largely guided by written reading responses. Therefore, absences will be taken seriously.

While the use of electronic copies of the texts is acceptable, phones are absolutely forbidden. Use of a phone during class time will result in an automatic F for that day's participation grade.

Additionally, you will be expected to either bring a written copy of the text *or* a laptop or tablet (if using an e-book) to *every* class. Students who attend class without either a paper copy of the texts or a laptop/tablet to reference an electronic copy will be given an automatic F for that day's participation grade. Due to the nature of the texts we are reading for this course, use of a phone to reference a text during class is forbidden.

Email and Communications

Please be aware that I frequently use the announcement feature in HuskyCT. You are responsible, therefore, for regularly checking your UConn email, especially if classes are canceled. Note, too, that I will only respond to emails from your official UConn email address.

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to make use of the Writing Center for your projects. This is a free service and can help you identify weak points in your work. Visit <http://writingcenter.uconn.edu> for more information.

Ethical Scholarship

It is crucial to find and use source legally and ethically. Review and abide by the University's code on academic misconduct (plagiarism and misuse of sources); you will be held responsible for understanding these materials. Anyone found plagiarizing will fail the essay or the course.

Accommodations

It is important to me that all students have the tools and resources necessary to be successful in this course. I have worked to ensure that this class is as accessible as possible for all students, incorporating UDL, multimodal texts, accessible content, and flexible deadlines and schedules. I am dedicated to meeting any accommodation requests, whether or not you are registered with UConn's Center for Students with Disabilities. I am also always learning, so I encourage you to approach me at any time with suggestions or requests for ways to make this class more accessible.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week	Day	Date	Due
1	Tuesday	08/27/19	Introductions
	Thursday	08/29/19	Crèvecoeur, "What is an American?" (HuskyCT); Phyllis Wheatley poems (HuskyCT)
2	Tuesday	09/03/19	Introduction: "An American Renaissance?" (3-21); Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney (106-14); William Cullen Bryant, "Thanatopsis" (116-19)
	Thursday	09/05/19	Emerson, Introduction (178-81); Emerson, "Self-Reliance" (236-53);
3	Tuesday	09/10/19	Mini close-reading assignment due by class time (printed); Emerson, "The American Scholar" (210-23)
	Thursday	09/12/19	Melville, Introduction (1410-13) and "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1469-95)
4	Tuesday	09/17/19	Thoreau, Introduction (950-52) and excerpt from <i>Walden</i> (969-1012)
	Thursday	09/19/19	Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" (950-68)
5	Tuesday	09/24/19	Individual conferences; rough drafts of Close Reading paper due by conference time
	Thursday	09/26/19	Individual conferences; rough drafts of Close Reading paper due by conference time
6	Tuesday	10/01/19	Short Close Reading paper due by 11:59:59pm ; Whitman, Introduction and "Preface to <i>Leaves of Grass</i> " (1294-1311); "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," and "As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life" (1364-75)
	Thursday	10/03/19	Whitman, "Song of Myself" (1312-56)
7	Tuesday	10/08/19	Douglass, Introduction (1159-63) and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1236-39)
	Thursday	10/10/19	Midterm
8	Tuesday	10/15/19	Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> (1197-1228)
	Thursday	10/17/19	Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> (1163-82)
9	Tuesday	10/22/19	Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> (1182-97)
	Thursday	10/24/19	Stowe, Introduction (793-794), <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>

Week	Day	Date	Due
10	Tuesday	10/29/19	Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
	Thursday	10/31/19	Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
11	Tuesday	11/05/19	Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>
	Thursday	11/07/19	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>
12	Tuesday	11/12/19	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>
	Thursday	11/14/19	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i>
13	Tuesday	11/19/19	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> ; research paper topics due
	Thursday	11/21/19	Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (909-930)
14	Tuesday	11/26/19	Thanksgiving Break
	Thursday	11/27/19	
15	Tuesday	12/03/19	Writing Workshops (rough drafts for research paper due by workshop time)
	Thursday	12/05/19	paper presentations

Research papers due: TBD