

**American University of Beirut
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Department of English**

**English 209/AMST 275AO: Survey of American Literature
Section 1**

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Office Hours	TBD

English 209: Survey of American Literature

(3 credits, Pre- or corequisite: ENGL 203 or higher, based on placement)

General Course Description (University Catalogue)

A course that covers major works of American literature and a broad range of writers. Readings may vary from term to term. Pre- or corequisite: ENGL 203 or higher, based on placement.

Number of credits: 3 credits

Course Description

This course is a survey of American Literature from 1492 to the present through the exploration of canonical as well as non-canonical voices/texts. Some of the topics that will be discussed in the course include, but are not limited to, American identity and individualism, American Exceptionalism, the cult of true womanhood and domesticity, Realism and Regionalism, and projections of racial and ethnic identity.

Course Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify elements of literary genres
2. Identify the historical and social contexts of literary works
3. Demonstrate awareness of canonicity in light of the history of the discipline
4. Define major literary movements and schools
5. Compare the characteristics of major literary movements
6. Explain the connection between American literature and culture
7. Compare/Contrast the thematic and structural characteristics of literary texts
8. Produce critical arguments about major literary works

Resources Available to Students

The required texts are available on Moodle or online. You must access them, read them, and bring them to class for discussion.

Required Texts

On **Moodle**: selections from works by Bartolomé de las Casas, William Bradford, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, William Faulkner, and Bharati Mukherjee.

Electronic links:

Mark Twain

The Project Gutenberg eBook of Adventures of Huckleberry Finn, By Mark Twain

Frederick Douglass

<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/23>

Walt Whitman

<https://whitmanarchive.org/published/LG/1881/poems/27>

Zora Neale Hurston

<https://archive.org/details/TheirEyesWereWatchingGodFullBookPDF/page/n63>

Grading Criteria: Grading will be based on these fixed criteria (non-curved)

Attendance and Class Participation	15%
Discussion Questions	10%
EXAM 1	25%
Class Presentation, see page 5	15%
EXAM 2	35%

Schedule

This syllabus might be altered at any stage; changes will always be in line with the general stated course objectives. This is part of the dynamism of ongoing evaluation and improvement of course offerings.

Please note: Changes will be announced in class. It is YOUR responsibility to note changes as announced.

Topic	Activities	Assignments
American Literature and Culture	Presentations Discussing course goals & syllabus	No Assignment The United States: Literature and History

The Literature of Discovery	Lecture & Discussion	The United States: Literature and History B. de las Casas, selections from <i>The Very Brief Relation</i> , pages 15-18
The Pilgrims Early Slave Narratives	Lecture & Discussion	W. Bradford, <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i> , Book I (Chaps I, IV, VII, and a section of IX), pages 164-175 (till “safety”) Library Session: Using Electronic Databases–Jafet Lib., Antoun Ghattas Karam Electronic Classroom F. Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> (1/2) (Beginning till end of chapter VII)
Early Slave Narratives Ethnicity and Race in the United States	Lecture & Discussion	Presentations: Guidelines and Requirements F. Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> (Chapter VIII till the end) F. Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> Documentary Viewing and Discussion
Poetry: The Private and the Public Selves	Lecture & Discussion	W. Whitman, <i>Song of Myself</i> (1881) Selection of Presentation Topics
American Realism and Regionalism	Lecture & Discussion	American Realism and Regionalism M. Twain, <i>The Adventures</i> (Chaps. 1-7) EXAM 1 (de las Casas, Bradford, Whitman, and Douglass)
American Realism and Regionalism	Lecture & Discussion	M. Twain, <i>The Adventures</i> (Chaps. 8-17) M. Twain, <i>The Adventures</i> (Chaps. 18-23)
Literature and Gender	Lecture & Discussion	Gender, Power, and Representation C. P. Gilman, “Why I Wrote ‘The Yellow Wall-paper?’” * and “The Yellow Wall- paper”
African American Literature and The Harlem Renaissance	Lecture & Discussion Group Presentations	Z.N. Hurston, <i>Their Eyes</i> (1/3) Presentations (Topics 1, 2, 3&4)
	Lecture & Discussion Group Presentations	Presentations (Topics 5, 6, 7&8) Presentations (Topics 9 & 10)
African American Literature and The Harlem Renaissance	Lecture & Discussion Group Presentations	Z.N. Hurston, <i>Their Eyes</i> (2/3) Z.N. Hurston, <i>Their Eyes</i> (3/3)
American Modernism	Lecture & Discussion	American Modernism W. Faulkner, “Barn Burning” (total) W. Faulkner, “Barn Burning”
Ethnic Interventions: Asian- American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	B. Mukherjee, “Loose Ends” (total) B. Mukherjee, “Loose Ends”
		Documentary Viewing and Discussion Concluding Session

		EXAM 2 (Twain, Gilman, Hurston, Faulkner, and Mukherjee)
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Course Policy

Attendance, preparation, and class participation are a primary requirement.

1. You are expected to attend all classes and bring the assigned reading to class.
2. Reading assignments are to be completed before the class meeting for which they are assigned.
3. You should be prepared to discuss the required texts and participate constructively.
4. Written and all other assignments should be handed in on or before the due dates indicated in the course outline.
5. If you are unable to attend class, it is your responsibility to inform the instructor prior to the class meeting. Absences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

In normal circumstances, absences can be excused only for medical reasons, **documented by a note from an AUB doctor**. If you miss more than one-fifth of the class sessions of the first ten weeks, you will be required to withdraw from the course.

Academic integrity and honesty are central components of a student’s education. Ethical conduct maintained in an academic context will be taken eventually into a student’s professional career. Anything less than total commitment to honesty undermines the efforts of the entire academic community. Both students and faculty are responsible for ensuring the academic integrity of the University (*AUB Student Handbook*).

University Policies

Academic Integrity: Please refer to AUB Student Code of Conduct: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/generaluniversitypolicies/Documents/StudentCodeConduct/StudentCodeConduct.pdf> , in particular section 1.1, which concerns academic misconduct including cheating, plagiarism, in-class disruption, and dishonesty. Please be aware that misconduct is vigorously prosecuted and that AUB has a zero tolerance policy. Course policy is that credible evidence of cheating will result in course failure.

AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me immediately so that we can privately discuss options. In order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

Non-Discrimination AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University’s non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff

member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix . To report an incident, contact the University's Title IX Coordinator Ms. Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb . An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com

PRESENTATION TOPICS

- 1- Emily Dickinson: Introduce the author, locate her work in the context of the course, and select two main themes in her work, analyze and illustrate using examples.
- 2- Margaret Fuller and American Transcendentalism: Introduce the author, locate her work in the context of the course, and select two main “transcendentalist” themes in her work to analyze and illustrate using examples.
- 3- Harriet Jacobs and *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: Introduce the author and the work, locate in the context of the course and in relation to Douglass' slave narrative. Select two main themes in her work, analyze and illustrate using examples.
- 4- The Trickster Figure and Its Tradition: Identify different types of tricksters in the African-American tradition and explain their origins and forms as well as social and political role.
- 5- The Harlem Renaissance: Introduce the period, its main characteristics and figures, with special emphasis on Alain Locke.
- 6- *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*: Discuss the reception and audience perceptions of the book. How was the book received? How did this reception change from one state to another and over time? Identify one major controversy about this book and explain its nature and causes.
- 7- W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington: Introduce these two figures and their work and explain similarities as well as differences in their attitude vis-à-vis strategies for the social and economic progress of the black people.
- 8- Toni Morrison's *Playing in the Dark*: Discuss Chapter One, “Black Matters”, and explain Morrison's main argument as well as her supporting points.
- 9- Arab-American Literature: Trace the different stages of the development of Arab-American literature and briefly introduce some of the major figures in each period.
- 10- Mexican-American Literature: Discuss chapter 7 (“la conciencia de la mestiza”) of Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* and explain the concept of the Borderland.

Please note:

- Your presentation should be **10 minutes in length (5 minutes for each presenter)**, followed by a short discussion period which you will facilitate. The presentation time should be divided **equally** between both presenters. If 3 students are presenting, the presentation should be 15 minutes in length.
- Provide an **outline** of your presentation for each member of the class (**23 copies**). In this outline, make sure to have your thesis statement and the main supporting ideas. The outline should also include a short bibliography of the works you used to prepare the presentation (MLA Style, 3-5 sources). You are expected to use the *MLA Handbook for*

Writers of Research Papers (by Joseph Gibaldi) for documenting the sources used in your presentation.

--As you prepare the presentation, assume that we will be interested in following up on the work you will present to us. Where appropriate, make reference to specific critics and identify your **sources**.

--Your **questions to the presenters** count towards your final presentation grade.

-- Please time yourself carefully; the **time limit** is strict.