

# Survey of Anglophone Literatures (Focus America)

## Writing America – U.S. American Literature

### from the Colonial Era to Postmodernism

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**Location:** Digital Lecture · **UniMeet:** <https://unimeet.uni-graz.at/b/bra-ey0-f7j-s1d>

**Course number:** ENL.02440UB · **First session:** 14 October 2022

**Course tutor:** David Michael Lautner ([david.lautner@uni-graz.at](mailto:david.lautner@uni-graz.at))

**Course description:** The course is conceptualized as an introductory lecture series to American literature from the Early Republic to the Postmodern Era. Hector de Crèvecoeur's famous question "What then is the American, this new man?" (asked in his *Letters from an American Farmer* from 1782) has since led to a number of literary discourses either manifesting or challenging the idea of 'American Exceptionalism.' Among others, we will discuss texts by Susanna Rowson, Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, Mark Twain, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Stephen Crane, Ernest Hemingway, Saul Bellow, John Barth, and Jonathan Safran Foer.

**Attendance:** Regular attendance is highly recommended, but not mandatory. If you cannot come to a session, make sure you have still read the required course materials for that session. You could also ask students who were present for their notes.

**Methods:** Interactive presentations of crucial developments in American literature with close readings of representative texts.

**Assessment:** Weekly reading assignments, final exam. Note: *Regular attendance* will dramatically raise your chances of **passing** the final exam!

**Exam dates:** 3 Feb. 2023 (Fri) / 9 March 2023 (Thur) / 22 June 2023 (Thur)

**Important note:** **Alternatives to the scheduled exam dates are not possible!**

## Guidelines and UNIMEET Etiquette:

The course will take place on UniMeet: <https://unimeet.uni-graz.at/b/bra-ey0-f7j-s1d>

### **Set your screen name**

Make sure to set your screen name to the name you want to be addressed by, typically your first and last name, so that your instructor and your fellow students can refer to you by your proper name in discussions. If you want to, you can also add your preferred pronouns (he/she/they) in parentheses so others know how to refer to you.

### **Switch your webcam off (when not in use)**

Keep your webcam switched off during class (unless you want to say something).

### **Mute your microphone (when not in use)**

Switch your microphone to mute whenever you aren't talking.

## ASSESSMENT:

**Weekly reading assignments** (all texts are available on the Moodle course site).

**Final Exam** (computer-based). The exam encompasses single-choice and multiple-choice questions.

# Syllabus

- 14 October     Early American and Colonial Literature**  
(1490s – 1780s / Genres: Narratives of Exploration, Sermons, Jeremiads, Spiritual Autobiographies)  
Basic texts (recommended):  
**Hans-Peter Wagner, “The Colonial Period” and “From the Revolution to 1800” (2010).**  
Additional authors and texts (optional):  
Michael Wigglesworth, *The Day of Doom* (1662);  
Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of Captivity and Restoration* (1682);  
Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702);  
Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741);  
Thomas Jefferson et al., “Declaration of Independence” (1776);  
Jean Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782).
- 21 October     Literature of the Early U.S. Republic – Susanna Rowson and American Sentimentalism**  
(1780s – 1850s / Genres: Novels of Seduction, Sentimental Fiction, Picaresque Novels, Political Texts)  
Main text (required):  
**Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple, A Tale of Truth* (1791/94) [excerpts].**  
Additional authors and texts (optional):  
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (1776);  
Royall Tyler, *The Contrast* (1787);  
William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789);  
Susanna Rowson, *Slaves of Algiers; or, A Struggle for Freedom* (1794);  
Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry* (1792-1815);  
Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World* (1850);  
Maria S. Cummins, *The Lamplighter* (1854);  
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852).
- 28 October     The Age of Gothic – Charles Brockden Brown and the Dark Side of America**  
(1790s – 1860s / Genres: Short Stories, Frontier Novels, Historical Narratives)  
Main text (required):  
**Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly, or, Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* (1799) [excerpts].**  
Additional authors and texts (optional):  
Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or, The Transformation* (1798);  
Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle” (1819);  
----, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (1819);  
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826);  
Emily Dickinson, “I Heard a Fly Buzz When I Died” (1862/1896);  
Stephen King, *It* (1986).
- 4 November     Dark Romanticism – Edgar Allan Poe’s Tales of the Uncanny**  
(1830s – 1850s / Genres: Short Stories, Historical Narratives)  
Main text (required):  
**Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839).**  
Additional authors and texts (optional):  
Edgar Allan Poe, “The Black Cat” (1843);  
----, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838);  
----, “The Raven” (1845);  
Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” (1835);  
----, “The Birth-Mark” (1843);  
----, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850);  
Herman Melville, *Typee: A Peep at Polynesian Life* (1846);  
----, *Moby-Dick, or, The Whale* (1851);  
----, “Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street” (1853/56);  
----, and *Benito Cereno* (1855).
- 11 November     Light Romanticism – Walt Whitman, Transcendentalism, and the ‘American Renaissance’**  
(1830s – 1850s / Genres: Short Stories, Philosophical Essays, Poetry)  
Main text (required):

**Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855-1892) [excerpts].**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (1836);  
-----, "Self-Reliance" (1841);  
Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845);  
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, *Evangeline; A Tale of Acadie* (1847);  
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden; or, Life in the Woods* (1854);  
Walt Whitman, *Democratic Vistas* (1871).

**18 November    American Realism I – Mark Twain and Local Color**

(1865 – 1920s / Genres: Local Color, Regionalism)

Main text (required):

**Mark Twain, "The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Bret Harte. "The Luck of Roaring Camp" (1868);  
Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (1872);  
----, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884);  
Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron" (1886);  
----, *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896);  
Willa Cather, *O Pioneers* (1913);  
----, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (1927).

**25 November    American Realism II – Henry James and the Novel of Manners**

(1870 – 1920s / Genres: International Novel, Novel of Manners)

Main text (required):

**Henry James, *Daisy Miller* (1878).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881);  
----, *The Princess Casamassima* (1886);  
----, *The Turn of the Screw* (1898);  
----, *The Ambassadors* (1903);  
William Dean Howells, *A Modern Instance* (1882);  
----, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885);  
Edith Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (1905);  
----, *The Age of Innocence* (1920).

**2 December    American Naturalism – Stephen Crane and the Age of Darwinism**

(1890s – 1920s / Genres: Immigrant Writing, Melodrama, Muckraking, Adventure, Utopian Fiction)

Main text (required):

**Stephen Crane, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1893) [excerpts].**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Jacob Riis, *How the Other Half Lives* (1890);  
Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie* (1900);  
----, *An American Tragedy* (1925);  
Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (1896);  
----, "The Open Boat" (1898);  
Jack London, *The Sea-Wolf* (1904);  
Frank Norris, *McTeague* (1899);  
----, *Vandover and the Brute* (1914).

**9 December    Feminist and Emancipatory Literature – Kate Chopin and the Age of 'Separate Spheres'**

(1770s – 1910s / Genres: Women's Fiction, Slave Narratives, Tales of Emancipation)

Main text (required):

**Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Phillis Wheatley, "Of Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773);  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845);  
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892);  
William Apress, *A Son of the Forest* (1829);  
William Wells Brown, *Clotel, or, The President's Daughter* (1853);

Pauline E. Hopkins, *Contending Forces* (1900);  
Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901);  
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903);  
James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912).

**16 December**    **American Modernism – Ernest Hemingway and the Crisis of the Modern Subject**  
(1920s – 1940s / Genres: Avant-Garde Fiction, Modernist Poetry, Harlem Renaissance)

Main text (required):

**Ernest Hemingway, “The Short, Happy Life of Francis Macomber” (1936).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Gertrude Stein, *The Making of Americans* (1911/1925);  
T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land” (1922);  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925);  
Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (1926);  
----, *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952);  
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929);  
----, “A Rose for Emily” (1930);  
John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939);  
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937).

**13 January**    **Postwar Literature – Saul Bellow and the Culture of Non-Conformism**  
(1940s – 1960s / Genres: Beat Writing, Quest Narratives, Social Domestic Drama, Radical Theater)

Main text (required):

**Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Allen Ginsberg, “Howl” (1955/56);  
Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957);  
J.D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951);  
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952);  
James Baldwin, *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953);  
Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man Is Hard to Find” (1955);  
Harper Lee, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1860);  
Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (1963).

**20 January**    **Early Postmodernism – Intertextuality and Metafiction in John Barth and Thomas Pynchon**  
(1950s – 1980s / Genres: Experimental Writing, Science Fiction & Fantasy, Detective Fiction)

Main text (required):

**John Barth, “Lost in the Funhouse” (1968).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955);  
Thomas Pynchon, *V.* (1963) / *The Crying of Lot 49* (1966) / *Gravity’s Rainbow* (1973);  
Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., *Slaughterhouse-Five, or, The Children’s Crusade* (1969);  
Paul Auster, *City of Glass* (1985) & *Moon Palace* (1989).

**27 January**    **PoMo, Neorealism, Metamodernism – Jonathan Safran Foer and the Challenges of Postmodernity**  
(1980s to Present / Genres: Genre Mixes, Neorealist Fiction, Neo-Slave Narratives, Ethnic/Queer Lit)

Main text (required):

**Jonathan Safran Foer, excerpts from *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005).**

Additional authors and texts (optional):

Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (1985) & *Mao II* (1991);  
Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (1982);  
Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987) / *Jazz* (1992) / *Paradise* (1997);  
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands / La Frontera* (1987);  
Jonathan Franzen, *Freedom* (2010).

**3 February**    **Final Exam** (computer-based exam)