

ENGL 2326: Survey of American Literature

Dr. Jaime Cantrell

Fall 2018

Section 001 / Lecture: T/R 9:30-10:45am
UC247

Office Hours: M/W 10am-11am and T/R
11am-12noon

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Course Description

The literature of the United States encompasses many ways of imagining experience. The diversity of late nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first century American literature warrants more attention than a chronological survey allows. It is no secret, however, that as a community of scholars we are in the midst of important conversations about identity politics and its relationship to literary study, and that there are competing perspectives about where, in a course about traditions and diversity, the emphasis should fall: on the text, on the historical moment, on long-term or timeless political and moral concerns. No professor can presume to solve such riddles. Therefore, this class is organized around the assumption that a key purpose of a survey course in literary traditions and literary diversity is to explore the text as well as situate it. In this course we will consider and question the different notions of national and individual identity as they evolved and changed over time in works of literature. How did competing models of American identity emerge from the moment of European contact in 1492 until the beginning of the Civil War? In what ways did early American writers engage with issues of national significance—mass genocide, religiosity, gender, the abolitionist movement, the rise of industrialism, and the burgeoning nation-state—as well as individual concerns surrounding motherhood, work, freedom, authorial style, gender, race, ethnicity, and sexuality? Particular attention will be paid to questions of race and gender and the relationship between history, culture and writing (including both “literature” and other written or transcribed forms of expression). This survey course will focus on minority voices and literary diversity, with units structured around gender and American women’s writings and American minority voices from writers representing African American, Native American, Jewish American, and Latina/Latino communities. Can we develop the possibility that in America everyone can feel like an outsider, and that many American writers, regardless of ethnicity or gender, have struggled with marginalization, alienation, or exclusion? Paradoxically, this powerful feeling of being outside seems to unite many authors into a large-scale community. Does a collective sense of exclusion provide a tradition that includes us all?

Required Course Texts

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter 9th Edition. ISBN: 9780393264517; available at the TAMUT bookstore, although I encourage you to purchase a used hard copy online provided the ISBN matches exactly. No e-copies will be permitted.

Student Learner Outcomes:

Students who successfully complete ENGL2326 will be able

1. To demonstrate awareness of the scope and variety of works in literature.
2. To respond critically to works of literature.

3. To articulate an informed personal reaction to works of literature.
4. To demonstrate knowledge of the influence of literature on intercultural experiences.

Course Objectives

In this survey of early American literature, students will be expected to:

1. Read pre-Columbian, first contact, seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth, twentieth, and early 21st century American writings through historical and cultural contextual lenses;
2. Engage in the literary critical practice of “close reading”
3. Develop understandings of literary devices including imagery, symbolism, allusion, etc., and analyze those and other formalist elements across texts and temporal periods;
3. Examine and analyze a number of early American literary traditions (the Gothic, Transcendentalism, Romanticism, Literary Modernism, etc.) and genres (myths, poems, magazines, short stories, essays, creative non-fiction, and letters from the archives);
4. Identify meaningful connections between the six narrative elements of fiction (plot, setting, style, theme, point of view, character) and authors/their texts;
5. Finally, while a survey course on literature spanning multiple centuries cannot hope to be comprehensive in nature or content, I expect by the conclusion of this course you will have a broad knowledge of American literature that will better prepare you for upper level division courses in the English program, including ENGL442: Advanced American Literature (which I’ll be teaching this spring!).

Classroom Decorum

Active participation is mandatory, and a significant portion of your grade is determined by the voice you bring to our discussions. Thoughtfulness trumps volume in this regard. I encourage you to be a lively and engaged voice in the discussions and lectures, and I require you to be a respectful one. Please do not eat in class, no texting, and I reserve the right to answer any cell phone that rings, buzzes or bleats during class time. If you are observed using anything with a screen during lecture (with the exception of students with accommodations), *I will ask you to leave the classroom.*

If you email me during the semester be sure to address me with respect (this means formally as Dr. Cantrell or Professor Cantrell, because trust me, you wouldn’t believe number of “Hey” or “Ms. Cantrell” emails I get from students!). Please also understand that in the interest of a work/life balance, any emails sent during nights and weekends will wait for a response until business hours; allow at least a 24-hour response time for all non-emergency notes. *Please note that if your email doesn’t include: 1) a salutation, 2) the course information, 3) your name and section number, and 4) a closing, then I will not respond to it. This digital age begs you to not be neglectful of basic email etiquette—all your professors will appreciate this fast and easy courtesy.*

Attendance

We have relatively few class meetings to reckon with the substantial demands of the course; consequently, you will be expected to attend faithfully. There is no attendance policy in lecture. However, you will be responsible for a quiz everyday in lecture; these quizzes are worth 25% of your overall grade. *Be cautious: it is entirely possible to fail this course based on attendance alone—if you are not present, you cannot take the quiz.* There will be no exceptions or make-ups (if you are sick and have a doctor’s excuse, you may not retake the quiz. Only if

you have a CHRONIC illness or a university related absence may you retake quizzes—if which case, you must notify me immediately).

Attendance verification will be submitted by the end of the second week of class.

Make –ups, Late Assignments, and Extra Credit

Assignments are due on the day and time they are scheduled; learning the fine art of time management is one of the many skills necessary to be successful in college. *I will not accept late assignments.* I will sometimes offer extra credit, but not always. If you come to class and complete the assigned readings, you won't need it.

Assignments and Grading

You may expect to receive your graded quizzes within one week of when they are taken. I highly advise you to retain your quizzes so that you can have a running calculation of your quiz grade (not to mention their usefulness during exam time)! You may expect your reading responses to be graded and returned within two or so weeks of when they are due.

- 25% Weekly Quizzes (X number of quizzes will be given, averaged together, and weighed)
- 20% Critical Analysis Essay
- 20% Midterm Exam
- 20% Final Exam
- 15% Participation (in-class writing assignments; discussion; homework; etc.)

This course will adopt the plus/minus grading scale on Blackboard's grade book to calculate the final grade. I usually round up in favor of the next whole letter score in particular cases of students on the cusp of a B+/A- or F/D-.

Critical Analysis Essay

You must formulate a critical analysis essay 3 pages in length just once this semester. It should demonstrate an attempt at close reading and analytical thinking; your response should address just ONE of the prompt options listed below (you may choose whichever delights your soul, so long as you submit one from list). Note: I will *not* accept more than one essay and take the highest score.

When writing, keep in mind: I've already read the text, so do not summarize it for me. A word of caution: *take this assignment seriously.* In writing, provide textual references for each point you make—that means cite the text. You must carefully and critically explore the readings in preparation for writing this assignment. All reading responses will be graded by your GTA and returned to you in discussion section within two weeks after they are submitted. Your reading responses should be submitted via the SafeAssign dropbox on Blackboard on the date and time they are due and in a hard copy format; all written assignments should be submitted in double spaced 12 pt. Times New Roman font with standard 1 inch margins. It is NOT necessary to submit a hardcopy. *Be sure to properly format the headings* for each of your papers and include a bibliography page (use MLA formatting and style). New to MLA formatting? Google OWL at Purdue or contact the campus library to set up a tutorial on bibliographies and in-text citation practices.

Consult the grading rubric on Blackboard for more info on how you'll be evaluated on this assignment. Please note that if you are suspected of plagiarism on this essay, you will be referred to the Academic Disciplinary Committee and I will recommend that you receive an F on the assignment *as well as* an F in the course.

PROMPT OPTION 1: DUE SEPT. 25th at 8AM to the SafeAssign dropbox on BB

- Based primarily on direct references or inferences you can draw from the Cherokee Memorials, write an essay in which you describe the Cherokees' particular economic, cultural, and political situation in Georgia at the time of the writing of these Memorials. You might also explicate the argument or arguments that the Memorials urge on members of the Senate and House and/or compare the rhetorical strategies of Petalasharo, Boudinot, and Black Hawk. Why might these strategies be especially effective in addressing their respective audiences?

PROMPT OPTION 2: DUE OCT. 25th at 8AM to the SafeAssign dropbox on BB

- Write an essay juxtaposing Jacobs' and Douglass' experiences, based on the following central quotations from each narrative: "Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women" (Jacobs) and "You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man" (Douglass). What are key themes in each text, and why are they important for analyzing these quotes? How do those themes differ or intersect? Use contextual quotes to analyze how Jacobs and Douglass experience the institution of slavery differently on the axis of gender.

PROMPT OPTION 3: DUE NOV. 22nd at 8AM to the SafeAssign dropbox on BB

- Walker's depiction of her mother-daughter bond differs considerably from Flannery O'Connor's. While Mrs. Hopewell defines herself and her daughter by listening to the voices of conventional "good country people," the mother who narrates "Everyday Use" listens to her inner voice and creates her own values, even if she has to silently defend those values from her older daughter's belligerent attacks. For many readers, it seems as if Walker wants us to side with the narrator and Maggie against Dee/Wangero. Is this the only way to read the story, though? Is Dee/Wangero the necessary antagonist of the story, or is Walker setting up a more complex dialectic between her characters? How does the value of the quilt change for Dee and what do they mean to Maggie and the narrator? What does Walker mean by valuing "everyday use," even though the quilts may be, as Dee claims, priceless?

Midterm and Final Exam

The midterm exam will be administered during lecture section in September. It will cover readings and material from the first half of the term. The final exam will be administered during finals week, and since we'll have more time for the final exam, expect it to be denser in content and scope. The final exam is not comprehensive. Exam format for both exams might include: T/F, a short identify section with texts/authors, essay questions, etc. You must bring an *unmarked* bluebook to lecture for each exam. I will stand at the door before class and collect bluebooks from each student as you walk in—if you do not have a blue book, you will not be admitted to sit for the exam.

Disability Accommodations Statement

University policy provides for reasonable accommodations to be made for students with verified disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis as specified under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Students with disabilities who believe they may benefit from classroom or other accommodations should contact the Office of Student Disability Services for information: Carl Greg, Office of Student Life UC126 or by phone at 903-223-3062.

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic honesty is expected of students in this course. Plagiarism and cheating may result in a failing grade for the course and will be reported accordingly; I will recommend a failing grade for the course (not just the assignment in question). None of the assignments in this course requires outside research—*just you, your Norton, and your thoughts*. For additional information on university academic integrity policy, see the university catalog.

Drop Policy

To drop this course after the census date, a student must complete the drop/withdrawal request form, located on the university website or obtained in the Registrar's Office. The student must submit the signed and completed form to the instructor of each course indicated on the form to be dropped for his/her signature. The signature is not an "approval" to drop, but rather confirmation that the student has discussed the drop/withdrawal with the faculty member. The form must be submitted to the Registrar's Office for processing in person, by email at Registrar@tamut.edu, mail (7101 University Ave. Texarkana, TX 75503) or fax (903-223-3140). Drop/withdrawal forms missing any of the required information will not be accepted by the Registrar's Office for processing. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the form is completed properly before submission. If a student stops participating in class (attending and submitting assignments) but does not complete and submit the drop/withdrawal form, a final grade based on work completed as outlined in the syllabus will be assigned.

This syllabus is subject to change, but all modifications will be announced in lecture meeting or via the announcements tab on Blackboard. It is your responsibility to be aware of possible alterations and adjust accordingly.

READING SCHEDULE (have all readings completed by this date):

Aug. 28	SYLLABUS DISCUSSION & Introduction
Aug. 30	No Class; Read "Iroquois Creation Story" & submit your responses to the drop box on Blackboard <u>by class time</u>
Week 2	Lecture: Stories from the Beginning of the New World
Sept. 4	p. 45-53 Christopher Columbus, "Letter of Discovery" & "Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage"
Sept. 6	p. 56-66 John Smith, from "The General History of Virginia" and from "The Fourth Book"
Week 3	Lecture: Anglo-American Colonies & Accounts of Native America
Sept. 11	p. 132-151 Mary Rowlandson, "A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson"
Sept. 13	MULTIPLE Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book" (p. 122) "On My Dear Grandchild..." series of three poems (.pdfs on BB)
Week 4	Lecture: Native American Removal and Resistance
Sept. 18	p. 631-642 Black Hawk, from Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak & Petalesharo, "Speech of the Pawnee Chief"; Elias Boudinot, from the <i>Cherokee Phoenix</i>
Sept. 20	-- MIDTERM EXAM
Week 5	Lecture: The American Gothic
Sept. 25	p. 668-677 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"
Sept. 27	p. 749-761 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher"
Week 6	Lecture: Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature
Oct. 2	MULTIPLE Thomas Jefferson, from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> (p.817-819), David Walker, "Appeal in Four Articles" (p. 820-823), & William Lloyd Garrison, "To The Public" (p. 827-829)
Oct. 4	p. 829-833 Angelina E. Grimké, <i>Appeal to the Christian Women of the South</i> & Sojourner Truth, "Speech to the Women's Rights Convention"
Week 7	Lecture: Transcendentalism & Romanticism
Oct. 16	p. 920-996 Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> Ch. 1, 2, 5, 17, 18
Oct. 18	MULTIPLE Emily Dickinson, "Because I could not stop for Death" (p. 1262), "I heard a Fly buzz-when I died" (p. 1263), "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" (p. 1268), "A bird, came down the Walk" (p. 1258)
Week 8	Lecture: African American Autobiography
Oct. 9	p. 1000-1066 Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself</i>
Oct. 11	p. 878-899 Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>

Week 9	Lecture: Regional/Realism
Oct. 23	p. 511-524 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wall-Paper" and "Why I Wrote the Yellow Wallpaper"
Oct. 25	p. 442-446 Kate Chopin, "Desiree's Baby"
Week 10	Lecture: Literary Modernism
Oct. 30	MULTIPLE Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat" (p. 950-958) & William Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (p. 1009-1015)
Nov. 1	p. 804-809 F.T. Marinetti, from "Manifestos of Futurism" & Mina Loy, "Feminist Manifesto"
Week 11	Lecture: Literature by African Americans, since 1945
Nov. 6	p. 1210-1220 Ralph Ellison, from <i>The Invisible Man</i> "Battle Royale"
Nov. 8	-- No Class, away at conference
Week 12	Lecture: Literature by Women, since 1945
Nov. 13	p. 1367-1391 Flannery O'Connor, "Good Country People" & "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"
Nov. 15	p. 1568-1574 Alice Walker, "Everyday Use"
Week 13	Lecture: Creative Non-Fiction
Nov. 20	MULTIPLE Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl" (p.1650-1651) & Edwidge Danticat, excerpt from <i>Brother, I'm Dying</i> (p. 1662-1663)
Nov. 22	-- No Class, Thanksgiving Holiday
Week 14	Lecture: Literature by Latino Americans & Asian Americans
Nov. 27	p. 1544-1553 Maxine Hong Kingston, "No Name Woman" from <i>The Woman Warrior</i>
Nov. 29	p. 1613-1622 Sandra Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek"
Week 15	Lecture: Contemporary Short Stories
Dec. 4	p. 1709-1716 Junot Díaz, "Drown"
Dec. 6	p. 1692-1708 Jhumpa Lahiri, "Sexy"
Week 16	Final Exam: Tuesday, December 11th at 8am-10:00am
