ENG122 American Literature and Culture

The course provides a general introduction to American literature, history, culture and politics from the 1600s up to the present time. It aims to develop the students’ knowledge of the diversity of American culture and society, and increase their understanding of the basic premises for the development of literature, culture, and society. The required reading for the course covers surveys of literary periods and historical events, in addition to primary texts – both literary and non-literary – that are representative for their time periods.

While the course reading is demanding and presupposes a strong command of English, it is also an aim of the course to further develop the students’ ability to express themselves in English, both orally and in writing.

Textbooks

The books listed below will be available at Akademika (student bookstore) at the beginning of the semester. Note that Akademika offers book packages at a reduced price.


- **Study Guide, Part 1** and Part 2, with notes and questions for the texts discussed in the seminar classes and in some of the lectures (My UiB)

Required Reading


2. Primary Texts

   Longer texts that have to be purchased separately at Akademika are marked (*). The rest of the texts are in *The Norton Anthology* (vol. 1 and 2), the Literature Kiosk, or in a folder on My UiB.

   **I. 17th and 18th Centuries (Colonial Period, Early Republic)**

   Winthrop, John. from “A Model of Christian Charity” (excerpt; from “Thus stands the cause …”) *(Norton 1: 100–02).*


   Franklin, Benjamin. from *The Autobiography* [Part Two] (excerpt; from “I had been religiously…” to “Thus far written at Passy, 1784”) *(Norton 1: 299–308).*

   **II. 19th Century, before 1865 (American Romanticism)**

   Emerson, Ralph Waldo. “Each and All” *(Norton 1: 505–08).*


   Melville, Herman. “Bartleby, the Scrivener” *(Norton 1: 1102–28).*

   Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* *(Norton 1: 938–1002).*

III. 1865–1914 (Period of Industrialization and Literary Realism)
Antin, Mary. Introduction, from The Promised Land. Online [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/antin/land/land.html#0](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/antin/land/land.html#0)

IV. 1914–1945 (Literary Modernism)

V. 1945– (Approaching Our Own Time)
Hansberry, Lorraine. A Raisin in the Sun (Vintage, Akademika).
Plath, Sylvia. “Morning Song” (Norton 2: 1418) and “Lady Lazarus” (Norton 2: 1418-20)
Viramontes, Helena María. Under the Feet of Jesus (Plume, Akademika).

2. Cultural Studies and Literary History
2.1. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, vols. 1–2
- all introductions to literary periods
- all introductions to the writers on the reading list
- lectures and seminars