

American Literature

Fall 2025

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The American Literature course begins with literature of the New World and ends with contemporary period literature. There is an emphasis on critical thinking, close reading, and the development of writing skills. The course is organized by theme, by genre, or by literary and historical period, depending on the approach of the teacher. Students will have a wide variety of writing assignments, opportunities for oral participation, and other activities connecting literature, history, and culture.

Learning Goals

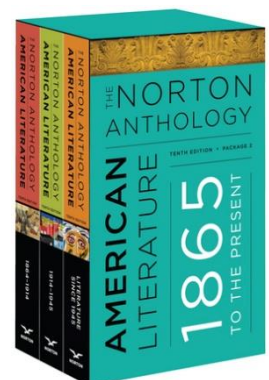
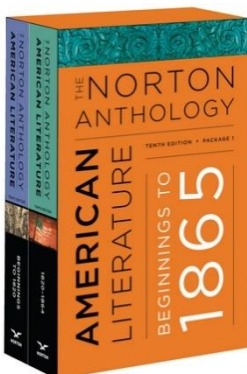
- Students will gain an appreciation of the breadth and depth of American literature through engagement with foundational works, authors, and literary forms, including prose, poetry, and drama.
- Students will develop skills in the close reading of literature, practicing and employing techniques to recognize and interpret foundational literary devices and techniques.
- Students will cultivate empathy and a deeper understanding of others by engaging with works of literature that portray a wide range of identities, cultures, perspectives, and lived experiences.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to identify, describe, and discuss the central features and characteristics of foundational American works, authors, and literary forms.
- Students will be able to craft original, meaningful aesthetic and cultural interpretations of literature supported by formal analysis of foundational literary devices and techniques.
- Students will be able to empathetically reflect and articulate how American literature functions to convey a wide range of identities, culture, perspectives, and lived experiences.

Required Texts

- *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Volumes A, B, C, D, E.
- Additional Readings will be provided as print outs and via Canvas.



Tasks and Projects

Detailed instructions will be provided for the following graded tasks and projects.

- Dice Quizzes (20% of course grade)
 - Students will participate in reading quizzes that are randomized through the use of a die.
- Classroom Activities Reflections (20% of course grade)
 - At four points during the semester, students will compose and submit a reflection discussing an in-class activity they found especially enlightening or especially challenging.
 - Due: #1 (Monday 9/8), #2 (Wednesday 10/8), #3 (Monday 11/3), #4 (Monday 12/8)
- Author Trading Card or Dear Author Letter (20% of course grade)
 - Students will select **one** of the two following options:
 - Students will research a course author and craft a trading card introducing the writer, their work, and significance.
 - Students will write a letter to a course author commenting on their work and biography and asking questions regarding both.
 - Due: Monday (9/22)
- Short Story Playlist or Mood Board (20% of course grade)
 - Students will select **one** of the two following options:
 - Students will select a short story from assigned readings and create a playlist of songs to accompany its reading.
 - Students will select a short story from assigned readings and craft a board of images to accompany its reading.
 - Due: Monday (11/3)
- Literary Artifact (20% of course grade)
 - Students will select an assigned reading and design a fictional artifact that could plausibly exist within its narrative world.
 - Due: Monday (12/15)



Tokens

- Each student starts the semester with 3 tokens, which can be used for either a two-day extension or to revise and resubmit a task/project for re-evaluation.
- No late work is accepted without a token. To use one, email Dr. B with the task/project, number of tokens, and purpose. Revised work must be resubmitted within four days of receiving a grade.
- Extra tokens can be earned through optional learning tasks. Students with an excused absence on a due date (without early submission) receive a courtesy two-day extension.



Daily Reading Schedule

Students should complete readings before the class period for which they are assigned.

Week One (8/11-8/15)

Monday

Welcome!

Wednesday

- “The Declaration of Independence” (1776)
- Benjamin Banneker – Letter to Thomas Jefferson (1791)

Friday

- Langston Hughes - “Let America be America Again” (1935)
- Frederick Douglass - “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)



Week Two (8/18-8/22)

Monday

- Cotton Mather - *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (Excerpts)

Wednesday

- Anne Bradstreet - “Before the Birth of One of Her Children” (1678) and “Verses upon the Burning of Our House” (1666)

Friday

- Phillis Wheatley - “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (1773) and “To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth” (1773)
- Olaudah Equiano - *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, Chapter One and Chapter Two (1789)

Week Three (8/25-8/29)

Monday

- Washington Irving - “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1820)

Wednesday

- Edgar Allan Poe - “The Raven” (1845), “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

Friday

- Nathaniel Hawthorne - “Young Goodman Brown” (1835)



Week Four (9/1-9/5)

Monday

- No Classes

Wednesday

- Henry David Thoreau - “Civil Disobedience” (1849)

Friday

- Herman Melville - “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853)



Week Five (9/8-9/12)

Monday

- Emily Dickinson - “Because I could not stop for Death -” and “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,” (1860s)

Wednesday

- Emily Dickinson - ““Hope” is the thing with feathers -” and “There's a certain Slant of light,”(1860s)

Friday

- Ambrose Bierce - “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (1890)

Week Six (9/15-9/19)

Monday

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman - “The Yellow Wallpaper” (1892)

Wednesday

- Willa Cather - “The Sculptor’s Funeral” (1905)

Friday

- Edith Wharton - “Afterward” (1910)

Week Seven (9/22-9/26)

Monday

- Author Trading Card or Dear Author Letter Show and Tell

Wednesday

- Author Trading Card or Dear Author Letter Show and Tell

Friday

- Author Trading Card or Dear Author Letter Show and Tell



Week Eight (9/29-10/3)

Monday

- William Faulkner - “A Rose for Emily” (1930)

Wednesday

- Robert Frost - “Design” (1922) and “Desert Places” (1934)

Friday

- Zora Neale Hurston - “The Gilded Six Bits” (1933)

Week Nine (10/6-10/10)

Monday

- No Classes

Wednesday

- Flannery O’Connor - “Good Country People” (1955)

Friday

- Ralph Ellison - “Battle Royale,” Invisible Man (1947)

Week Ten (10/13-10/17)

Monday

- Tennessee Williams - “A Streetcar Named Desire” (1947)

Wednesday

- Tennessee Williams - “A Streetcar Named Desire” (1947)

Friday

- Tennessee Williams - “A Streetcar Named Desire” (1947)

Week Eleven (10/20-10/24)

Monday

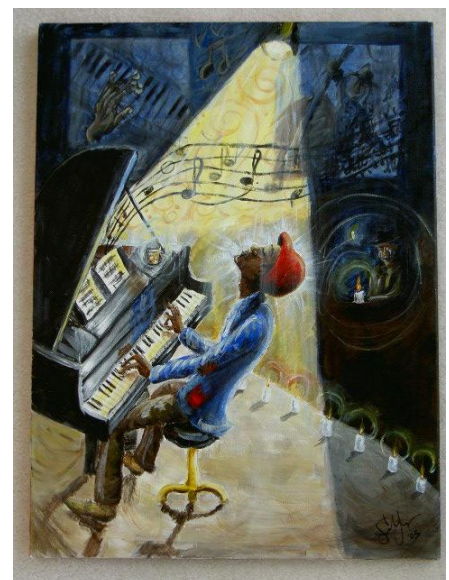
- Allen Ginsberg - “Howl” (1956)

Wednesday

- James Baldwin - “Sonny’s Blues” (1957)

Friday

- Anne Sexton - “Her Kind” (1960) and “The Truth the Dead Know” (1962)



Week Twelve (10/27-10-31)

Monday

- Joan Didion - “Slouching Towards Bethlehem” (1967)

Wednesday

- Donald Barthelme - “The Balloon” (1968)

Friday

- John Cheever - “The Swimmer” (1964)

Week Thirteen (11/3-11/7)

Monday

- Short Story Playlist or Mood Board Show and Tell

Wednesday

- Short Story Playlist or Mood Board Show and Tell

Friday

- Short Story Playlist or Mood Board Show and Tell

Week Fourteen (11/10-11/14)

Monday

- Alice Walker – “Everyday Use” (1973)

Wednesday

- Ursula K. Le Guin – “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas” (1973)

Friday

- Leslie Marmon Silko - “Lullaby” (1974)

Week Fifteen (11/17-11/21)

Monday

- Raymond Carver - “Cathedral” (1981)

Wednesday

- Toni Morrison - “Recitatif” (1983)



Friday

- Amy Tan - “Two Kinds” (1989)

Week Sixteen (12/1-12/5)

Monday

- George Sanders - “CivilWarLand in Bad Decline” (1992)

Wednesday

- Sandra Cisneros - “Woman Hollering Creek” (1991)

Friday

- David Foster Wallace - “Consider the Lobster” (2004)



Week Seventeen (12/8-12/12)

Monday

- Karen Russell - “St. Lucy’s Home for Girls Raised by Wolves” (2006)

Wednesday

- Charles Yu – “Standard Loneliness Package” (2010)

Friday

- Lauren Groff – “Ghosts and Empties” (2015)

Week Eighteen (12/15-12/19)

Monday

- Literary Artifact Show and Tell

Wednesday

- Literary Artifact Show and Tell

Ball State University Beneficence Pledge

Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains outstanding faculty, staff, and students. Ball State is committed to ensuring that all members of the campus community are welcome through our practice of valuing the varied experiences and worldviews of the people whom we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as evident in our Beneficence Pledge. As a reflection of Ball State’s commitment to respect, civil discourse, and the Beneficence Pledge, inclusiveness at the Indiana Academy emerges as one of the priorities of our living and learning community. We strive to exist together respectfully and compassionately, creating an environment where every member can thrive.

IA Wireless Device Policy

Pursuant to Indiana Code 20-26-5-40.7, The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics and Humanities prohibits student use of wireless communication devices for non-instructional purposes in the classroom. As such, any and all portable wireless devices, that have the capability to provide voice, messaging, or other data communication between two or more parties, must only be used for academic purposes directly tied to the classroom activity or related educational task. Exceptions to this wireless device policy are eligible through academic accommodations, individualized education programs, or with instructor approval permitting the use of a wireless device for justification related to health, safety, and/or well-being.

The improper use of a wireless device in an active classroom setting is subject to disciplinary action including but not limited to; a verbal warning, temporary seizure of said device by a school official, an unexcused absence for the class in question, written communication to parent/guardian, among other elevated consequences for repeated improper use.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is mandatory. Students may receive excused absences at the professional discretion of the school nurse, the associate director of mental health services, the associate director of college counseling and student engagement, the director of academic affairs, and the executive director of the Indiana Academy. Unexcused absences occur when students miss class without prior approval from the aforementioned designated school officials. Continued absences (both excused and unexcused) from Academy classes increase the likelihood of unsuccessful completion.

Alongside steady attendance, students are expected to maintain consistent healthy habits of decorum, respect, and kindness towards their classmates, instructors, and teaching assistants. When students fail to meet these classroom behavioral standards and academic habits, it is the expectation faculty engage appropriately to bring quick and immediate resolution. When students consistently fail to meet these behavioral standards and academic habits in the classroom, an administrative consequence ladder will be adopted, and recorded, in attempt to administratively address, engage, and rectify ongoing challenges.

Humanities Division Statement on AI

The Humanities Division recognizes that artificial intelligence (AI) provides some exciting new tools for academic work. However, AI also poses significant dangers for academic integrity. Passing off as your own any research, words, or ideas which you did not create is plagiarism. That is always the case whether the source is print, internet content, or generated by AI. It is vital to read the policies your individual humanities instructors have regarding AI, and ask them any questions you may have about the use of AI in their course.

Use of AI

Generative AI is not permitted in planning, constructing, or revising any course tasks or projects.