

Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature Survey English 2401E (002) Fall/Winter 2022-23

Prof. Alyssa MacLean

Email: <u>alyssa.maclean@uwo.ca</u> **Tel:** (519) 661-2111 ext. 87416

Office: UC 4429

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-3 or by appointment

Class Time: Tuesdays 10:30 am – 12:30 pm, Thursdays 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Class Location: University College 3220 Delivery type: in-person, synchronous

Antirequisite(s): English 2341E, 2342F/G, 2343F/G, 2344E, 2345F/G, 2346F/G and 3664E, or

the former English 2308E.

Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 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 sentimental poetry to slave narratives to postmodern drama. We will consider the aesthetic and formal properties of each text and consider how writers were shaped by the social conditions, ideological conflicts, economic forces, and political developments of their times, such as the forced removal of Native Americans and the practice of chattel 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 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*, and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar*; short fiction by Herman Melville, Henry James, William Faulkner, and Alice Walker; personal narratives such as Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Zitkala-Sa's *Impressions of an Indian Childhood* and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*; and poetry by Anne Bradstreet, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Allan Ginsberg, and Sherman Alexie.

Course format: this is an in-person synchronous course.

Use of recordings: Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior permission of the instructor.

Learning Objectives:

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

- Identify different literary traditions in the US and explain their development, noting their key literary characteristics, their historical period, their intellectual tradition, and their relation to each other
- Generate original, incisive arguments about literature that pay attention to the structure, rhetoric, genre, and historical context of literary works
- Express ideas clearly in oral and written form, using appropriate textual evidence, literary terms, scholarly criticism, theoretical concepts, historical contexts, and insights from class discussions
- Formulate a research question and revise written work based on feedback
- Summarize and cite secondary sources responsibly, develop basic critiques of them, and discuss them productively to generate new interpretations of texts
- Demonstrate an emergent awareness of scholarly approaches to the study of US literature, such as new historicist, feminist, queer, and African American studies; use research tools such as library databases
- Display academic integrity in all research processes—i.e. demonstrate an awareness of
 how new knowledge is created in the discipline, cite sources ethically and transparently,
 acknowledge the ideas that are theirs and not theirs, and make that difference clear to
 their readers. Students will contribute to the larger research community as they create
 connections among researchers and themselves, and protect the ideas of others and of
 ourselves.

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Eds. Nina Baym et al., Shorter Tenth Edition, 2 volumes. ISBN: 978-0-393-88444-9

-n.b. This 2-volume anthology will be the main course text. The set available at the bookstore includes a bundle wrapper that contains the code for the digitized version of the 5-volume set, which may be useful.

Douglass, Frederick, and Harriet Jacobs. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, Modern Library, 2004. ISBN 0-345-47823-1 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Bantam, 2003. 9780553210095 Hemingway, Ernest. *In Our Time*, Scribner, 2003. ISBN 9780684822761 Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*, Faber and Faber, 1988. ISBN 978-0-571-20033-7

Recommended texts:

Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray. *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms*. 4th Edition, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2018. ISBN 978-1-319-03539-6

Modern Language Association. *MLA Handbook*, 9th edition, Modern Language Association, 2021. ISBN 978-1603293518

-n.b. We will be referring briefly to both of these texts in class, but they are not required texts. They are recommended for English majors who don't yet own a glossary of literary terms or an MLA handbook for consultation purposes.

Methods of Evaluation:

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/Student%20Information.html.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Land acknowledgement: Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and

Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population.

Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

COVID-19 vaccine information:

As part of a strengthened COVID-19 vaccination policy, all members of our community - including

students, employees, and visitors - who plan to be on campus this fall will be required to demonstrate proof of vaccination (2 vaccines plus a booster), except under rare exemptions. All members of the community must upload proof of vaccination by January 1 2023.

COVID-19 mask protocol in class:

When determined by Western policy and public health directives, students will be required to wear masks

that meet or exceed Western's recommendations at all times in the educational spaces on campus. Students who are unable to wear a mask for medical or religious reasons must seek formal accommodation through Accessible Education at aew@uwo.ca.

Students are expected not to eat or drink while in class to ensure masks stay in place. Students will be able to eat and drink outside of the classroom during scheduled breaks.

Students unwilling to wear a mask as stipulated by Western policy and public health directives will be referred to the Department, and such actions will be considered a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

Contact information:

I will normally respond to emails within 48 hours. I'm happy to discuss your ideas anytime during office hours. I hold my office

hours in my office, with the ability to hold them on Zoom from there. Please sign up for an appointment slot via the link provided on OWL and indicate whether you want to come inperson or via Zoom. If you just want to drop by, please do, but understand that I'll have to attend to scheduled students first. If you can't attend my regularly-scheduled office hours, contact me and we can set up an appointment.

Intellectual Property/Copyright:

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for

students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

A note on our class content:

Our course readings and discussions will often focus on serious, difficult, and potentially challenging topics that may ask you to step out of your normal comfort zone. Almost every work on our syllabus depicts

mature, provocative, or even deliberately offensive content of some kind, such as trauma and gender-based violence, racist ideology, racial epithets, suicide, substance abuse, and forms of self-harm.

Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings. Nonetheless, we are all responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful, and I ask all students to come to class and participate in discussions in a spirit of intellectual curiosity, honesty, and empathy. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

Please consider approaching me ahead of time if you'd like spoilers for certain kinds of content or other information that would help you feel more able to appreciate the readings or class discussion. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, I encourage you to reach out to campus counselling services; if need be, your counsellor can contact me to discuss the situation.

Timetable (tentative):	
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You are expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to the first class in which a work is being discussed. Please bring assigned readings to class.

N.B.: we may discover that we want to spend more time on certain readings and less time on others. I'll consider changing the schedule if such a change would benefit most students' learning in this course. If readings are modified, they will not vary significantly in page length.

Unit 1. Contact in the Americas		
Thurs. Sept 8:	Introductions	
Tues. Sept. 13:	Iroquois creation story (Norton)	
	Àlvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, from "The Relation" (Norton)	
Thurs. Sept. 15:	Excerpt from John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity"	
	(Norton)	
	Letter from indentured servant Richard Frethorne (posted on OWL)	
Unit 2: Puritans and Anne Bradstreet		
Tues. Sept. 20:	Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "The Author to Her Book," "Here	
	Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House" (Norton)	
Thurs. Sept. 22:	Bradstreet, "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth	
	Bradstreet" (Norton)	
Unit 3: Puritans and The Scarlet Letter		
Tues. Sept 27:	Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>	
	This week: watch MLA videos on OWL—these will be useful for	
	upcoming papers	
Thurs. Sept. 29:	The Scarlet Letter con't	
	Secondary reading TBA	
Tues. Oct. 4:	The Scarlet Letter con't	

	First short paper due (3 pages)			
Thurs. Oct. 6:				
Unit 4: Revolutionary America				
Tues. Oct 11:	Thomas Jefferson et al. "The Declaration of Independence" (OWL)			
Thurs. Oct. 13	Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To The Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth," "To His Excellency General Washington" (Norton)			
Unit 5: Transcend	lentalism			
Tues. Oct. 18:	Emerson, "Self-Reliance"			
	Secondary reading on Transcendentalism TBA			
	Henry David Thoreau, selections from Walden (Norton) Ch. 1 and 2			
Thurs. Oct 20:	Henry David Thoreau, selections from <i>Walden</i> (Norton) (to end of excerpt)			
Tues. Oct. 25:	Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (Norton)			
Thurs. Oct. 27:	"Bartleby" con't			
Oct 31-Nov 6	No class: Reading Week			
Unit 6: American	slavery and the slave narrative			
Tues. Nov. 8:	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (read entire novel, not the excerpts provided in Norton)			
Thurs. Nov. 10:	Incidents con't			
Tues. Nov. 15:	Incidents con't			
	Download and read the following essay on OWL: Whitsitt, "Reading Between the Lines: The Black Cultural Tradition of Masking in Harriet Jacobs's <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> "			
Unit 7: Whitman				
Thurs. Nov. 17:	Whitman, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer"			
Inurs. Nov. 17:				
	Essay 2 due (5 pages)			
Tues. Nov. 22:	Whitman, "Song of Myself" sections 1-13, 16-19, 48-52 (Norton) Secondary reading TBA			
Thurs. Nov. 24:	Emily Dickinson, "I heard a Fly buzz - when I died -" "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"			
Tues. Nov. 29:	Dickinson, "There's a certain Slant of light" (Norton) "Tell all the truth but tell it slant –" "I started early – took my dog"			
NI 00 1 1 1	other poems TBA (Norton)			
•	o drop a full course course without penalty			
Thurs. Dec. 1:	Dickinson TBA			
	and Native American life writing			
Tues. Dec 6:	Download the following reading on OWL, print out and bring to class (do not use the excerpts in Norton):			
	Zitkala-Ša (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin), from <i>Impressions of an Indian</i> Childhood			

Thurs. Dec. 8	Zitkala-Ša (con't)
	es. Dec 22: December exam period (no midterm for this class)
Tilday Dec. 10-10	es. Dec 22. December exam period (no maderin for this class)
	Winter Break
Unit 1: Realism ar	nd Modernism
Tues. Jan 10:	Henry James, "Daisy Miller: A Study" (Norton)
Thurs. Jan. 12:	"Daisy Miller" con't
Tues. Jan. 17:	F. T. Marinetti, From "Manifesto of Futurism" (Norton)
	Ezra Pound, From "A Retrospect," "In a Station of the Metro"
	(Norton)
	William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow", "This is Just to
	Say" (Norton)
Thurs. Jan 19:	T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (Norton)
Tues. Jan 24:	Eliot, "Prufrock" con't, "The Waste Land" (Norton)
Thurs. Jan 26:	"The Waste Land" (con't)
Tues. Jan 31:	Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "The
	Snow Man"
Thurs. Feb. 2:	Stevens (con't)
	Secondary reading TBA
Unit 2: Hemingwa	ay
Tues. Feb. 7:	Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time
Thurs. Feb. 9:	In Our Time con't
Tues. Feb. 14	In Our Time con't
	Essay 3 due (5 pages)
Thurs. Feb. 16	In Our Time con't
Feb. 18-23	No class: Spring Reading Week
Unit 3: The Harle	m Renaissance
Tues. Feb 28:	W. E. B. DuBois, from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , ch. 1, 3 (Norton)
	Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "Sympathy," "We Wear the Mask"
Thurs. Mar. 2:	Langston Hughes, "The Weary Blues" (Norton)
Unit 4. Postmoder	n American fiction
Tues. Mar. 7:	Plath, The Bell Jar
Thurs. Mar. 9:	The Bell Jar (con't)
	Research paper proposal due
Tues. Mar. 14:	The Bell Jar (con't)
	A link to the following book excerpt will be posted on OWL.
	Download and read for class:
	From Marta Caminero-Santangelo's The Madwoman Can't Speak: Or
	Why Insanity is Not Subversive
Thurs. Mar. 16:	The Bell Jar (con't)
Unit 5. The Beat C	
Tues. Mar 21:	Jack Kerouac, "Belief and Technique for Modern Prose" (OWL)
	Allan Ginsberg, "Howl", "A Supermarket in California"
Thurs. Mar 23:	"Howl"
Unit 6. The Amer	ican South and the American West

Tues. Mar. 28	Faulkner, "Barn Burning"
Thurs. Mar. 30	Walker, "Everyday Use"
	RESEARCH PAPER DUE (8-10 pages)
Tues Apr. 4	Alexie, "At Navajo Monument Valley Tribal School"
_	"Pawn Shop," "Crow Testament"
Thurs. Apr. 6	Review
Exam period	Final Exam: Time and Date TBA
(Apr 13-30)	

OVERVIEW OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS:

Attendance and illness policy:

Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or

half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

If there is a reason why you're not attending our class, please speak to me about it. The process for requesting academic accommodation on medical or other grounds is described in the "Accommodations" section near the end of this syllabus.

Please do not come to in-person class if you're feeling ill or if you can't pass the COVID-19 screening survey. I will be giving students 4 classes' worth of grace days for participation per semester, to accommodate common colds and other illness. I will consider providing live-streamed classes in cases where a student anticipates being unable to come to class for more than two consecutive classes. Please consult the COVID flowchart under "Lessons" on OWL for more instructions. [N.B. if you're staying home because you've failed a COVID-19 self-assessment, you always have the option of going to Academic Counselling for formal academic considerations. I would recommend doing that if you anticipate being absent for more than 2 consecutive classes.] Note that this flexibility of grace days of class participation does not extend to other assessments in the course, which would require academic consideration or an extension request made in advance.

Students who demonstrate a pattern of routinely missing coursework due to self-reported COVID symptoms, and therefore do not demonstrate mastery of the learning outcomes of the course, will not receive credit for the course.

Participation and engagement:

This class depends upon regular and active engagement and participation from all students: this involves reading ne course texts carefully before class, preparing questions for class discussion, listening

the course texts carefully before class, preparing questions for class discussion, listening actively, responding thoughtfully to other students, and coming to office hours. You must bring your assigned text to class so that you can participate fully in our discussions. Readings should

be completed in their entirety before our first class on them, even if we're covering them over multiple days.

Your participation mark is designed to measure your attendance, participation, engagement with other students, and evidence of consistent preparation and active learning. Short in-class writing assignments or quizzes may be given during the semester to ensure that all students are contributing to the conversation. Failure to come to class prepared enough to ask a question, complete an in-class assignment, or participate in a discussion will negatively affect your participation grade.

Quizzes and engagement activities: Over the course of the year, I'll be giving 10 quizzes and/or short-answer assignments that are meant to test your comprehension of past class discussions and key concepts and monitor the class's comprehension of the assigned reading. For the most part these quizzes will take place on OWL at the beginning of class. The best 7 out of 10 quizzes will be counted.

Essays: There are 4 essays due for this class: one short paper, (3 pages), 2 medium essays (5 pages), and a final research paper (8-10 pages) which will require a proposal.

Papers in English should be written in MLA format; this method of documentation is described in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 9th ed, which is available as a digital download on the university's library website. It's also available for purchase at the bookstore. The OWL at Purdue website also has an abbreviated guide to MLA guidelines at http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/.

Further details of these papers will be announced later in the course. I encourage you to discuss your papers with me in office hours as you work on them. On the day the essay is due, please upload a copy of it under "Assignments" on OWL.

Late policy: The penalty for late papers will be 2% per day. Extensions may be granted in the case of a documented personal or medical emergency. Late penalties will be applied for each day of the week, including weekends and holidays.

Exam: This course will have a closed-book, 3-hour in-person final exam that will cover all of the material of the course. Further details will be provided later in the course.

MORE COURSE POLICIES

Contingency plan for an in-person class pivoting to 100% online learning:

In the event of a COVID-19 resurgence during the course that necessitates the course delivery moving away from face-to-face interaction, all remaining course content will be delivered online. The grading scheme will not change. Any remaining assessments will also be rescheduled, modified for digital submission, or conducted online as determined by the course instructor. In the event that online learning is required, a stable internet connection with working microphone and webcam will be required. As has been the case in the past, the

decision to pivot to online learning will be made by Western, and not individual instructors or departments (excepting temporary online instruction in the event of instructor illness). If any changes in delivery format are necessary, I will communicate with you via Announcements on OWL to explain the new format for the class.

Accommodation Policies: Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities.

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 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 Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Religious Accommodation: Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT WESTERN

Statement on Academic Integrity

We (i.e. students in this course, Professor MacLean, the Department of English and Writing Studies, Western University, and the scholarly community at large) share an understanding of the ethical ways that we use to produce knowledge. A core practice of this shared value of academic integrity is that we acknowledge the contributions of others to our own work. However, it also means we

that we acknowledge the contributions of others to our own work. However, it also means we produce our own contributions that add to the scholarly conversation: we don't buy or copy papers or exams, or have someone else edit them. We also don't falsify data or sources, or hand in the same work in more than one course.

One of the learning outcomes of this course is to cultivate a clear sense of what academic integrity is: what academic integrity means for this discipline, why it matters, and how to practice it in our research. Please come and see me any time you have questions about how or why we engage in the practices of attribution and citation. See "<u>Tips for Avoiding Plagiarism</u>"

from UBC's Chapman Learning Commons, and bookmark the Purdue OWL website for how to use MLA citation style.

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.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

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/

Academic Support & Engagement http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/

If you need help:

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.