

Las Positas College
3000 Campus Hill Drive
Livermore, CA 94551-7650
(925) 424-1000
(925) 443-0742 (Fax)

Course Outline for ENG 35
MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE
Effective: Spring 2019

I. CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

ENG 35 — MODERN AMERICAN LITERATURE — 3.00 units

U.S. literature from the second half of the 19th century to the present, including poetry, drama, prose fiction, and essays. Emphasizes literary analysis and the exploration each work in relation to its social, cultural and historical contexts.

3.00 Units Lecture

Prerequisite

ENG 1A - Critical Reading and Composition
with a minimum grade of C

Grading Methods:

Letter Grade

Discipline:

- English

	MIN
Lecture Hours:	54.00
Total Hours:	54.00

II. NUMBER OF TIMES COURSE MAY BE TAKEN FOR CREDIT: 1

III. PREREQUISITE AND/OR ADVISORY SKILLS:

Before entering the course a student should be able to:

A. ENG1A

1. Critically read texts and materials from a variety of academic and cultural contexts, demonstrating in writing and discussion the ability to:
2. Summarize a thesis and main points;
3. Analyze main ideas;
4. Evaluate the validity and logic of the text's reasoning and support;
5. Relate ideas and information in the text to his/her own experience as well as other texts;
6. Create a coherent position or argument based on reading;
7. Write multiple-paragraph papers that:
8. Accurately and appropriately respond to a given assignment;
9. Develop a relevant, focused thesis;
10. Are well-organized and coherently move from coordinating to subordinating points;
11. Are well-developed with sufficient and relevant evidence;
12. Synthesize facts and ideas originating outside his/her direct experience to develop and support a thesis;
13. Demonstrate stylistic choices in tone, syntax, and diction;
14. Use standard American English correctly;
15. Integrate researched material into his/her own writing with appropriate context, explanation, punctuation, and citation;
16. Document sources in an academically responsible way.

IV. MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- A. Explain the developments in literary approach and technique in the works of American writers since the mid-19th century
- B. Analyze literary works in relation to their historical, social, and cultural contexts, at least once in a presentation format (handout, PowerPoint, etc.)
- C. Explain the structure of the works studied and analyze their literary components, including plot, character, tone, style, and figurative uses of language (such as metaphor, irony, symbol, paradox)
- D. Contrast the diversity of the works while comparing their treatment of common themes, especially in response to social and political changes
- E. Critically evaluate distinctive eras of American literature since the mid-19th Century, for example, the 19th century "American Renaissance," the Harlem Renaissance, modernism and post-modernism, protest literature of the Civil Rights era
- F. Assess how literature both reflects and helps create history and culture
- G. Analyze the literature of writers from at least three of the following groups through compare/contrast analysis: African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, Latinos, Native Americans
- H. Apply knowledge of shifting racial definitions, formation, identity, and relationships to the interpretation of literature

- I. Evaluate how national identity/ies inform the creation of literature, whether in terms of form or theme
- J. Evaluate the tension between individual artistry and resistance to stereotype and/or advancement of the racial group, as well as tensions between "authentic" racial expression and assimilation to Anglo-American, male literary standards
- K. Building on knowledge of MLA citation from English 1A, create presentation aids that cite information from outside sources in a fashion appropriate to the medium (handouts, PowerPoints, etc.)

V. CONTENT:

- A. Readings of prose fiction, poetry, drama: may also include expository essays, graphic novel, performance, transcriptions of oral literature, and/or creative nonfiction;
- B. Readings from an array of American writers, diverse in terms of ethnicity, gender, and era;
- C. Summary, expressive, and basic analytical written responses to readings;
- D. Practice of a writing process, including individual and collaborative prewriting, planning, drafting, revision, and editing;
- E. Short essay assignments based on the examination of texts;
- F. Reading of selected sources with a mind to using sources to support small research project (oral presentation and/or review);

VI. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:

- A. **Discussion** - Students will participate in class discussion, whether as individuals or groups. Group discussion projects may involve collaborative work on students' understanding of a theme in the literature (race in Huck Finn, for example) or jigsaw activities in which students learn about a theme or topic in literature from peer groups and then take turns "teaching" various themes or topics to their home group.
- B. **Observation and Demonstration** - Though English 1A is a pre-requisite for this course, observation and demonstration of the writing process, and of writing a literature essay in particular, will be the focus of some class periods. Adaptation of MLA plagiarism and citation rules (direct quote, paraphrase, summary) to writing about literature will be discussed and demonstrated.
- C. **Guest Lecturers** - Guest lecturers will be invited when funding is available.
- D. **Lecture** - Instructor will do minimal lecturing on aspects of literary form, region, and ethnic group that will most directly impact students' reading. This will serve to build schema for students.
- E. **Student Presentations** - Students will engage in small research projects presented to the class. Projects might build schema for an upcoming reading; provide information about an ethnic group or literary movement that will not be covered in the class but would contribute to student understanding of a theme or racial group, for example; or provide more detailed information about an author under consideration.
- F. **Field Trips** - Field trips to local theaters may be included if performing relevant American plays. Field trips to author readings are also possibilities.
- G. **Audio-visual Activity** - Instructor may show films based on fiction or other literary or oral art under consideration in course. Films might also be used to provide historical or biographical background.

VII. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- A. Write an essay, with citations in MLA style, analyzing the experimental style of Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* in terms of its specific contribution to American postmodernism.
- B. Write an essay, with citations in MLA style, comparing and contrasting the revolutionary mid-19th Century visions of Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.
- C. Write an essay, with citations in MLA style, considering how Native American writer Sherman Alexie explores connections between Native American and African-American cultures and responses to oppression in *Reservation Blues*.
- D. Write a journal entry providing a critical analysis of thematic or structural aspects of the works considered.
- E. Write a journal entry relating course materials to your life and values, which shows your understanding of how the literary vision has contributed to those values.
- F. Prepare a group presentation on the African-American male literary establishment's negative reception of the work of African-American female writers, which challenged male dominance and sexism. Your handout or PowerPoint must cite information in MLA style. You do not have to cite common knowledge;
- G. Prepare an oral presentation that will facilitate the class discussion on an author's story on a given class day. Provide information on the biography and literary and cultural context of the author and the particular work; identify important themes and relevant quotes that you think the class should discuss; and suggest a connection of the material to a course Student Learning Outcome of the instructor's choosing. Your handout or PowerPoint must cite information in MLA style. You do not have to cite common knowledge.

VIII. EVALUATION:

Methods/Frequency

- A. Quizzes
Some assessment of students' reading comprehension, whether journals or quizzes, will be given weekly.
- B. Research Projects
Once.
- C. Papers
Twice.
- D. Field Trips
Optional; often will be extra credit
- E. Class Participation
Daily.
- F. Class Work
Daily.
- G. Home Work
Daily.

IX. TYPICAL TEXTS:

1. Lauter, Paul, ed. *Heath Anthology of American Literature, Vol. II, Concise Edition.*, Cengage, 2014.
2. Levine, Robert. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Vol. 2: 1865 to the Present.* . Shorter 9th ed. ed., Norton, 2017.
3. Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.*, Dover, 1995.
4. Kingsolver, Barbara *The Bean Trees.*, Harper Perennial, 2011.
5. O'Neill, Eugene. *Long Day's Journey into Night.*, Yale UP, 2002.
6. Twain, Mark. *Huckleberry Finn.* Norton Critical ed., Norton, 1998.
7. Bonnin, Gertrude (Zitkala-Sa). *American Indian Stories, Legends, and Other Writings.*, Penguin, 2003.
8. Cather, Willa *Death Comes for the Archbishop.*, Virago Modern Classics, 2006.
9. Cahan, Abraham. *Yekl, the Imported Bridegroom, and Other Stories of Yiddish New York.*, Waking Lion P-Ingram, 2010.
10. Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand and Passing.*, Rutgers UP, 1986.
11. Okada, John. *No-No Boy.*, U of Washington P, 1979.
12. Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises.*, Scribner, 2006.
13. Ginsburg, Allen. *Howl.*, City Lights, 2001.
14. Morrison, Toni. *Beloved.*, Vintage, 2004.
15. Kushner, Tony *Angels in America: A Gay Fantasia on National Themes: Part I: Millennium Approaches; Part II: Perestroika.*, Theatre Communications Group, 2003.

16. Diaz, Junot. *Drown.*, Riverhead Trade, 1997.
17. Kingston, Maxine Hong *The Woman Warrior.*, Vintage, 1989.
18. Anzaldua, Gloria *Borderlands: La Frontera.*, Aunt Lute Books, 2012.
19. Franzen, Jonathan. *The Corrections.*, Plcador, 2002.
20. Alexie, Sherman. *Reservation Blues.*, Grove, 2005.
21. Whitehead, Colson. *The Underground Railroad.* 1st ed., Doubleday, 2016.

X. OTHER MATERIALS REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: