

Department of English & Writing Studies

American Literature Survey
English 2308E (002)
Fall/Winter 2016-17**Instructor:** Alyssa MacLean**Date/Time:** Monday 3:30-5:30pm,
Wednesday 3:30-4:30pm**Location:** Thames Hall 3101**Antirequisite(s):** English 2341E, 2342F/G, 2343F/G, 2344E, 2345F/G, 2346F/G and 3664E.**Prerequisite(s):** At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both of English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

A survey of American literature from the period of imperial exploration and contact in North America to the postmodern era. In this class, we will read some of the most fascinating literary works of the United States in a variety of modes and genres—from novels to abolitionist propaganda to sentimental poetry. We will consider the aesthetic and formal properties of each text and consider how writers were inspired by the social conditions, ideological conflicts, economic forces, and political developments of their times, such as Indian Removal and slavery. As we study the evolution of major artistic movements and periods, we will also trace the development of important assumptions, myths, and fundamental beliefs about the United States that still influence American discourse today.

In this survey, we will also pay close attention to the voices that are heard—and not heard—in different moments of US history. The pressure of attempting to read 400 years of literary history will force us to pose some difficult questions about the limits of the American literary canon. Why do we read what we read, and who benefits from that? How have ideas of what constitutes “literature” (or “America,” for that matter) changed over time? What could lesser-known writers contribute to our understanding of the US nation and its literature? And is it possible to read so-called canonical writers in a way that produces new kinds of knowledge?

Readings will include novels such as Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*, Ernest Hemingway’s *In Our Time*, Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*; short fiction by Herman Melville, William Faulkner, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Henry James; personal narr

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A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Further course policies will be available in the official syllabus at the beginning of the fall term.

Timetable (tentative):

You are expected to have completed the assigned reading prior to the first class in which a work is being discussed. Readings are subject to change. Please bring hard copies of assigned readings to class. (Norton) = Find reading in Norton anthology. (OWL) = Find reading on course website.

Please note that readings may be added, dropped, or modified:

1. ORIGINS

Mon. Sept 12: Introductions.

3. NEW VISIONS OF AMERICA: TRANSCENDENTALISM, ABOLITIONISM, AND SENTIMENTALITY

	Second short paper due
Mon. Jan. 30:	Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar," "The Snow Man," "The Idea of Order in Key West," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (Norton)
Wed. Feb 1:	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i>
Mon. Feb. 6:	Hemingway, <i>In Our Time</i>
Wed. Feb. 8	<i>In Our Time</i> (con't)
Mon. Feb. 13:	Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (Norton)
Wed. Feb. 16:	In-class test
Mon. Feb. 20:	READING WEEK
Wed. Feb. 22:	READING WEEK
7. THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE	
Mon. Feb. 27:	Library Research Session W.E.B. DuBois, from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , ch. 1, 3 (Norton) Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "Sympathy," "We Wear the Mask," "Frederick Douglass" (Norton) Langston Hughes, "I, Too," "The Weary Blues", "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" (Norton)
Wed. Mar. 1:	

