

English 334 V01: American Literature from the Origins to 1865

Fall 2024

English Department

INSTRUCTOR	Professor Nalencz
CLASS MEETING DAY AND TIMES	TRF 1:25-2:20
CLASS LOCATION	FH 404
OFFICE LOCATION	Founders Hall/ The Academy A321
E-MAIL	leonard.nalencz@umsv.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Monday and Wednesday 4-5:30pm, and by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

What are the “origins” of American literature? When should we begin? This class is a survey of literature from what is now called the “United States of America”, but it begins with the literature of various Indigenous people, and continues through the establishment of the current form of government and the enduring problem of the claim that “liberty” is a “self-evident truth”. How can this be the case, Frederick Douglass and Harriet Jacobs will ask, for people who are enslaved? We end with the poetry of Emily Dickinson, considering whether it is entirely self-enclosed, or if it related to the social issues of her America. (3 credits)

TEXTS AND OTHER INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:

There are **two required books** for this course:

- 1.) **The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Beginnings to 1865 (Shorter Tenth Edition)**. ISBN: 978-0-393-69683-7
- 2.) **Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl***. Bedford-St. Martins, 2019.
ISBN: 9781319169251

These books are listed on Akademos, but you can get them anywhere. You need to buy a hard copy of these books and bring the relevant volume to **every** class meeting. **E-books are not accepted, meaning you can't follow along on your phone or your computer** unless you have a letter of disability from the administration. When there are readings for class posted on Canvas, you need to **print them out** and bring them to class in hard copy.

COURSE OBJECTIVES and ASSESSMENT of STUDENT LEARNING

Familiarity and competence in reading in historical context is paramount, and the ability to read in a literary tradition is also desired.

DLO=Department Learning Outcome:

1. Demonstrate basic knowledge of American literature in historical context.
2. Develop a critical vocabulary enabling participation in literary discourse.
3. Identify and apply some major theories of literary interpretation (especially historical criticism) and criticism.
4. Write a clear and convincing analysis of at least one primary literary text. Engage in literary research using both print and electronic sources.
5. Produce a persuasively argued paper with bibliography that incorporates primary and secondary sources.

Course Schedule:

All reading assignments must be completed **before** the class period for which they are listed.

Class date	Reading/Assignment due
8/27	Introduction: What do we call this place before 1776? (Norton Anthology of American literature p. 6-28).
8/29	Native American Oral Literature (NA p. 29-44 and Canvas)
8/30	Columbus, <i>Letters</i> (NA p. 45-53 and Canvas)
9/3	Rowlandson, <i>Narrative of Captivity</i> (NA p. 138-150 and Canvas)

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9/5	Rowlandson, <i>Narrative of Captivity</i> (NA p. 150-159 and Canvas)
9/6	Ethnographic and Naturalist Writings (NA p. 275-292 and Canvas)
9/10	Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence" (NA p. 320-328); "Notes on the State of Virginia" (NA p. 766-770)
9/12	Judith Sargent Murray, <i>Equality</i> (NA p. 385-394); Danielle Allen, from <i>Our Declaration</i> (Canvas)
9/13	Phillis Wheatley (NA p. 399-404)
9/17	Phillis Wheatley (NA p. 405-409); Eve L. Ewing (Canvas)
9/19	Native Literature: Negotiation and Resistance (NA p. 425-436)
9/20	Native Literature: Negotiation and Resistance (NA p. 580-597); Images (NA p. C1-C16)
9/24	Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address" (NA p. 723-726); Margaret Fuller (NA p. 754-765)
9/26	Women's Rights/ Women's Writing (NA p. 727-738), Angelina E Grimké (NA p. 782-785)
9/27	Harriet Beecher Stowe, from <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> (NA p. 790-813)
10/1	Harriet Beecher Stowe, from <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> (NA p. 813-829)
10/3	Henry David Thoreau, <i>Resistance to Civil Government</i> (NA p. 879-897)
10/8	Henry David Thoreau, from <i>Walden</i> (NA p. 941-951)
10/10	Chinese-American literature: the "Friendship Album" (Canvas)
10/11	Midterm exam
10/17	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life</i> (NA p. 970-987)
10/18	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> (NA p. 988-1006)
10/22	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> (NA p. 1007-1023)
10/24	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> (NA p. 1024-1040)
10/25	Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (NA p. 1040-1043); Audre Lorde, "The Fourth of July" (Canvas)
10/29	Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i> (NA p. 1044-1047, 1062-1067)
10/31	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 25-50)
11/1	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 51-76)
11/7	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 77-102)
11/8	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 103-128)
11/12	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 129-54)

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11/14	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 155-180)
11/15	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (p. 181-209)
11/19	Frances E.W. Harper (1215-1220); Emily Dickinson (1220-1224)
11/21	Emily Dickinson (NA p. 1225-1234)
11/22	Emily Dickinson (NA p. 1235-1243)
11/26	Emily Dickinson (NA p. 1244-1249)
12/3	Class Presentations
12/5	ClassPresentations
12/6	Class Presentations; Final Essay Due!

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Honesty

Students are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with all University policies and procedures, including but not limited to the University policies on [Academic Honesty & Integrity](#) as well as all University policies and procedures described in the Student Handbook and (for undergraduates) the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) (for undergraduate students), or for graduate students, the [Graduate Catalog](#).

Academic Support Services

The University of Mount Saint Vincent offers a range of academic support services which might be helpful to students in this course; these services are provided by the [Oxley Integrated Advising Program](#), located in the Elizabeth Seton Library.

Attendance

Students are required to attend all classroom, laboratory, and clinical sessions. Students are expected to arrive at classes on time. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they will miss class and it is the responsibility of the student to make up all work if absent from class. For prolonged absences, the student must notify Academic Affairs. Three latenesses of more than five minutes is the equivalent of one absence; if you miss more than three classes, you will lose one-third off your final grade (and again with another three absences).

Accessibility Services

Students with disabilities should contact the University's Office of Accessibility Services. Students who are eligible to receive reasonable accommodations at the University of Mount Saint Vincent must register with the Office of Accessibility Services. Students must complete a "Request for Reasonable Accommodation" form and submit supporting documentation. Eligibility is determined under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act 2008 (ADA). Students are responsible for self-identifying and seeking services with the Office of Accessibility Services. A reasonable accommodation is defined as a service that does

not fundamentally alter the programs, course design, living space, and activities provided to other students. In addition, the accommodation may not pose a financial or administrative burden to the university. A reasonable accommodation request can be initiated at any time during the student's academic enrollment at the University. However, accommodations are not retroactive. The application and decision process varies; therefore, students are encouraged to begin the process at least 4 weeks in advance of the date they are requesting to start their accommodations. To receive more information on eligibility and services, contact the University's Office of Accessibility Services located at the Charles L. Flynn, Jr. Academic Resource Commons.

Other policies

Please put phones, laptops, and any other internet connected devices (watches, e.g.) away, turned off, and out of sight for the entirety of class. If there is something so pressing and urgent that you must check your phone, you should consider being absent from class rather than being distracted and potentially distracting others (myself included).

CANVAS COURSE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

This course will use the Canvas Course Management System. Please check our course page for the syllabus, for some assigned reading, and for your record of attendance.

GRADES

The following is a guideline concerning key areas considered during the grading process for this class. Please ask if you have any questions!

Grading Elements	Percent of Final Grade
Active class participation	25%
Research Paper(s)	25%
Class presentation	15%
Midterm Examination	15%
Final Examination	20%

Standardized University Grade Policy

University Grades Quality Points % of Total Points in Course

A	4	93 to 100
A-	3.67	90 to 92
B+	3.33	87 to 89
B	3	83 to 86
B-	2.67	80 to 82
C+	2.33	77 to 79
C	2	73 to 76
C-	1.67	70 to 72
D+	1.33	67 to 69
D	1	60 to 66
F*	0	0 to 59

**Please note there is a distinction between an earned F and an unearned F. An unearned F means you did not complete a course and failed to act responsibly by withdrawing from the course. This can have negative financial implications and impact your eligibility for federal financial aid. An earned F means you completed the course but not with a passing grade. This is not a good outcome, but is usually considered preferable to an unearned F.*

Essay assignment:

Your essay should be approximately **1600** words. It must be typed, in 12-point Times New Roman font with one inch margins, and double-spaced. Include your name, course, and a title of your own. The **assignment** is to use write a research paper on either Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life* or Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Your edition of Jacobs' narrative includes helpful supporting material, like historical background and contemporary letters, and you should use some of that material for your research essay if you choose to write about *Incidents in the Life*. In either case, here are a few questions you might consider: What did you learn from this research? How do other scholars and critics understand the historical and literary importance of Jacobs/Douglass? Does what you found in your research confirm or contradict what we discussed in class? How has the research you have done impact your understanding of the historical period we are studying? (These are suggestions; you can use them or not as you see fit.)

Class Presentation:

Each student will present to the class for 10-15 minutes and then answer questions from the class and me. The topic is to present your research for your final essay. You should begin by sharing with the class the secondary sources you are using, and how these sources affected your understanding of Jacobs' or Douglass' life and work. You can do this as an outline, but since everyone has read the primary source and will also be doing research, you don't have to summarize, and you can focus on your own research and perspective. The feedback should be helpful for you as you work on your final essay.