



# The Beijing Center

北京中国学中心

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## Spring 2021 TBC 1160 Survey of American Literature

Credit Hours: 3.0

Class Times and Location: TBA

Instructor: Tang Jiannan, Ph.D.

E-mail: j.tang@thebeijingcenter.org

### Course Description

This course explores American Literature from the period of exploration and settlement to the present, and focuses especially on the period of expansion to the contemporary literature. Students will study works of prose, poetry, drama, and fiction in relation to their historical and cultural contexts. Texts will be selected from among a diverse group of authors for what they reflect and reveal about the evolving American experience and character. The survey helps to fulfill the university aims of fostering competencies in writing, speaking, reading, and appreciation of the arts; contributing to a knowledge and understanding of American literature and cultures; and integrating theoretical and applied knowledge within the context of a cosmopolitan worldview.

### Learning Outcome

Lectures, readings, paper assignments, and discussions are designed to help you develop the skills to:

1. Characterize each period of American Literature from the period of exploration and settlement until the present.
2. Examine the works from each period as literary products of their age.
3. Analyze works from a diversity of authors, genres, cultures, and historical periods.
4. Produce perceptive analytical essays, accurately and effectively integrating and documenting the primary text(s) (and secondary sources, if any).
5. Discuss the unique literary style(s) of authors and draw comparisons among the various authors/texts studied.
6. Evaluate the varied provenance of American literature from a cosmopolitan worldview, particularly its religious, sociopolitical, economic, cultural, and literary derivations.

### Required Textbook

Perkins, Barbara and George Perkins, eds. *The American Tradition in Literature*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed., McGraw Hill, 2009.

### Course Requirements

1. Recommended readings

**Primary Resources on Reserve at the TBC Library**

1. Levine, Robert S. et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. W.W. Norton & Company, 2016.

### **Secondary Resources**

1. Crane, Gregg. *19th Century American Novel*. Cambridge University Press, 2007.
2. Barrish, Phillip. *American Literary Realism*. Cambridge University Press, 2001.
3. Lamb, Robert Paul and G. R. Thompson, eds. *A Companion To American Fiction 1865 – 1914*. Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005.

### **2. Assignments & Exams**

The midterm test is to answer some essay questions based on what is learned in the class. The final paper will be a long one (8 pages, double space, Times New Roman). **Plagiarism is absolutely forbidden.**

The final paper will count for 50% of the final grade.

The class participation (including presentation, discussion, in-class paragraph writing and class attendance) will count for 30%.

Late paper policy: All students are allowed one late paper among the three short papers, provided it is not more than one week late. The second late paper will result in a full grade reduction for the course. The third late paper will result in failure for the course

### **3. Attendance Policy**

Only valid medical or family emergencies qualify as an absence, and documentation of the same must be presented to the professor no later than the next class meeting. All other absences are considered to be unexcused. Unexcused absences will affect your grade (see below). Arriving more than 10 minutes late for any three classes will cumulatively count as one unexcused absence, while arriving 30 minutes late for any class will count as an unexcused absence.

Penalties for unexcused absences:

- 1 absence – class participation grade drops one full letter grade (example: A- to B-)
- 2 absences – class participation grade drops two full letter grades
- 3 absences – class participation grade drops three full letter grades
- 4 or more absences – class participation grade is a failing grade

Any absence, whether excused or not, will require catch-up reading.

### **4. Grading**

- (a) Class participation (30%) including presentations, discussions, in-class paragraph writing and class attendance
- (b) Midterm test (20%)
- (c) Final paper (50%)

### **5. Academic Honesty Statement**

Please click the following link to see The Beijing Center's policy on Academic Integrity: <http://thebeijingcenter.org/academic-integrity>

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week One**

- a) Class introduction
- b) Introduction to American Literature
- c) Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (p.307-320)

### **Week Two**

- a) Perkins: "An Age of Expansion" (p. 907-914)
  - b) Walt Whitman: "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (p. 974-977);
  - c) Emily Dickinson: "I Heard a Buzz Fly—When I Died" (p.1013); "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" (p.1018); "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass" (p.1020);
- [Presentations: "What is American Literature?"]

### **Week Three**

- a) "Realism" (p.1047-1048)
  - b) Mark Twain: Headnote and "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (p. 1054-1060)
  - c) Howells: Headnote and "Editha" (p. 1077-1087)
  - d) James: Headnote and "Daisy Miller" (p. 1088-1130)
- [Presentations: "American Literary Realism" and "Local Color Writings"]

### **Week Four**

- a) Sarah Orne Jewett : Headnote and "A White Heron" ( p. 1201-1208)
  - b) Kate Chopin: Headnote and *The Awakening* (p. 1209-1296)
  - c) Mary E. Wilkins Freeman: Headnote and "The Revolt Of 'Mother'" (p.1297-1308)
- [Presentation: "Women's Writings in Realism"]

### **Week Five**

- a) Naturalism
  - b) Stephen Crane: Headnote and "The Open Boat" (p. 1349-1350; p. 1352-1367)
  - c) Jack London: Headnote and "To Build a Fire" (p. 1393-1406)
- [Presentation: "Naturalism in American Literature"]

### **Week Six**

- a) Literary Renaissance (p. 1407-1411)
  - b) Willa Cather: Headnote and "Neighbour Rosicky" (p.1420-1440)
  - c) Robert Frost: Headnote (p.1441-1443); "Mending Wall"(p.1445-1446); "The Road Not Taken" (p. 1451); "Fire and Ice" (p.1457); "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (p.1457)
  - d) Sherwood Anderson: Headnote, "The Book Of The Grotesque" and "Adventure" (p. 1468-1473)
- [Presentation: "American Literary Renaissance"]

### **Week Seven 10/30/2020**

- a) Ezra Pound: Headnote and "In A Station Of The Metro" (p.1484-1487)
  - b) Wallace Stevens: Headnote (p.1545-1546); "The Snow Man" (p.1552); "The Emperor of Ice-Cream" (p.1554)
  - c) William Carlos Williams: Headnote (p.1559-1560); "The Young Housewife" (p.1561); "Portrait Of A Lady" (p.1564)
- [Presentations: "What Is Modernism?" and "Modern American Poetry"]

## **preparation for a mid-term test.**

### **Week Eight**

- a) Midterm Test (2 hs)
- b) Explanation of the questions in the test
- c) Discussions

### **Week Nine A Literature of Social and Cultural Challenge (1920–1945)**

- a) Introduction: “Drama between the Wars” (p.1587); “Primitivism” (p.1587); “The Roaring Twenties and the Lost Generation” (p.1588-1590); “The Harlem Renaissance” (p.1590); “Depression and Totalitarian Menace” (p.1591-1593);
  - b) Eugene O’Neill : Headnote and “The Hairy Ape” (p.1596-1627)
  - c) Tennessee Williams: Headnote and “The Glass Menagerie” (p.1760-1805)
- [Presentation: “American Drama”]

### **Week Ten**

- a) William Faulkner: Headnote (p.1693-1695); “That Evening Sun” (p.1696-1706); “Barn Burning” (p.1707-1718)
- b) Ernest Hemingway: Headnote (p.1719-1720); “Big Two-Hearted River” (p.1721-1732)

### **Week Eleven**

- a) Langston Hughes: Headnote (p.1658); “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (p.1659); “Harlem” (p.1662); “The Weary Blues” (p.1659); “Song for a Dark Girl” (p.1660)
  - b) Richard Wright: Headnote and “From Black Boy” (p.1740-1741)
  - c) Final Paper Proposal 1
- [Presentation: “African-American Writings”]

### **Week Twelve**

- a) Katherine Anne Porter: Headnote and “The Jilting of Granny Weatherall” (p.1733-1739)
  - b) Postmodernism
  - c) Bob Dylan: Headnote and song lyrics (pages 1329-1338)
  - d) Flannery O’Connor: Headnote and “Good Country People” (p.1989-2002)
- [Presentations: “America in the 20th Century and Beyond” and “Postmodernism and American Literature”]

### **Week Thirteen**

- a) Introduction to Contemporary Literature: “A Century Ends and New Millennium Begins” (p. 2053-2058)
  - b) Alice Walker: Headnote and “Everyday Use” (p. 2183-2189)
  - c) Amy Tan: Headnote and “Half And Half” (p. 2202-2211)
  - d) Jhumpa Lahiri: Headnote and “The Third And Final Continent” (p.2242-2255)
- [Presentation: “Multiculturalism in Literature”]

### **Week Fourteen Finals Week**

FINAL PAPER DUE