

Corby Roberson

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Class Meeting Time: Monday 5-7:30

Class Location: BU121

Office Hours: Tuesday and Friday 8AM-10AM, 11AM-12PM, 1PM-3PM, and by appointment

In person: BU 214

Virtual: Contact me to arrange a Zoom meeting

American Literature Survey: Syllabus

Course Overview and Goals: Welcome to American Literature from the beginning to now. We will focus our attention on academic and rigorous reading, writing, speaking, and listening, as they relate to literature, culture, and the humanities. We will survey the well-known writers, but we will also pay close attention to those voices who have been silenced, such as LGBT+, BIPOC, and women writers. The goal is for students to be able to appreciate the traditional literary canon, while also recognizing the ways in which many voices have been marginalized. To wrap up the class, we will trace lines from the very inception of “America” to today’s current events through literature, art, music, journalism, and other facets of culture. You will be expected to read critically; take copious and beneficial notes; discuss and debate ideas; listen to learn, not respond; and then to produce your own writing and projects to showcase *your* learning and acquired knowledge.

Texts: *The Norton Anthology of American Literature A - E*

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Beloved by Toni Morrison

My expectations:

- Your punctual presence is required at every class meeting. Punctuality includes having all homework (notes, papers, or projects) finished *before* class begins. You should bring your reading notes with you either electronically or on paper, and be ready to engage in class and participate in discussion at 5PM when class begins.
- Because of the time of our class, you may bring your dinner with you if you need to do so. We do have someone with a melon allergy, so please keep that in mind. If this becomes a distraction, we’ll rethink the privilege.
- Always try everything with a respectful attitude. Yes, some things will be difficult, but we get better by stretching ourselves.
- Be academically honest. Plagiarism and cheating are not welcome in our learning community.
- Recognize that being a literary person is a difficult task. There will be a lot of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and I reserve the right to be flexible. What will not make me flexible is complaining about the amount of work you may have for this class.
- Be kind. Be respectful. Be open.

Absence and Tardies: Because we meet only once a week, your on-time attendance is imperative. You will be counted tardy if you arrive after 5PM. If you arrive after 5:10PM, you will be counted absent. Absence and tardies will be reported to the Office of Academic Life. If you do need to miss a class, *you* are expected to turn in any assignments that were due (they should be submitted beforehand anyway), *you* will be responsible for obtaining any assignments you may have missed in class, and *you* are responsible for getting notes from someone in the class.

Late Work: Late work will *not be accepted*. Your work should be submitted to canvas *before* class starts, unless your work is a project that will be submitted in class. If you submit the work

in class, it must accompany you to class and arrive in a completed state at the beginning of the class period. Generally, I have designed the class, so that your homework is your background knowledge or scaffolding for whatever we will discuss in class, so there is no point in turning it in after we've already completed the discussion.

Technology: Technology can be a useful tool, but it can also be a detrimental bully. I allow technology to be used in our classroom for specific educational purposes, so please bring some form of technology with you each Monday night. I also reserve the right to tell you that your technology is cheating you out of your education, so if I ask you to turn off your technology, that means you've been barred from using it in class for the future.

Academic Dishonesty: Everything you produce as a student says something about who you are and how you want people to perceive you as an academician. That being said, your work for this class should be *yours*. As part of a learning community, you owe it yourself, your peers, and me to be academically honest. This means making your own claims and supporting them with evidence, which you then cite appropriately. Please refer to the "Academic Honesty" section of your *Student Handbook* if you do not understand the Academy policy. Please ask questions if there is any doubt in your mind that might be being academically dishonest.

Assignment Weights

Discussion 15%
 Daily Notes 15%
 Reader's Responses 20%
 Midterm Paper/Project 20%
 Final Paper/Project/Presentation 30%

Grading Scale:

A	95 - 100
A-	90 - 94
B+	87 - 89
B	83 - 86
B-	80 - 82
C+	77 - 79
C	73 - 76
C-	70 - 72
D	69 and below

Assignments (these will also be clearly posted each week in canvas, so there will be no confusion about what is due when):

Discussion (every Monday night) - two of the main goals of the class are speaking and listening to learn, so each night, you will be expected to participate in a discussion with me and your peers about the assigned texts, the key here is not to dominate the discussion or make asides or take tangents, but the key is to listen and speak thoughtfully about the topic at hand; make a point, support it with evidence from the text, and then listen to others' comments

Daily Notes (posted to canvas as a PDF before class every Monday night) - part of being prepared for discussion is taking excellent notes (digitally or on paper); remember these notes are for *you* to help you during discussion, so you may use whatever style of notes you would like to use, but they must be thorough; if I notice that your notes seem lackluster or if you're stumbling in discussion, I will request that we meet so I can help you with this skill

Reader's Response (posted to canvas as a PDF by 10PM on Wednesday nights) - you will take your own ideas, and the things you learned in our discussion on Monday night, and write a 2-page response to the text; this can be an analysis, a further exploration of a topic of interest, a comparison with another piece of literature, a global connection, a connection with something you learned in another class, or maybe you need to clarify a thought you brought into discussion; this is your opportunity for you to shine!

Midterm Paper/Project - TBD; we will discuss this as we progress through the semester, but there will be a writing component and a project component

Final Paper/Project/Presentation - TBD; we will discuss this as we progress through the semester, but there will be a writing component, a project component, and a presentation. There are seven of us and we have a 2.5 hour class, so expect your presentation to be about 15 minutes long.

BSU Diversity and Inclusion: Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>. As such, it is important to ensure that your comments and behavior in class is respectful and inclusive. Discriminatory comments or behavior will not be tolerated and may result in disciplinary action, in accordance with Indiana Academy and Ball State University policy.

BSU and Academy Mask Policy: The Indiana Academy will follow Ball State University's mask policy. Effective July 1, 2020, all people on campus—including faculty, staff, students, vendors, contractors, suppliers, and visitors—should wear face masks (covering nose and mouth) while inside campus buildings. Face masks are specifically required in the following situations:

- I. When in the presence of others (indoors or outdoors) and physical distancing is difficult to maintain, such as in hallways, elevators, stairs, public spaces, and common areas;
- II. When in a classroom or laboratory;
- III. When using campus transportation (such as a shuttle bus);
- IV. When multiple individuals are in a University vehicle.

Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to bring their own mask. Masks will be provided to anyone who is unable to bring a mask or their mask is damaged.

Non-compliance: If a student declines to wear a face mask as required, the student will be referred to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. If the situation occurs in a classroom or other academic setting, it is considered a classroom management issue, and the teacher will remind the student of the requirement and give the student a chance to comply with it prior to referring the matter to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. Wearing masks is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19 to others.

Addendum: Important Literature is often about the deepest and most difficult struggles of humans to live authentically in a complex world. Through the thoughts and experiences of literary characters, we readers can examine and evaluate our personal responses to life's mysteries, complexities, disappointments, and joys. In addition, we begin to understand how a writer, in his or her own struggle to express experience creatively, has responded to the social, political, and artistic environment of his / her times. The English Department at the Academy selects reading material that reflects these human struggles, has endured the test of time, and has earned a respected place in the universe of letters. In addition, the instructors include recently published poems, short stories, and articles that reflect the diversity of contemporary cultures and experiences. If, because of the powerful nature of the reading experience, you are unable to read and study a specific text with reasonable analytic objectivity, please confer with your instructor. Alternative texts (of comparable length and degree of difficulty) are available.

American Literature Schedule: Subject to change, but I will always tell you in advance.

August 24: Discuss excerpts from documents posted on Canvas: “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,” “On Plymouth Plantation,” and “The Iroquois Constitution” and the complete poem “A Letter to her Husband, absent upon Publick Employment”

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

August 31: Discuss excerpts from *Norton Anthology Volume A*: “The Crisis, No. 1” (pp.637-643), “The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson” (pp.652-657), “On the Equality of the Sexes” (pp.726-733), and the complete poem “To His Excellency General Washington” (pp.761-762).

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

September 7: NO CLASS: Labor Day

If you are so inclined, you may take a look at the history of Labor Day, as class struggle is a key component in our class:

US Government Official version: <https://www.dol.gov/general/laborday/history>

A Labor Union Perspective: <http://laborpress.org/labor-day-a-holiday-born-out-of-a-brutal-history/>

September 14: Discuss from *Norton Anthology Volume B*: “Self-Reliance” (pp.1163-1180), “What to the Slave is Fourth of July?” (pp.2140-2143), “Speech to the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851” (p.1695), and “From “Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk” (pp. 1253-1256) I will also distribute your Midterm Project or Paper and Presentation assignment sheet, so we can go over it. Your midterm project/paper/presentation will be due on October 5.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

September 21: Discuss *The Scarlet Letter* from “The Custom House” through “Chapter X: The Leech and His Patient.” I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

September 28: Discuss *The Scarlet Letter* from “The Interior of a Heart” through the end of the book. I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

October 5 Midterm Paper or Project and Presentation There will be an assignment sheet distributed on September 14, and we will use our class time to present your projects or papers. You will each have 20 minutes to present. Submit your self-reflection by Wednesday at 5 (so I can grade them before midterm grades are due!).

October 12: Discuss from *Norton Anthology Volume C* “Song of Myself, 1 - 6” (pp.30-34), “The Don and His Broad Acres” (pp. 93-100), “[I am alone]” (pp.383-384), “[He has filled graves with our bones]” (pp.385-387), and “The Yellow Wallpaper” (pp.808-819). I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

October 19: Discuss from *Norton Anthology Volume C*: “from Mob Rule in New Orleans” (pp.854-878), “Twenty Years at Hull House” (pp. 1169-1173), and “We Wear the Mask” (p. 1043). I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

October 26: Discuss from *Norton Anthology Volume D*: “Nothing Gold Can Stay” (p. 1403), “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” (p. 1448), “The Red Wheelbarrow” (p.1469), “In a Station of the Metro” (p. 1482), “Feminist Manifesto” (p.1502-1504), “The Paper Nautilus” (p.1535), “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (pp. 1577-1580), “The Lynching” and “If We Must Die” (p.1688), “somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond” and “anyone lived in a pretty how town” (p.1813), and “I, Too” (p. 2028). I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

November 2: Discuss from *Norton Anthology Volume E*: “Shoulders” (p.3216), “Persimmons” (p. 3199), “from Poetry is Not a Luxury” (pp. 2501), “A Supermarket in California” (p. 2584), “Entropy” (pp. 2817-2827), and “*La consciences de la mestiza/Towards and New Consciousness*” (pp.2936-2946) I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

November 9: Discuss *Beloved*. I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.
Submit your reader’s response by Wednesday at midnight.

November 16: Discuss *Beloved*. I may provide external sources in class; you will not have to read them ahead of time.

Post your notes to canvas before class.

Submit your current event for next week's e-learning discussion by Wednesday at midnight.

November 23: NO CLASS; Thanksgiving Break

Enjoy your break. If you really want to be in the holiday spirit, you can revisit "On Plymouth Plantation" by William Bradford from our first meeting.

December 7: E-Learning Discuss *Beloved* or discuss current events as they relate to the themes of the class. Before Wednesday, November 18, post a link to your current event in the canvas discussion. You are all responsible for reading all seven current events articles. You will each lead a 15-minute discussion for your current event. We will talk more about this before you leave for Thanksgiving Break.

Submit your reader's response by Wednesday at midnight.

December 14: E-Learning Final Paper or Project and Presentation There will be an assignment sheet distributed on November 16. Submit your self-reflection by Wednesday at 5.