I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

English 509, American Literature is a one-semester course for which the student receives three credits. The course is a survey of American writers from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century. In this course, students are exposed to an interweaving and unfolding of disparate threads and literary voices that will give them an integrated vision that crosses boundaries of ethnic, gender, or regional perspectives.

II. COURSE RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE

English 509 helps students develop an understanding of and appreciation for the literary merit and cultural context of male and female writers from the seventeenth to the twenty-first century, the history and intellectual currents that influence them, and the literary genres they employ. In this course, students will be able to demonstrate in their writing and speaking an understanding of the literature through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and presentation.

E509 is designed as a class for students who will become English educators; such students must learn to use speaking and observing as major forms of inquiry and reflection. Therefore, students will be responsible not only for learning the course material, but for being able to present it (see “special course requirements,” below). Whether or not an individual is in fact an education major, it is true that when a student takes responsibility for presenting material, he/she learns it in a more dynamic way, as do his/her classmates. In this way, the successful student of E509 is expected to become an ambassador for the arts and humanities and for the benefits of critical thinking as a lifelong habit (ref. NCATE matrix 2.4, 2.7, esp. 3.2).

III. COURSE OVERVIEW:

English 509, American literature, is a graduate level, one semester, three-credit course that surveys the works of American writing from its beginnings, through its flowering in the 19th century, and on towards its emergence as a major world literature in the 20th century. Besides acquainting students with a body of remarkable literature that has recently been reshaped to include far more disparate voices than were once included, the course will seek to both question and develop narratives that link literary texts to one another through relations of affinity, influence, interconnection, and culture. This course is dedicated to finding cultural links and crossings and is particularly interested in those moments in American texts in which writers move across boundaries of social class, gender, race, culture in the widest sense. In teaching and learning about United States authors, it is particularly useful to find connections and contrasts between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Frederick Douglass, or Ann Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley, or Edward Albee and James Baldwin, at least in how their writings differently "read" and reinterpret the North American world whose stage they shared.
IV. COURSE COMPETENCIES

1. Institutional Outcomes

E509 American Literature is well aligned with the University’s goal of developing students and teaching candidates who are effective performers, reflective decision-makers, and humanistic practitioners.

- The humanities content of E509, and the students’ responsibility for demonstrating a keen appreciation of it is designed towards developing **effective performers**. Students engage the literature and culture of early America wide variety of ethnic and cultural perspectives, including the voices of women, Native-American, African-Americans, and European-Americans.

- **Reflective decision making** is developed through consideration of the ethical, moral, and spiritual issues surrounding the literature of a people who claimed divine providence as their guide, but countenanced atrocities (slavery, American-Indian genocide) repugnant to the modern mind. Students relate their own backgrounds to the backgrounds of the writers to examine the ideas and cultural settings that have informed contemporary cultures and the culture of times past.

- **Humanistic practice** is engendered when the students demonstrate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of others’ beliefs, values, and cultural constructions as well as their own.

This course offers the students an understanding of how American Literature began in the 1600s as an obscure offshoot of the English Renaissance, grew gradually out of its provincial status and underwent its own Renaissance in the nineteenth century, moved its literary center southwards and westwards in the post civil-war nineteenth century, and exploded into a series of cultural and ethnic movements in the twentieth century.

2. Specific Learning Objectives

The course is designed to equip students to acquire the following competencies:

A. To acquaint students with the ideas and writing associated with each major period of American literature: pre-colonial, colonial, romantic, post-bellum, naturalism, modernism, and post-modernism;

B. To impel students to explore the social, political, literary, and economic factors that promoted the development of American literary movements and theories.

C. To introduce students to the major genres of each literary period as they reflect the thinking in various periods.

D. To understand the thematic or ideological “content” of certain genres in American literature;

E. To understand what makes some genres more “American” than others.

F. To acquaint students with themes that are characteristic of, though not necessarily exclusive to the American experience and that include the following:
the problem of American identity;
the individual and the community;
the problem/expression of literary authority;
the American Dream;
the immigrant experience, family relationships, and attitudes toward children;
race, segregation, and slavery;
progress and modernity;
gender issues of women’s lives, works, vision, and politics.

IV. EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Through
  - typed papers,
  - in-class essays and exams,
  - formal class presentations,
  - typed papers, and
  - formal and informal class discussion, *(ref. NCATE matrix 3.2.2, 3.2.3,3.2.4)*

students will at the end of English 317 be able

A. To discuss the intellectual currents of the colonies; Puritanism, Anglicanism, Separatism, Catholicism and Quakerism.

B. To understand how the writers of the Enlightenment era became more and more American as the century progressed, until the Revolutionary War ended their Colonial status.

C. To discuss the writer of the Romantic Period as a professional author, though many writers still regarded literature as an avocation.

D. To analyze the intellectual currents of the Romantic period: nationalism, romanticism and transcendentalism.

E. To understand why the so-called American Renaissance produced classic examples of fiction and poetry.

F. To discuss the basis for understanding the political writing of the period.

G. Distinguish between naturalism, social realism, local color realism, and psychological realism;

H. Show understanding of the effect of both reconstruction and Jim Crow on the literature of the late 19th century.

I. Note the influences of American's emergence as an economic and military power on the literature of this period.
J. Explore and explain the contrasting themes of early 20th century modernism, such as Optimism for the future (Hughes) vs. pessimism (Eliot).

K. Elucidate, in writing and discussion, the rise of “pure” aesthetic concerns as a category of concern for American literary modernists.

L. Explore and discuss the different ethnic, economic, and social experiences used in the post-WWII fiction of Bernard Malamud, Maxine Hong Kingston, Amy Tan, Alice Walker, Leslie Marmon Silko, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Toni Morrison.

M. Analyze the common themes and elements uniting writers of differing backgrounds.

N. Examine the stylistic innovations of writers of the late 20th century period, including their links to modernism, realism, and naturalism, but also to post-modernism.

COURSE CONTENT

1. The Literature of Colonial America
   - Christopher Columbus (1451)
   - Captain John Smith (1580-1631)
   - William Bradford (1590-1657)
   - Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)
   - Michael Wigglesworth “Day of Doom”
   - Cotton Mather (1663-1730)
   - Mary Rowlandson
   - John Woolman
   - Jonathan Edwards

2. The Literature of Reason and Revolution
   - Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)
   - Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797)
   - Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)
   - Phillis Wheatley (1754-1784)
   - Philip Freneau (1752-1832)

3. The Age of Romanticism
   - David Walker (?)
   - Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)
   - Nathanial Hawthorne (?)
   - Margaret Fuller (?)
   - Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
   - Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
   - Herman Melville (1819-1891)
   - Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)
   - Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)
Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897)
Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

4. Post-Bellum Regionalism, Realism, and Naturalism.

- Charles Chesnutt (1858-1938)
- Mark Twain (1835-1910) *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- William Dean Howells (1837-1920) "Editha,"
- Henry James (1843-1916)
- Kate Chopin (?)
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- Stephen Crane (1871-1900)

5. Twentieth Century Modernism

- W.E. B. DuBois
- Edward Arlington Robinson
- Robert Frost
- Ezra Pound (1885-1972)
- William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)
- T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)
- Langston Hughes (1902-1967)
- Jean Toomer
- Zora Neale Hurston (1891-1960)
- Richard Wright


- Tillie Olsen
- Ralph Ellison *Excerpt from Invisible Man*
- Tomas Rivera. "...And the Earth Did not Part"
- James Baldwin "Sonny's Blues."
- Toni Morrison. *Excerpt from Sula.*

V. SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student is required to make two oral presentations, which will also serve as a basis for a critical review.

1. Who were the Puritans, and what did they believe?
   Name:   Due Date
2. Mary Rowlandson, her captivity narrative, and King Phillip’s War
   Name: Due Date:

3. Benjamin Franklin
   “The Man and his writing:”
   Name: Due Date

4. Thomas Jefferson:
   The man, his “Declaration” and his Notes on the State Virginia (and the issue of Race)
   Name: Due Date:

6. David Walker
   From: The Appeal
   Name: Due Date:

7. Edgar Allan Poe
   “The Fall of the House of Usher”
   Name: Due Date:

   “The Masque of the Red Death”
   Name: Due Date:

8. Nathaniel Hawthorne
   “Young Goodman Brown”
   Name: Due Date:

   “Rappaccini’s Daughter”
   Name: Due Date:

9. Ralph Waldo Emerson
   Self Reliance
   Name: Due Date:

   “The American Scholar”
   Name: Due Date:

10. What you need to know about Margaret Fuller
    (But never knew to ask)
    Name: Due Date:

11. Henry David Thoreau
    From: Walden. “Civil Disobedience”
    Name: Due Date:

12. Herman Melville
    “Bartleby the Scrivener”
    Name: Due Date:
13. Frederick Douglass  
   From: Narrative of the Life (How he learned to read and write, and the famous root episode)  
   Name: Due Date:

14. Walt Whitman  
   “Song of Myself”  
   Name: Due Date:

15. Whitman and Lincoln: “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”  
   Name: Due Date:

16. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn  
   Name: Due Date:

17. The DuBois / Washington fight, and Early Modernism  
   Name: Due Date:

18. The Modernism of Pound and Eliot  
   Name: Due Date:

19. The Modernism of the Harlem Renaissance  
   Name: Due Date:

20. Richard Wright and Zora Neale Hurston  
   Name: Due Date:

21. Post World War II Multi-Cultural American Literature  
   Tomas Rivera  
   Name: Due Date:

22. Amy Tan  
   Name: Due Date:

The following critical readings are in the library:

Ray B. Browne and Martin Light, Critical Approaches to American Literature, Volume I

Lawrence Buell, Literary Transcendentalism

H. S. Commager, The American Mind.

Everett Emerson, ed. Major Writers of Early American Literature 1764-1789: The Revolutionary Years Everett Emerson, ed. Puritanism in America, 1620-1750.
Perry Miller, The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings, Volume I

Charles Shapiro, ed. Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels,

The Gale Literature Criticism Series will be of help to you. Look for books in the LC (Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800) NCLC (Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism), TCLC (Twentieth Century Literary Criticism), CLC (Contemporary Literary Criticism) and DLB (Dictionary of Literary Biography).

DISCUSS is an online resource accessible from library computers that offer full text articles; use it!

IF YOU CANNOT FIND WHAT YOU’RE LOOKING FOR, ASK A LIBRARIAN FOR HELP!!

Of course, there are many, many internet sources that are of help. For my list of recommended internet sources, see the list of selected internet links at the end of this document.

Guidelines for class presentations:

- Plan your presentations
- Speak TO the class; don’t read something downloaded from the web!!
- Make eye contact.
- Reading some of the text can be interesting, but you have to MAKE IT interesting! For instance, use inflections in your voice, and call on another member of the class to help.
- Relate your material to other course material and to anything else that will help the students.
- Ask for questions
- Ask questions. Leave the audience something to consider.
- When possible, give the class something to look at or listen to. Pictures of Columbus, the Puritans, slaves, and the founding fathers often reveal much about changing cultural attitudes. Examples can be found at http://www.learner.org/amerpass/. This doesn’t have to be elaborate; 10 copies of two pictures can do much to illustrate a point.

(Ref NCATE matrix 3.2.1-3.2.5; 4.7; 3.6.2)

Grading criteria for class presentations (in descending order):

35% Summary of the material (present the main points in a way that is easily understandable)
20% Relationship to the course material in general (other authors, issues, and periods)
20% Showmanship (presentation, audio/visual, eye-contact, posture, dress)
15% Questions and Answers
10% Clarity and pronunciation of speech

Not only will the instructor evaluate the student; students will be required, at the end of each class, to evaluate the student presentations of that class. (Ref. NCATE matrix 4.6, 4.7, 4.8).
The following formal papers are required:

1. At the mid term, each student will submit a comparison paper on two of the works the class has studied (this will NOT be on the same topic as the class presentation).

2. Each student will write a paper, due at the end of the semester which relates the topic of his or her paper to one or two other major works we study in the course of the semester.

Papers must be well researched and properly referenced.

VI. METHOD OF EVALUATION

Students must complete four unit examinations in addition to the mid-term and final examinations. Quizzes will be given throughout the semester. All unit examinations will be announced. Quizzes will not always be announced.

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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>Papers</td>
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List of suggested internet links.

The following websites are listed roughly in order of usefulness, in the instructor’s opinion. (Some of the best sites are not the most useful because they demand a high speed, multi-media connection).

Anthology of American Literature by George McMichael companion website.
http://cwx.prenhall.com/bookbind/pubbooks/mcmichael/
Like most textbooks today, yours supports a companion website. Features of this site include an interactive timeline, dynamic web links which are a valuable source of supplemental information, author profiles, essay questions, bulletin board discussion areas. It’s pretty good.

Companion Website to Norton Anthology of American Literature
http://www.wwnorton.com/naal/
An older website than the Prenhall American Lit website, this one has recently been extensively refreshed. Very good.

C-Span American Writers
http://www.americanwriters.org/index_short_list.asp
I love this site!! It is a true multi-media site filled with information and material and very lively. You need a high-speed network connection to appreciate it.

American Passages: A literary survey
http://www.learner.org/amerpass/
Want to put together your own slide show on American Lit? This is the place to go! A co-production of WWNorton and PBS, this is an interactive, multi-media site designed to support a college-level American Literature course. Excellent!

Early American Literature 1600 - 1900, Resources
http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/amlitfirst.htm
A link to links. So far, it has always been kept up to date.

PAL Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide
http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/table.html

The Seventeenth Century: Echoes of the Renaissance and Reformation
http://lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/amlit1.html
Lecture notes from Michael S. Seiferth

Resources for American Literature
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~daniel/amlit/amlit.html
Analysis and criticism of works by Lorraine Hansberry, Frank Norris, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Herman Melville, Washington Irving, Sarah Orne Jewett, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Stephen Crane, Zora Neale Hurston, William Faulkner, Flannery O'Connor; this site also includes, American Literature Survey, literary study, teaching methods, online e-texts.

Voice of the Shuttle: English Literature
http://vos.ucsb.edu/
English & American literature. Literary criticism. This site keeps growing! Must visit

Outline of American Literature
http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/oal/amlitweb.htm
From USIA. Literary movements; time periods. Excellent site, From U.S. Information Agency

American Literary Movements
http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/litfram.html
Defines literary terms, timeline, biography and gives links for authors.

The American Renaissance and Transcendentalism
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/icon/transcend.html
From PBS. I Hear America Singing

Electronic Archives for Teaching the American Literatures
http://www.georgetown.edu/tamlit/tamlit-home.html
Essays, syllabi, bibliographies

Romancing the Indian
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/HNS/Indians/main.html
Comparison of the sentimentalizing and demonizing representations of American Indians in the works of James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain; and other nineteenth-century American authors.
Who Was Benjamin Banneker?
http://www.progress.org/banneker/bb.html
Biography from Banneker Center for Economic Justice

The World of Benjamin Franklin
http://sln.fi.edu/franklin/rotten.html
Biography; Franklin as a scientist, inventor, statesman, printer, philosopher, musician and economist;

American Transcendentalism Web
http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/
Begun in Spring 1999 by Virginia Commonwealth University graduate students studying in Professor Ann Woodlief's class in Studies in American Transcendentalism. This is a major resource for students of American Literature.

The Cambridge History of English and American Literature
http://bartleby.com/225/index.html

An Early American Almanac
History; facsimile of first almanac published/shed in 1725

Fire and Ice; Puritan and Reformed Writings
http://www.puritansermons.com"/

BIBLIOGRAPHY


America, 2000.


Richardson, Robert D. Emerson: The Mind on Fire
Richardson, Robert D. *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind* 

Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography* 
NY: Knopf Publishing Group, 1996.


