

Survey of American Literature
English 2613 – Fall 2023

Midwestern State University
Dual Credit with Founders Classical Academy of Schertz

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Course Description: A survey of American literature from the colonial beginnings through the 20th century. Emphasis is on the works of principal authors as they reflect literary and historical backgrounds.

The purpose of this course is to engage students with the plays, poems, and novels of American literature from the 17th through 20th centuries. Students will develop skills of close reading and criticism, analyzing these works for form (literary genre and convention) and content (themes and ideas).

Prerequisites: None

Goals:

- The class will examine the major authors and early American literary works through the American Romantic movement.
- This course will also examine previously marginalized authors who have only recently been included in the American canon. In particular, this class should reveal to students the origins of American culture and reinforce that our culture is more complex and diversified than previously acknowledged.
- In addition, this class will focus on how writers in various cultural and historical periods utilized literature to comment on civic engagement, as well as moral and ethical conflicts between communities and individuals.

Required Texts (all texts are supplied by the teacher):

- “Legend of Sleepy Hollow” by Washington Irving
- “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- *Bartleby the Scrivener* By Herman Melville
- *Moby Dick*, Herman Melville.
- Anne Bradstreet “Dialogue between Old England And New”
- Edward Taylor “Huswifery, “The Wasp”
- Jonathan Edwards “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
- Sarah Kemble Knight excerpts from her diary
- William Bradford “Of Plymouth Plantation”
- Jane Johnston Schoolcraft “Mishosha, or the Magician and His Daughters”
- Chief Seattle “Speech of Chief Seattle”
- Benjamin Franklin “The Way to Wealth” “Speech in the Convention” “On the Slave Trade”
- Thomas Paine, from “Common Sense”
- Mercy Otis Warren, “To Fidelio, Long Absent on the great public Cause, which agitated all America, in 1776”

- William Cullen Bryant “Thanatopsis”
- Edgar Allan Poe “Annabel Lee”
- Henry David Thoreau excerpts from “Walden Pond”
- Ralph Waldo Emerson “Self-Reliance”
- Walt Whitman “Song of Myself”
- Frederick Douglass, excerpts
- Frederick Law Olmsted from *A Journey Through Texas*
- Emily Dickinson, short poems

Assignments and Grade Distribution:

- 25% Weekly Short Writing, Study Questions, & Participation
 - Students will answer frequent study questions aimed at helping them develop critical reading skills.
 - Students will write weekly one-page reflections reflecting on the week’s reading and discussion. These will build towards the longer essays.
- 15% Seminar (quiz grade)
 - Seminars will be held once a week. Questions will be posed in advance, and students will be expected to prepare thoroughly to lead a discussion for the duration of the class.
- 40% Tests & essays
 - Three unit tests: Tests generally consist of a section of quotation identification and short-answer questions (one sentence), a section of medium-answer questions (approx. three sentences), and a longer essay. Some exams ("essay exams") may consist of a series of short essays.
 - Essays will require students to posit and develop a significant thesis about the text. Prior to starting an essay, students will need to have their theses approved by the instructor, and will turn in outlines and rough drafts to aid them in crafting a full, thoughtful argument. Essays will conform to the MLA style guide. Assignment sheets for the following assignments will be handed out during the semester and are considered an extension of this syllabus. Students will write one essay offering a coherent thesis about each of the following books:
 - *Scarlet Letter* (4-5 pages)
 - *Moby Dick* research paper (pages5-7)
- 15% Quizzes
 - Students will be given brief, frequent quizzes over the daily reading homework and the literary conventions and forms discussed. Quizzes will often include quotation identification questions.
- 5% Memorization
 - Students will memorize several poems and recite them from memory for a grade.

Quality of Work

All assignments (homework, classwork, tests, and papers) must be neat and legible. Ripped, torn, or scribbled-on paper will not be accepted. Paper torn out of a spiral notebook is not acceptable. Lined notebook paper/loose-leaf paper is required for all upper school assignments unless specifically directed by the teacher.

Late Work and Absences

Students are expected to complete and turn in assignments in good order and on time. Late work will be penalized 10% per day late. Work more than 2 days late will receive a grade of zero. Major assignments with test weighting (final drafts of essays would be the primary qualifying assignment) will be penalized 20% for each day late and will only be accepted on the next two school days. Regarding excused absences, students will be allowed one extra day for each day missed to turn in work that was assigned while absent (for example, if a student is absent two

days, the relevant work will be due two days after he or she returns). Absences may not extend deadlines of work assigned when the student was present—such work is due on the day the student returns to school. For the list of valid absences, see the campus handbook.

If a student is absent, it is always his or her responsibility to determine what was assigned by checking Skyward and/or getting the assignment from a responsible classmate. The absent student is also responsible for obtaining notes from fellow classmates. The student should also check with the teacher in case an in-class assignment needs to be made up.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Cheating takes place when a student copies the work of another, allows someone to copy his or her own work, or when he or she uses unauthorized aids during assignments or assessments. Plagiarism occurs when a person uses someone else's words or ideas and presents them as one's own (typically on an essay or paper). Student cheating or plagiarism will result in short term consequences, a grade penalty, a meeting with parents, and a discipline consequence. Academic dishonesty will also have long term consequences related to virtue, vice, habit, and destiny. Earning a lower score on an assignment or test is preferable to degrading one's character. Refer to page five of the campus handbook for details about academic dishonesty. Turnitin.com may be used to check papers for plagiarism.

Nota bene, unless specifically given permission, students may not work together on a written assignment.

Extra Credit and Extensions

There will be no extra credit given to compensate for negligence. If a student needs an extension or help completing an assignment, he or she needs to request it **in advance via email so that there is a record of the request**. A signed note from a parent or doctor may also gain an extension.

Email Policy: I will respond to student emails in 1 to 2 business days. I may not respond to emails after 5pm or on weekends.

Disability Support Policy Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guarantees reasonable accommodation.

Major Course Assignments & Examinations:

Week 3: Test on initial material

Week 7: 4-5 Page Paper on Scarlet Letter

Week 8: Midterm test

Week 14: 5-7 Page Research Paper

Week 15: Final Exam

Course Overview:

Week 1-3: *Colonial beginnings and the American Dream*

- Week 1
 - Introduction to American Literature,
 - Early Colonial literature Anne Bradstreet, Edward Taylor, Sarah Kemble Knight, William Bradford's "Of Plymouth Plantation"
- Week 2
 - Jonathan Edwards "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
 - Benjamin Franklin "The Way to Wealth" "Speech in the Convention" "On the Slave Trade"
 - Washington Irving "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
 - Thomas Paine, from "Common Sense"

- Mercy Otis Warren, “To Fidelio, Long Absent on the great public Cause, which agitated all America, in 1776:
- Week 3
 - Jane Johnston Schoolcraft “Mishosha, or the Magician and His Daughters”
 - Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl”
 - Seattle ,Speech of Chief Seattle
 - Test
- Week 4-7 Scarlet Letter**
- Week 4
 - Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Young Goodman Brown” Introduction to *Scarlet Letter*
 - Chapters 1-7 of *Scarlet Letter*
- Week 5:
 - Chapters 8-16
 - Paper Outline
- Week 6:
 - Chapters 17-25
- Week 7:
 - *Final discussion Essay on Scarlet Letter*
 - Essay Due
- Week 8-15: Herman Melville**
- Week 8:
 - Midterm
 - Frederick Douglass, excerpts
 - Frederick Law Olmsted excerpts from *A Journey Through Texas*
- Week 9:
 - Ralph Waldo Emerson “Self-Reliance” William Cullen Bryant “Thanatopsis”
 - Henry David Thoreau “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” From Walden Pond
 - Walt Whitman Song of Myself (1855 version)
 - Introduction to Herman Melville, American Romanticism and *Bartleby the Scrivener*
- Week 10:
 - Chapters 1-30 of *Moby Dick*
- Week 11:
 - Chapters 31-60
- Week 12:
 - Chapters 61-90
- Week 13:
 - Chapters 91-120
 - Paper Outline
- Week 14:
 - Chapters 121-135
 - Final Discussion
 - Research Paper Due
- Week 15
 - Sojourner Truth's Speech at the Akron, Ohio, Women's Rights Meeting
 - Selected Emily Dickinson poems
 - Final Exam