

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

**English 226/AMST 275AY: Contemporary American Literature  
Section 1**

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<b>Office Hours</b>	TBD

**ENGL 226 Contemporary American Literature**

(3 credits, prerequisite: ENGL 203 or higher, based on placement, may be repeated for credit for a maximum of 6 credits.)

**General Course Description (University Catalogue)**

A course that covers developments in contemporary American literature, with attention to form and cultural context.

**Course Description**

This course focuses on the analysis of contemporary American texts and explores recent/current trends in American Literature, such as Absurdism, Minimalism, and Feminism. It also examines the manner in which writers with diverse backgrounds responded to or appropriated language and voice as part of their efforts to offer alternative expressions of the American experience. Special emphasis will be given to the study of American identity, multiculturalism, race, gender, ethnicity and class.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students should be able to:

1. Outline the contemporary literary history of America
2. Identify the connections between contemporary American literature and culture
3. Define different literary movements and schools
4. Compare the characteristics of different literary movements
5. Compare/Contrast the thematic and structural characteristics of literary texts
6. Identify the characteristics of ethnic American literature
7. Summarize an argument

## Resources Available to Students

The course readings are available on **Moodle**. You must read and prepare all the assigned texts.

### Required Texts:

Selections from *The Way to Rainy Mountain*, N. Scott Momaday  
Selections from *The Woman Warrior*, Maxine Hong Kingston  
Selections from *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa  
Selections from *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Sandra Cisneros  
“The Spiced Chicken Queen of Mickaweah, Iowa,” Mohja Kahf (From *Dinarzad’s Children*)  
“Looking for Mr. Green,” Saul Bellow  
“Cathedral” Raymond Carver  
“Reena,” Paule Marshall

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

Attendance and Class Participation	20%
Exam 1	25%
Presentation	20%
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
	Social and Historical Background	Discussing course goals & syllabus	<b>No Assignment</b>  <b>Contemporary American Literature: Texts and Contexts I</b>

	Social and Historical Background Contemporary American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Contemporary American Literature: Texts and Contexts II</b> S. Bellow, "Looking for Mr. Green" (total)  <b>Library Session: Using Electronic Databases</b>
	Ethnicity and Acts of Interpretation	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Due: Selection of Presentation Topics (on Moodle)</b>  <b>Talking About Literature and Presentation Guidelines</b>  S. Bellow, "Looking for Mr. Green"
	Native American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	S. Bellow, "Looking for Mr. Green"  N. Scott Momaday, <i>The Way</i>
	Modern U.S. Minimalism	Lecture & Discussion	N. Scott Momaday, <i>The Way</i>  R. Carver, "Cathedral" (total)
	Modern U.S. Minimalism Borderlands and Ethnic Identifications	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Presentation 1: US Minimalism</b> R. Carver, "Cathedral"  <b>Presentation 2: Mexican-American Literature</b> G. Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la mestiza"
		Lecture & Discussion	<b>EXAM 1 (Bellow, Momaday, Carver)</b>
	Mexican-American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	S. Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek"  S. Cisneros, "Woman Hollering Creek"
	African-American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Presentation 3: African-American Literature General Discussion</b>  P. Marshall, "Reena"
	African-American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	P. Marshall, "Reena"
	Chinese-American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Presentation 4: Chinese-American Literature</b> M. H. Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> ("No Name Woman")  M. H. Kingston, <i>The Woman Warrior</i> ("White Tigers")
	Arab-American Literature	Lecture & Discussion	<b>Presentation 5: Arab-American Literature</b> M. Kahf, "The Spiced Chicken <i>Queen of Mickaweaquah, Iowa</i> "  M. Kahf, "The Spiced Chicken <i>Queen of Mickaweaquah, Iowa</i> "
			<b>General Discussion</b> <b>EXAM 2 (Anzaldúa, Cisneros, Marshall,</b>

			Kingston, Kahf)
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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:

<https://aub.policytech.eu/dotNet/documents/?docid=147&public=true> , 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](mailto:accessibility@aub.edu.lb); +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

In line with its commitment to the principle of equal opportunity in education and employment, AUB policies protect you from discrimination on the basis of protected characteristics, including discriminatory harassment and sexual harassment. Protected characteristics include: race, color, religion, age, national or ethnic identity, sex, gender or gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital status, disability, genetic predisposition or carrier status, alienage or citizenship status, and political affiliation.

The policies are applicable to all the AUB Community. If you think you have experienced discrimination, discriminatory harassment, or sexual harassment, we encourage you to inform the Equity/Title IX Coordinator, Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, [titleix@aub.edu.lb](mailto:titleix@aub.edu.lb), report to a Title IX deputy at your faculty or at any other faculty ([www.aub.edu.lb/titleix](http://www.aub.edu.lb/titleix)), or report online ([www.aub.ethicspoint.com](http://www.aub.ethicspoint.com)). Reports may be submitted anonymously or not. Please know that the University will maintain the confidentiality of the complaint and privacy of the persons involved to the greatest extent possible, consistent with its goal of conducting a thorough and complete investigation and to the extent permitted by law.