

American Literature (I)

Class Time: 2:10-5:00 p.m. Thursday
Classroom: A419 Humanities and Social Sciences Building I
Instructor: Shu-Ling Chen
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E-mail: slchen@gms.ndhu.edu.tw
Phone: 890-5309
Office Hours: 2:00-4:00 p.m. Tuesday

Textbook:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Vol. 1. Beginnings to 1865. Shorter 10th ed. New York/London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023.

Course Description:

This course aims to study American literature from its beginnings to 1865 and help students develop a greater understanding of American history, culture, and society. We will discuss and evaluate the chosen literary works carefully and critically, paying special attention to how they represent some of the most influential American literary themes and traditions. For example, encounter, discovery, and conquest; Puritan world-making; dissent; the First Great Awakening; Enlightenment; the American identity; revolution and independence; intellectual independence; Romantic skepticism; individualism and self-reliance; and women's voices. Students are required to give one group presentation and three short individual presentations. In addition, they are expected to come to class prepared and participate vigorously in class discussions.

Schedule:

Week 1. 9/12/24: Introduction

Week 2. 9/19: "Beginnings to 1820" (3-28), "Native American Oral Literature" (29-38) (**Presentation 1**)

Week 3. 9/26: **Encounter, Discovery, and Conquest:** Christopher Columbus: "Letter of Discovery" (45-51); John Smith: from *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (62-74); Movie: *Pocahontas* (**Presentation 2**)

Week 4. 10/3: **Puritan World-Making:** William Bradford: from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (79-96); John Winthrop: "A Model of Christian Charity" (101-113) (**Presentation 3**)

Week 5. 10/10: Holiday, No Class

Week 6. 10/17: **Public and Domestic Dissent:** William Bradford: "Mr. Morton of Merrymount" from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (96-99); Roger Williams: from *A Key into the Language of America* (114-119); Anne Bradstreet: "Prologue" (120-123), "The Author to Her Book" (130-131), "To My Dear and Loving Husband" (132), "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666" (133-134) (**Presentation 4**)

Week 7. 10/24: **The First Great Awakening:** Cotton Mather: from *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (165-171); Jonathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (172-185) (**Presentation 5**)

- Week 8. 10/31: **Enlightenment and the Limits of Reason:** Benjamin Franklin: “The Way to Wealth” (185-194), “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” (197-200), from *The Autobiography* (201, 253-264) (**Presentation 6**)
- Week 9. 11/7: **Midterm Examination**
- Week 10. 11/14: **The American Self & Un-American Selves:** J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur: from “Letter III. What Is an American?” (288-299); Philip Freneau: “The Indian Burying Ground” (395-396, 397-398); Phillis Wheatley: “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (399-401), “To S. M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works” (407-408) (**Presentation 7**)
- Week 11. 11/21: **Revolution & Independence:** Thomas Paine: from *Common Sense* (305-313), “The Crisis, No. 1” (313-319); Thomas Jefferson: from “The Declaration of Independence” (320-328) (**Presentation 8**)
- Week 12. 11/28: “American Literature 1820-1865” (439-460); Washington Irving: “The Author’s Account of Himself” & “Rip Van Winkle” (461-477) (**Presentation 9**)
- Week 13. 12/5: **Intellectual Independence:** Ralph Waldo Emerson: “The American Scholar” (500-503, 532-545) (**Presentation 10**)
- Week 14. 12/12: **Romantic Skepticism & the Dark Side of the Soul:** Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Young Goodman Brown” (600-603, 617-626); Edgar Allan Poe: “The Tell-Tale Heart” (660-664, 691-695) (**Presentation 11**)
- Week 15. 12/19: **Romantic Individualism and Self-Reliance:** Henry David Thoreau: “Resistance to Civil Government” (879-897), From *Walden, or Life in the Woods*: “2. Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” (941-951) (**Presentation 12**)
- Week 16. 12/26: **Women’s Voices:** Margaret Fuller: from *The Great Lawsuit* (754-765); Emily Dickinson: Poems #112, 340, 372, 479, 1263 (1220-1224, 1230-1231, 1233-1234, 1236, 1244) (**Presentation 13**)
- Week 17. 1/2/25: **Final Examination**

Grading Policy:

Attendance: 10 %

Participation: 15%

1 Group Presentation: 15%

3 Short Individual Presentations: 10%

Midterm Examination: 25%

Final Examination: 25%

Two Rules:

If you miss class over 3 times, you will get 0 for Attendance unless you have a good reason.

Please be on time. Being late 3 times equals 1 absence.