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**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:**

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| **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, *Incidents*, Ch1, 7; Frederick Douglass, *Narrative*, Ch 11. Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven*.  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 The Souls of Black Folk. Ch 1; Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery 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: Song of Myself. |
| 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 during the period between the two world wars | American Modernism in Poetry | Norton Anthology: Claude McKay ‘The Lynching’; Robert Frost’s poems |
| 33-36 | Describe the emergence of Jazz and Blues in the 20th Century and analyze aspects of the music | Blues and Jazz of the mid and late 20th 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:**

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| **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**