

## English 2250 American Literature I

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Office Hours: MWF 9:15-10:00 or by appointment

### Course Description and Objectives

This course will cover “American” literature from its beginnings to mid-way through the nineteenth century. Through the texts we will read and discuss, you will gain an understanding and appreciation of our cultural inheritance. Through literary works, we will understand the historical and cultural implications of early American life and relate it to our own modern culture. You will participate in a classroom community of learners reading and responding to a common body of literature. These responses will occur in the form of classroom/online conversations, written essays, presentations, and exams. This course should also prompt you to employ critical thinking skills as we investigate the ever-changing American literary canon.

### Required Materials

*American Literature*. Vol. 1. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Eds. William E. Cain, Alice McDermott, Lance Newman, and Hilary E. Wyss. New York: Pearson, 2014.

Northrup, Solomon. *Twelve Years a Slave*. Eds. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Kevin M. Burke. New York: W.W. & Norton Company, 2017.

Supplemental readings (I will provide these)

### Organization

This section of ENGL 2250 is organized around thematic aspects rather than chronologically. Even with this structure, the course covers a large span of American literary history from exploration and colonization through the Civil War. The thematic nature of the course provides an opportunity for us to explore ideas such as citizenship and the American Dream when we read selections from David Walker and Thomas Jefferson during the first couple of days of the course. These themes will carry over throughout the semester as we read various authors who challenge the *Declaration of Independence's* opening line, “All men are created equal.” What did this phrase mean during the early years of our nation’s history? Along with questioning this phrase, the thematic structure will allow us to question the American literary canon and who should or should not be included in that canon. To that extent, we will read authors that F.O. Matthiessen placed into his canon in *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (1941). The five authors Matthiessen placed in this pantheon dominated the American literary canon for decades. Should they still dominate that landscape? Should others be included when we look at Early American literature? These are some of the other questions we will ponder as we proceed through the semester on our literary journey.

### Course Requirements and Explanation of Grading

Quizzes and Participation (online assignments)	10%
Essay One (1,200-1,500 words)	20%
Presentation and written project	20%
Mid-term Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%

A=90-100; B=80-89; C=70-79; D=60-69; F=59 or below

**Attendance and In-Class Participation**— Although I believe that as adults you should have control over your own education, attendance is vital to your success in this course. Much of your learning and work will take place in class, and you will be involved in discussing the readings in class. To fully comprehend and hopefully appreciate the texts, you should come to class fully prepared. This means you should have read the homework and completed any assignments for class.

You will be held accountable to the following attendance policy: 3 or more unexcused absences will result in a grade of FA (failure due to absences). If you have an excused absence—e.g., university-sponsored trip, doctor's visit—you must provide verification to the course instructor, in writing, no later than *one week* after the absence occurs. Tardiness is disruptive and disrespectful to your peers and to the teacher. Every two instances of tardiness (defined as 5 minutes late or more) will be counted as one absence.

Daily attendance is not sufficient to guarantee you a passing participation grade. Any activities taking place during class time contribute to your in-class participation grade. This includes note-taking during lectures, actively participating during discussion, and otherwise participating in class activities. There will be small group discussions during classes and other activities that will be part of this grade.

**Essay One**—This will be explained on a separate handout. Papers are due at the beginning of class on the day specified on the paper assignment handout. **Late papers are penalized one letter grade per academic day! Due July 10<sup>th</sup>.**

**Forums**—Every week, you will be required to post a question about the readings the day we discuss them. You must also respond to one person's question on the forum to receive full credit for the assignment.

**Quizzes**—These will be based on readings and/or concepts from lectures and online discussions. Quizzes will be given at least once a week and possibly twice. Make sure you prepare for these by reading the materials for class. Missed quizzes (excused or unexcused) cannot be made up. I will drop the lowest quiz grade.

**Presentation and Written Project**—Reading literature is not a solitary activity. While you may read alone, literature is meant to be discussed and contemplated with others. With that in mind, you will be required to create a presentation with one or two other students in the course. The presentation will include a written component as well. It will involve your group discussing archival items that relate to our course. The details of this assignment will be explained on a separate handout. Presentations will occur on July 24<sup>th</sup> and July 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Mid-term and Final Exams**—The mid-term and final exams will consist of definition/identification questions, short answer questions, and long essay questions. Only the works we discuss in class or that I otherwise specify will be covered on the exams. The mid-term will include material up to June 21<sup>st</sup> while the final will mainly focus on material after that date; however, the final may have questions about some of the material from the first part of the semester.

### **Late and Make-up Work**

1. Assignments are due on the Due Date. **They will not be accepted late.**

2. Essays are due at the beginning of class on the day specified on the assignment handout. **Late papers will be penalized one letter grade per academic calendar day.**
3. Late daily assignments will be failed if unexcused.
4. Quizzes cannot be made up
5. Exams will not be made-up unless the student provides an excuse from the Dean of Students.

### **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism**

There are two major types of plagiarism:

1. Word-for-word copying, without acknowledgement, of the language of another writer. (Almost needless to say, having another person write or dictate all or part of one's composition is plagiarism of this kind and clearly forbidden. But in addition students should copy no passages, no matter how brief, without acknowledging its source and either placing it in quotation marks or setting it aside as a blocked quotation.)
2. The unacknowledged paraphrasing of an author's ideas. (The student should no more take credit for another writer's thoughts than for another writer's language. Any distinctly original idea taken from another writer should be credited to its author. If the student does not know whether another writer's idea is distinctly original, he or she should incline to believe that it is; no fault attaches to over-acknowledgment, but under-acknowledgment is plagiarism.)

Cheating and plagiarism are serious violations of the Student Academic Honesty Code (Title XII) and will be treated according to the procedures outlined in the [Student Policy e-Handbook](#) or on the [University Policies website](#). You are responsible for asking your instructor any questions you may have about honest use of sources or proper documentation. You will receive a "0" for the assignment for the first instance of plagiarism. For a second instance, you will fail the course.

### **Miller Writing Center**

The Auburn University Miller Writing Center is free and available for students who desire feedback on their writing. (We can *all* use extra feedback on our writing.) Keep in mind, however, that while the tutors are there to help you with your assignments, they are not there to complete your assignments for you. Thus, when you schedule a meeting, make sure to have a list of questions, your essay, and documents like writing prompts with you when you actually meet. Taking these simple steps will help you and the tutors make the most of your time working together.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Students should conduct themselves in a manner respectful of themselves, their classmates, and me. While we may discuss controversial or potentially offensive issues, and class discussions may well involve differences of opinion, students are to conduct themselves in a professional manner.

**I require all students to turn off or silence all cell phones, tablets, and computers. We will use these in class, at certain points. However, when we are not using them for classroom activities, they must be put away.**

### **Early Alert Grade Statement**

You will receive an “Early Alert Grade” one week prior to midterm (31<sup>st</sup> class day). The Early Alert Grade represents your current performance on class work graded at that point in the semester. If your Early Alert Grade is a “D,” “F,” or “FA,” you will receive an email from the AU Retention Coordinator. Early Alert Grades can be viewed by logging into AU Access, opening the “tiger i” tab, selecting “Student Records,” and opening the “Midterm Grades” window from the drop down box. If the grade appears inaccurate, please contact the instructor.

### **Withdrawal from the Course**

No grade penalty will be assigned for dropping a course on or before midterm. A student who withdraws from a course prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> class day during Fall or Spring semester will receive no grade assignment; however, after the first 15 days, a “W” (Withdrawn Passing) grade will be recorded for the course. A course may be dropped with a “W” after midterm only under unusual conditions (e.g., serious illness of the student, serious illness or death of a member of the student’s immediate family). When approval for dropping the course under such circumstances is granted by the student’s dean, a “W” may be assigned only when the instructor indicates that the student is clearly passing the course. Otherwise, a grade of “WF” (Withdrawn Failing) will be assigned.

### **Accessibility Statement**

Students who need accommodations are asked to submit their approved accommodations electronically through AU Access and to make an individual appointment with the course instructor during the first week of classes—or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096. For more information, you can also visit the website for the Office of Accessibility: <<https://cws.auburn.edu/accessibility>>.

**Tentative Readings for English 2250**  
**(This schedule is subject to change)**

Month	Date	Readings/Assignments
May	19	Introductions and go over syllabus
May	22	David Walker (510-520)
May	24	Thomas Jefferson (430-440 & 462-465)
May	26	J Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (392-418)
May	29	<b>Memorial Day: No Class</b>
May	31	<b>Meet in Special Collections &amp; Archives in RBD Library</b>
June	2	Samson Occom (376-391) William Apess (562-567)
June	5	Mary Rowlandson ("Preface to Reader," Removes 1-5, 8, 12, 13, 15, 18-19)
June	7	John Marrant (466-487)
June	9	Sarah Kemble Knight (240-263)
June	12	Jonathan Edwards (264-277)
June	14	John Winthrop (102-124)
June	16	William Bradford (77-98)
June	19	Selections from Anne Bradstreet and Emily Dickinson
June	21	<b>Review for Mid-Term</b>
June	23	<b>Mid-Term</b>
June	26	Solomon Northup (5-55)
June	28	Solomon Northup (55-109)
June	30	Solomon Northup (109-157)
July	3	Solomon Northup (157-194)
July	5	Frederick Douglass (1023-1045)
July	7	Selections from John Russwurm and Elias Boudinot*
July	10	Lydia Maria Child (578-589) — <b>Essay one due on Canvas</b>
July	12	Selections from Phillis Wheatley and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper
July	14	Ralph Waldo Emerson (590-625)
July	17	Rebecca Harding Davis (1204-1236)
July	19	Herman Melville (1062-1093)
July	21	Selections from Walt Whitman
July	24	<b>Presentations</b>
July	26	<b>Presentations</b>
July	28	<b>Review</b>
August	3	<b>Final 8:00-10:30</b>

\* Text will be provided through Canvas