



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani
Hyderabad Campus

FIRST SEMESTER 2019-2020
Course Handout Part II

01-08-2019

In addition to part I (General Handout for all courses appended to the time table) this portion gives further specific details regarding the course.

Course No. : HSS F399
Course Title : Introduction to American Literature
Instructor-in-charge : Shilpaa Anand

Scope and Objectives of the course:

The course charts the socio-cultural and literary landscape of the United States in particular and ‘America’ in general. The first half of the course will cover the historical development of American literature since the landing of the *Mayflower* pilgrims to the decisive American victory over the Axis powers in World War II, and will cover the following history: 1500- 1700 the establishment of Plymouth Plantation and the establishment of early Puritanism; 1700-1800, the influence of Enlightenment thought on American life and letters ; 1800-1865, the period of American Literary Nationalism, the westward expansion, and end with the American Civil War; 1865-1914, will cover the Reconstruction period, the Mexican War, imperial expansion to the Southwest, the building of transcontinental railroads, the American frontier issue, industrialization and transformation of American life and their effects on the literary marketplace; 1914-1945, the period between the 2 world wars, the Great Depression as well as the Harlem Renaissance. The latter half of the course will highlight the multicultural composition of the American context, with a survey of 20th century literature that has been grouped as Black writing, Arab-American writing, Asian-American literature, Chicano literature as well as Native American writing. Socio-political high points of the U.S. history such as the Civil Rights movement will be studied through the Black Arts movement.

Objectives:

- the course will trace a history of American society and culture through the works of writers over the ages. It will introduce students to the vastness of American literary output from the colonial period (1500s) to the early 21st century.
- It will enable students to see how American literature has changed, mutated, and developed a life of its own because of long-standing conflicts (both internal and external) and because of social and political forces that have moulded the nation as very distinctive and yet similar in some respects to European nations.
- This course will enable students to appreciate the variety of concerns (intellectual, political, social, and economic) that take root and flourish in a context informed by a multitude of conflicting agendas.
- It will enable students to understand the deep connections between language, society, and culture in the United States.

Textbook:

A History of American Literature. Richard Gray. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2004.

Reference Book:



The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Revised. 8th Edition. 2 vols. Ed. Philip F. Gura et al. W.W. Norton & Company, New York. 2012.

Course Plan:

Lecture No.	Learning Objectives	Topics to be Covered	Chapter in Text Book
1	Introduce the course, its layout, its expectations, and methods of evaluation	Overview of the course plan; discussion of text books and supplementary material	Course Handout
2-4	Discuss the colonial background of American Literature, 1500-1700 ; To explain various aspects of colonial literary culture To explain various aspects of Puritanism and challenges to it; To explain the complexity of captivity narratives	The Colonial Background; Literary Culture of the Colonies,	TB: p. 1-32, p.49-68 Norton Anthology: William Bradford, John Winthrop, Mary Rowlandson
5-7	Describe the impact of Enlightenment Thought on American Society and Literature, 1700-1800 ; To explain the literary culture of the Great Awakening; To discuss the prevalence of Thomas Paine's "common-sense" idea	Enlightenment Thought and the Great Awakening Literary Culture and the Great Awakening	TB: p. 68-99; Norton Anthology-selections
8-10	Explain the significance of the American Revolution; To explain the importance of the Frontier Question in relation to slavery and the Native American experience	Literary Culture and the Great Awakening; American Frontier and the Native American Experience	TB: 100-117; 124-151; 164-193 Norton Anthology: Thomas Jefferson, 'Declaration of Independence'; Black Hawk; Cherokee Memorials.
9-14	Discuss the broad features of the literary culture of the Antebellum Period, a broad outline of the debates about American Nationalism, the literary output of national poetry with special reference to Edgar Allan Poe To discuss the literary output of women writers with reference to Emily Dickinson	Literary Culture of the Antebellum Period; Literatures of American Nationalism	TB: p. 194-213 Norton Anthology: James Fenimore Cooper - selections; Ralph Waldo Emerson, 'Self Reliance', Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents</i> , Ch1, 7;



			Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> , Ch 11. Edgar Allan Poe, <i>The Raven</i> . Emily Dickinson poems
15-17	Describe the significance of the American Frontier and its connection to Industrialization, 1865-1914 and various debates relating to American westward expansion ranging from the Louis and Clark Expedition (1803) to the 1890 Census	American Frontier Debates, Industrialization Manifestoes of American Exceptionalism, Critiques of American Westward Expansion	TB: p.245-249; Norton Anthology: selections
18-19	Explain the concepts of realism and naturalism	American Literary Realism and Naturalism	TB: p.282-308; Norton Anthology: Henry James 'The Art of Fiction'; Theodore Dreiser 'True Art'.
20-23	Discuss the question of African-American identity	American Dissent in the Age of the Machine	Norton Anthology: W.E.B. Du Bois <u>The Souls of Black Folk</u> . Ch 1; Booker T. Washington, <u>Up From Slavery</u> Ch 14.
24-25	Describe the significance of Mark Twain, Herman Melville, and Jack London	American Adventure and Disillusionment	TB: p. 251-257; Norton Anthology: selections
26-27	Discuss the importance of Walt Whitman to American poetry in relation to industrialization and transformation of American life		Norton Anthology: <u>Song of Myself</u> .
28-30	Explain the importance of the socio-cultural developments between the 2 world wars, 1914-1945 ; To explain the importance of the Harlem Renaissance and its impact on American cultural life	National Identity and the 2 World Wars; Harlem Renaissance	TB: p.336-347; 509 – 537 Norton Anthology: Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston
31-32	Contrast styles and concerns of poetry	American Modernism in	Norton



	during the period between the two world wars	Poetry	Anthology: Claude McKay 'The Lynching'; Robert Frost's poems
33-36	Describe the emergence of Jazz and Blues in the 20 th Century and analyze aspects of the music	Blues and Jazz of the mid and late 20 th century	Supplementary reading
37-38	Explain the aspects of Chicano literature	Emergence and progress of Mexican-American writing	Supplementary reading
39-41	Trace the emergence of Arab-American and Asian- American writing and analyze it	Historical contexts and development of Arab-American and Asian-American writing	Supplementary reading
42	Summary of Course	Summary	---

Evaluation Scheme:

No.	Component	Duration	Weighting (in %)	Date and Time	Nature of component.
1.	Assignment 1		15%	TBA	Open Book
2.	Mid-Semester	1 ½ hours	30%	3/10, 9.00 -- 10.30 AM	Closed Book
3.	Assignment 2		15%	TBA	Open Book
4.	Comprehensive Exam	3 hours	40%	9/12 FN	Closed Book

Chamber Consultation Hours: To be announced in class and on CMS

Notices:

Notices concerning the course will be displayed on CMS.

Make-up Policy:

Make-up exams and make-up assignments will be granted due to medical reasons if students have prior clearance from institute authorities and if students have informed the instructor beforehand. If a student has an extraordinary situation that does not allow him/her to appear/ for the examination/submit an assignment, the student is responsible for intimating the matter to the instructor at the earliest.

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy:

Academic honesty and integrity are to be maintained by all the students throughout the semester and no type of academic dishonesty is acceptable.

Shilpaa Anand
INSTRUCTOR-IN-CHARGE



