

E f316M: American Literature  
Summer 2020  
Unique #79740  
Professor Evan Carton & Professor Coleman Hutchison

### Course Description

This team-taught, self-paced course in the American literary tradition will explore historical and thematic connections between writers and works from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. In doing so, the course will also provide a variety of opportunities for students to increase their enjoyment of and engagement with literature, as well as their skills as analytical readers and writers. After an introductory unit in which students will be introduced to some key terms and methods for reading literature more skillfully and enjoyably, the course will be organized historically and divided into five units. Although the readings will proceed more or less chronologically, each unit will include one or more recent or contemporary work. Students will be encouraged throughout the course to make thematic connections between the literature and historical circumstances of earlier periods and the cultural products and social issues of contemporary life.

### Course Objectives

This course will: introduce students to the study of American literature; model methods of literary and cultural interpretation; help students to improve their critical thinking and reading skills. Please note: E316M may be used to fulfill the Humanities component of the University Core Curriculum. As a result, the course addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills; critical thinking skills; personal responsibility; and social responsibility. In addition, this course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience.

### Course Texts

- Nina Baym, et al, eds., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Shorter Eighth Edition (Norton; ISBN: 978-039329056 [print and electronic]; 978-0393918854 [print only]). **Please note:** While the syllabus and lectures will refer to page numbers in the Shorter Eighth Edition, you may also use the recently published Shorter Ninth Edition, which includes nearly all of the texts we will read this term. This 9th edition is a two-volume set and may be easier for you to obtain than the 8th. Page numbers for the Shorter Ninth edition can be found [here](#).
- Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (Mariner; ISBN: 978- 0618706419)

These texts are available at the University Co-Op, 2246 Guadalupe.

### Course Requirements and Evaluation Method

#### **Weekly Tutorial Participation (20% of final grade)**

Students are required to take part in weekly, online, 10-minute tutorials with their Teaching Assistants during each of the four full weeks of the summer session (starting with the week of June 8). These tutorials will typically meet on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. Tutorial

participation will be measured by, among other things, quality of insights, familiarity with the material, responsiveness to the ideas and comments of their Teaching Assistant, and willingness to take intellectual risks. These sessions are much more than virtual office hours; they are an opportunity to show engagement with the course texts and lectures and to take part in a one-on-one interpretive exchange. TAs will contact the students in their sections before the official start of the summer term to explain how to log in for tutorials and to establish a tutorial schedule. Students will select their weekly tutorial time slot from among their TA's available hours and then be responsible for attending the tutorial at that time. NB: A missed tutorial appointment will result in 0/50 points for the week. Graded tutorials begin with Unit I, but we are asking that you take part in an ungraded 5-minute tutorial between June 4 and June 7 to meet your TA and orient you to the format and expectations of the subsequent graded tutorials.

### **Reading and Lecture Quizzes (20% of final grade)**

Each unit will culminate in a 10-minute quiz over the unit's readings and lectures. Quiz questions will be multiple choice or true/false. Each quiz will consist of 10 questions and be worth 50 points.

### **Visions and Revisions (20% of final grade)**

In addition to tutorials and quizzes, students will be asked to complete four end-of-unit writing exercises. Each of these short critical and/or creative assignments is worth 50 points. There is an optional, fifth "Visions and Revisions" worth 10 extra credit points.

### **Final Examination (40% of final grade)**

There will be a three-hour, cumulative online final examination. The examination will have three parts: 1) a 10-question quiz over Unit V's readings and lectures (50 points); 2) a CRIT of a poem not included on the syllabus (150 points); and 3) a series of analyses of passages from across the syllabus (200 points). Details on the final examination will follow shortly.

### **Grading Rubric**

Letter grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric:

	B+ = 870-899	C+ = 770-799	D+ = 670-699	F = 0-599
A = 940-1000	B = 840-869	C = 740-769	D = 640-669	
A- = 900-939	B- = 800-839	C- = 700-739	D- = 600-639	

NB: Final grades will not be rounded up.

### **Best Practices and Sage Advice**

- Read closely the syllabus
- Follow closely the directions for assignments
- Watch the unit introduction before beginning a given unit
- Complete the reading for each class before you watch the lecture
- Re-watch lectures or parts of lectures as needed
- Complete each unit's readings and lectures before your Weekly Tutorial

- Demonstrate your engagement by bringing questions and comments to the Tutorial
- Complete each unit's Quiz, V&R, and Tutorial before the opening of the next unit

#### Additional Policies and Protocols

##### **Academic Integrity**

"The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community." Any work submitted for academic credit must be your own; it must also be produced expressly for this course.

##### **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512/471-6259 (voice) or 512/232-2937 (video phone), or visit <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>.

##### **Computer and Internet Connection Reliability**

It is very important that you confirm that your computer meets the minimum technical requirements and is able to stream the video lectures. Please visit the test stream page before the semester begins: <https://www.laits.utexas.edu/tower/tech.html>. NB: It is your responsibility to ensure that your computer and internet connection are reliable for class. If you are concerned about your computer or internet connection, please email [gatewaytechsupport@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:gatewaytechsupport@austin.utexas.edu). The university's many computer labs offer reliable computers and internet connections.

##### **Course Website**

The course learning management system is Canvas: <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>. NB: The communication for this course will come exclusively via Canvas. Do check the site—and your email—regularly. This is especially important in a self-paced, online course. Please also familiarize yourself with the Close Reading Interpretive Tool: <https://laits.utexas.edu/crit/>.

##### **Email Protocols**

Please direct all questions about course logistics, policies, requirements, and the like to your Teaching Assistant. Share substantive questions or ideas about the readings and lectures with your Teaching Assistants and/or the Professors. Although your Teaching Assistant will be your first point of contact for this course, you are welcome to email the professors as well. (See the link above.)

##### **Office Hours**

Given that this is an online and on-demand course, one for which many of the students will not be on campus, neither the Teaching Assistants nor the Professors will hold traditional office hours.

## Teaching Assistants

Teaching Assistants will play a crucial role in this course. Among other things, they will conduct weekly tutorials and evaluate student performance. All assignments will be graded by the Teaching Assistants in consultation with the instructors, who will ensure consistency and fairness. Students with course-related questions or concerns should first consult their assigned Teaching Assistant. This is especially the case with grade disputes. The Teaching Assistants are authorized to resolve any and all grade disputes.

## Teaching Staff

More information about Professors Carton and Hutchison and the Teaching Assistants is available on the "About the Teaching Staff" page on the class Canvas site.

## A Note on Reading for this Course

Studying literature often requires us to engage with uncomfortable and even offensive content. In this course we will address such content in a forthright and mature fashion, using our critical thinking, reading, and writing skills to both critique and contextualize it. At the same time, respect for the course community and one another's experiences and viewpoints is paramount.

## Course Schedule

**Note:** Required readings and videos for each lecture are listed in the Course Schedule below. Most readings appear in the *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter Eighth Edition*; *Norton Anthology* page numbers are given in parentheses after each title. (Page numbers for the Shorter Ninth edition can be found [here](#).) With the exception of Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*, which is available as a separate book, all other readings and videos may be accessed via the links below. Please be sure to read the biographical headnote in the *Norton Anthology* for each author on the syllabus.

## Course Introduction

*Introduction: Reading Literature Critically and Pleasurably (June 4-7)*

Lecture #1: Roads Traveled and Less Traveled By

- **Robert Frost**, "The Road Not Taken" (1920)
- [Literary Critical Terms and Concepts to Know](#)

Lecture #2: The CRIT Method

- **Gwendolyn Brooks**, "kitchenette building" (2494)
- [Axioms for E316M](#)
- [Reading Closely with CRIT Video](#)
- [Reading Actively Video](#)

*I. A City upon a Hill: 1620-1776 (June 8-14)*

Unit 1 Introduction


Lecture #3: The Mayflower Compact

- **John Winthrop**, "A Model of Christian Charity" (90-102)
- **Anne Bradstreet**, "The Author to Her Book" (119); "Before the Birth of One of Her Children" (120); "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House" (122-123)

#### Lecture #4: Religion, Race, and Gender in Early America

- **Mary Rowlandson**, selections from *A Narrative of the Captivity...* (127-143)
- **Louise Erdrich**, "Dear John Wayne" (2781-2782); ["Captivity"](#)
- [Reading Race in American Literature and Culture Video](#)

#### Lecture #5: American Self-Fashioning

- **Benjamin Franklin**, from *The Autobiography* (esp. 254-271, 290, 297-308--[excerpts here](#)) 
- **Phillis Wheatley**, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (403)

#### Lecture #6: "Natural" Man and Nature's God

- **Jonathan Edwards**, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (209-220)
- **Philip Freneau**, "The Indian Burying Ground" (399-400); "On the Religion of Nature" (400-401)
- [Reading with the Oxford English Dictionary Video](#)

#### Lecture #7: American Chosenness, Then and Now

- **Martin Luther King, Jr.**, "I Have a Dream" (2579-2582)
- **Barack Obama**, ["Remarks by the President in Eulogy for the Honorable Reverend Clementa Pinckney"](#)
- **Billy Collins**, ["The Names"](#)
- [Reading Text and Context Video](#)

### II. Our Freedom and Our Bondage: 1776-1865 (June 15-21)

#### Unit II Introduction

#### Lecture #8: Declaring Independence

- **Thomas Paine**, from *Common Sense* (324-331)
- **Thomas Jefferson**, from *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson* (339-344)

#### Lecture #9: Me, Myself, and I

- **Ralph Waldo Emerson**, "Self-Reliance" (549-566)
- **Walt Whitman**, "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" (1078)

#### Lecture #10: Radical American Poetics I: The Good Gray Poet

- **Walt Whitman**, "Song of Myself" (1024-1067); ["I Hear America Singing"](#)

#### Lecture #11: Radical American Poetics II: The Belle of Amherst

- **Emily Dickinson**, "Success is counted sweetest" (1193-1194); "'Faith' is a fine invention" (1195); "Some keep the Sabbath going to Church –" (1196); "I like a look of Agony" (1199); "I know that He exists" (1203-4); "After great pain, a formal feeling comes –" (1204); "The Soul selects her own Society" (1205); "The Brain – is wider than the Sky –" (1208); "A narrow Fellow in the Grass" (1212-1213); "Tell all the truth but tell it slant –" (1213)
- **Billy Collins**, ["Taking Off Emily Dickinson's Clothes"](#)

#### Lecture #12: Slavery and its Shadow

- **Frederick Douglass**, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (938-1002)
- **Ava DuVernay**, [13th](#)

### III. One Nation . . . Indivisible?: 1865-1914 (June 22-28)

### Unit III Introduction

#### Lecture #13: The Civil War—Before and After

- **Abraham Lincoln**, “Address Delivered at the Dedication...” (747-748); “Second Inaugural Address” (748-749)
- **Paul Laurence Dunbar**, “An Ante-Bellum Sermon” (1806-1808); “We Wear the Mask” (1808)
- **Charles W. Chesnutt**, “The Goophered Grapevine” (1642-1649); “The Wife of His Youth” (1649-1657)


#### Lecture #14: Regionalist Traditions I: A White Heron and Others

- **Sarah Orne Jewett**, “A White Heron” (1597-1603)
- **Alice Walker**, “Everyday Use” (2715-2721)

#### Lecture #15: Regionalist Traditions II: Fire on the Bayou

- **Kate Chopin**, “*Désirée’s Baby*” (1605-1609); “The Story of an Hour” (1609- 1611); “At the ‘Cadian Ball’” (1611-1617); “The Storm” (1618-1621)

#### Lecture #16: New Americans

- **Emma Lazarus**, [“The New Colossus”](#)
- **Abraham Cahan**, [“A Sweat-Shop Romance”](#)  (1659-1667)
- **Sui Sin Far**, “Mrs. Spring Fragrance” (1706-1714)

#### Lecture #17: Indivisible Legacies

- **Gloria Anzaldúa**, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue” (2705-2713)
- **Sandra Cisneros**, “Woman Hollering Creek” (2772-2779)
- **Li-Young Lee**, “Persimmons” (2798-2800)


### IV. *A Change Is Gonna Come: 1914-1968 (June 29-July 5)*

#### Unit IV Introduction


#### Lecture #18: Making it New: Modernist Poetry

- **Ezra Pound**, “A Pact” (1974); “In a Station of the Metro” (1974)
- **William Carlos Williams**, “The Red Wheelbarrow” (1968); “This Is Just to Say” (1968-1969)
- **Wallace Stevens**, “The Emperor of Ice Cream” (1953); “Anecdote of the Jar” (1957)
- **E.E. Cummings**, ““next to of course god america i” (2138-2139); “I sing of Olaf glad and big” (2139-2140)

#### Lecture #19: The Harlem Renaissance

- **Zora Neale Hurston**, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me” (2124-2127); [“The Gilded Six Bits”](#)  (2127-2135)
- **Langston Hughes**, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (2222-2223); “I, Too” (2223-2224); “Song for a Dark Girl” (2226); “Theme for English B” (2228-2229)

#### Lecture #20: The Southern Renaissance

- **William Faulkner**, “Barn Burning” (2188-2200)
- **Flannery O’Connor**, [“Everything that Rises Must Converge”](#)  (NB: Don't forget to read the Norton headnote on O'Connor)

#### Lecture #21: Radical American Poetics III: Bad Housekeepers

- **Sylvia Plath**, “Morning Song” (2602); “Lady Lazarus” (2602-2604)

- **Adrienne Rich**, [\*"Storm Warnings"\*](#) (2565); [\*"Yom Kippur 1984"\*](#)

*V. Global American Dreams and Nightmares: 1968-2017 (July 6-9)*

Unit V Introduction

Lecture #22: The Things We Carry

- **Tim O'Brien**, *The Things They Carried* (1-117: "The Things They Carried" to "Church")

Lecture #23: The Lives of the Dead

- **Tim O'Brien**, *The Things They Carried* (118-233: "The Man I Killed" to "The Lives of the Dead")

Lecture #24: American Literature in/and the Future

- **Junot Diaz**, "Drown" (2850-2857)
- **Jhumpa Lahiri**, "Sexy" (2834-2849)

Course Conclusion