

**UNIVERSIDAD DE COSTA RICA  
 ESCUELA DE LENGUAS MODERNAS  
 BACHILLERATO EN INGLÉS  
 SECCIÓN DE LITERATURA INGLESA**

**Course Outline**

Course Title: American Literature Survey	Pre-requisites: LM-1361, LM-1362, LM-1363, LM-1365 & LM-1366
Course Code: LM-1475	Co-requisites: None
Credits: 3	Academic Cycle: VII
Hours: Class Hours: 4 Out-of-class hours: 5	Type: Course of study for the B.A. degree in English
Level: 4 <sup>th</sup> year	

**I. Description**

This class is a survey of American literature from the colonial period to the present. It is designed to give seventh-semester students a comprehensive view of American literature within its historical, biographical, social, political, economic, philosophical, and religious context. Due to the nature of the course, it favors an eclectic approach that combines the communicative, constructivist, cognitive, and task-centered approaches. This is the first English literature class that teaches the three main literary genres studied in the third year of the major: narrative, drama, and poetry and the first survey class on the major literary traditions in the English language. This course aims at developing critical and creative thinking as far as the American culture and literature goes, promoting the critical analysis and interpretation of literary works, and increasing fluency in English through reading and discussion.

**II. Objectives:**

By the end of the semester, the student will be able to:

1. identify major American works by author and by period.
2. relate literary works to the historical, biographical, social, political, economic, philosophical, and religious elements from which they evolve.
3. link the development of the United States to the development of its literature.
4. determine the issues and attitudes revealed through given literary works.
5. develop empathy and respect for the values, norms, ideas, and opinions of other individuals and societies.
6. explain and defend interpretations based on textual support of given works in clear English.

**III. Contents**

1. The New Land (1500-1800)
  - a. Native American oral literature

- b. Colonial literature
  - c. Puritan literature
  - d. Literature of the Enlightenment
2. Literary Nationalism (1800-1840)
    - a. Early Romanticism
    - b. Folk literature
    - c. Literature of mystery and suspense
  3. American Classic (1840-1870)
    - a. Mid-Romanticism
    - b. Activist literature
      - i. the nonconformists
      - ii. women
      - iii. African Americans
    - c. Moralistic literature
  4. Variations and Departures (1870-1915)
    - a. Late Romanticism
    - b. Realism
    - c. Naturalism
  5. The Modern Temper (1915-1945)
    - a. Modernistic prose
    - b. Modernistic poetry
  6. New Frontiers (1945-present)
    - a. New prose
    - b. New drama

Each of the previous divisions includes:

- Historical cultural background
- Literary trends
- Specific works
- Biographical information

#### **IV. Methodology**

Each class will be devoted to lectures by the instructor to introduce and clarify the historical and biographical backgrounds of each unit. Group discussions to analyze the reading assignments critically will follow. From time to time, students will prepare, ahead of time, panels, debates or group presentations on some works, periods, or authors. As a complement to these activities, multimedia materials will be shown in class.

Out-of-class work includes completing the assigned readings before each class, googling complementary materials for a more comprehensive understanding of the written text, looking for the meaning of unfamiliar terms, making sure that team work is equitable by meeting and working as a group and that labor division is fair, doing the creative writings and the essays, and producing the video.

Students will employ their theoretical knowledge of American culture and literature and of the conventions of the literary and essay genres to produce their creative writing, academic essays, and the script for the video. They will also employ their knowledge of the conventions of public speaking (panel, debate, speech) they have acquired throughout the major to deliver their oral presentations.

## V. Evaluation

The final grade will be based on the following:

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| 1. Creative writing                      | 10% |
| 2. Essays                                | 20% |
| 3. Oral reports, quizzes, and class work | 20% |
| 4. Video                                 | 10% |
| 5. 2 Midterms                            | 40% |

Only assignments turned in on time, personally, or with a previous excuse and/or justified with documents (for serious illness, hospitalization, emergencies, death of close relatives) will be accepted. Quizzes might be unannounced and may not be taken by those with unjustified absences. Points off will be taken for oral reports that are tardy. Equipment and support materials must be ready when reports are scheduled at the beginning of a class. Students will be marked down when they do not prepare themselves for a class.

**Todo estudiante en todo curso queda sujeto a los reglamentos de evaluación de la Universidad de Costa Rica.**

## VI. Bibliography

Carlsen, Robert, et al, eds. *American Literature: A Chronological Approach*. Treasury Edition. N.Y.: Mc Graw Hill, 1985.

Inge, Thomas, ed. *A Nineteenth Century American Reader*. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1989.

Lauter, Paul, General ed. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Vol. 1. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1990.

Lauter, Paul, General ed. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Vol. 2. Lexington, Massachusetts: D.C. Heath and Co., 1990.

Lemay, Leo, ed. *An Early American Reader*. Washington D.C.: United States Information Agency, 1989.

Miller, James. E, Jr., et al., eds. *The United States in Literature*. 7th ed. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1987.

## VII. Additional resources

Videos on youtube.com and History.com (Witches documentary, short films on America: The Story of Us)

Audio recordings (Colonial Songs and Indian songs)

Online readings.

## VIII. Tentative Timetable

Week	Dates	Topic
1	March 13-17	<p>Introduction to the course            It Was The Wind That Gave Them Life (Navajo)            The Creation (James Wheldon Johnson)            Relato de la tradición de los indígenas bribris:            Creación de los Sikuas (gente blanca)</p> <p><b>Background : The New Land (1500-1800)</b>            The War of God's Horse Song (Navajo)            A Dancing Song (Pima), Firefly Song (Ojibwa)            The Iroquois Constitution (Dekanawidah)            A Spectacle of Great Beauty (Christopher Columbus)</p>
2	March 20-24	<p>The Narrative of His Journey (Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca)            The History of Plymouth Plantation (William Bradford)            Traveling in the New Land (Sarah Kemble Knight)            Moral Perfection (Benjamin Franklin)</p> <p>What Is an American? (Michel-Guillaume Jean de Crèvecoeur)            The Flesh and the Spirit (Anne Bradstreet)            Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God (Jonathan Edwards)</p>
3	March 27-31	<p>The Trial of Martha Carrier (Cotton Mather)            Excerpts from the Penguin book of <i>Witches</i>            Witch Documentary</p> <p><b>Oral Presentation Group #1: _____</b>  <b>Background: Literary Nationalism (1800-1840)</b>            The Masque of the Red Death (Edgar Allan Poe)            Annabel Lee (Edgar Allan Poe)            To Helen (Edgar Allan Poe)            Vincent (Tim Burton)</p>
4	April 3-7	<p>The Devil and Tom Walker (Washington Irving)            Thanatopsis (William Cullen Bryant)            The Chambered Nautilus (Oliver Wendell Holmes)</p> <p>Stanzas of Freedom (Russell Lowell)            Escape : A Slave Narrative (James W. C. Pennington).            Songs of America: Deep River            Swing Low, Sweet Chariot</p>

		Follow the Drinking Gourd Clementine
5	April 10-14	<b><u>HOLY WEEK</u></b>
6	April 17-21	<b>Oral Presentation Group #2:</b> _____ <b>Background American Classic (1840-1870)</b> Self-Reliance, Maxims of Emerson and Fable (Ralph Waldo Emerson) Civil Disobedience (Henry David Thoreau)  Young Goodman Brown (Nathaniel Hawthorne) Hospital Sketches (Louisa May Alcott)
7	April 24- 29 (Semana Universitaria)	Uncle Tom's Cabin (Harriet Beecher Stowe) The Lightning-Rod Man (Herman Melville)  Movie: 12 Years a Slave
8	May 1-5	<b>HOLIDAY</b>  <b>FIRST MIDTERM (THE NEW LAND AND LITERARY NATIONALISM)</b>
9	May 8-12	<b>Oral Presentation Group #3:</b> _____ <b>Background: Variations and Departures (1870-1915)</b> Hear American Singing and What is the Grass? (Walt Whitman) Emily Dickinson's poems  Stephen Crane's poems The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County (Mark Twain) A Pair of Silk Stockings (Kate Chopin)
10	May 15-19 <b>Hand in essay #1</b>	My Heart Feels Like Bursting (Satanta) I Will Fight No More Forever (Chief Joseph) <b>Oral Presentation Group #4:</b> _____ <b>Background: The Modern Temper (1915-1945)</b> The Last Flower (James Thurber)  The Hollow Men (T.S. Elliot) The Road not Taken and Fire and Ice (Robert Frost) In Another Country (Ernest Hemingway)
11	May 22-26	Theme for English B (Langston Hughes) Chicago (Carl Sandburg)

		The Leader of the People (John Steinbeck) Barn Burning (William Faulkner)
12	May 29-June 2	<b>Oral Presentation Group #5:</b> _____ <b>Background: New Frontiers (1945-present)</b> The Secret (Denise Levertov) The Writer (Richard Wilbur) Daddy and Lady Lazarus (Sylvia Plath).  Harrison Bergeron (Kurt Vonnegut Jr.) The Yellow Wallpaper (Charlotte Perkins Gillman) To Be Young, Gifted and Black (Lorraine Hansberry)
13	June 5-9	The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas (Ursula K. Le Guin) The Singing Bell (Isaac Asimov) America (Allen Ginsberg)  Little Miracles, Kept Promises (Sandra Cisneros) To Live in the Borderlands Means You (Gloria Anzaldúa) Sex Goddess of the Western Hemisphere (maggie estep) Please Don't Take My Air Jordans (reg e. gaines)
14	June 12-16	Novel Analysis: My Year of Meats (Ruth Ozeki)
15	June 19-23 <b>Hand in essay #2</b>	Novel Analysis: My Year of Meats (Ruth Ozeki)
16	June 26-30	<b>CREATIVE PROJECT PRESENTATIONS</b>
17	July 3-7	<b>SECOND MIDTERM (AMERICAN CLASSIC - VARIATIONS AND DEPARTURES - THE MODERN TEMPER - NEW FRONTIERS)</b>
18	July 10-14	<b>GRADES</b>
	July 17	<b>AMPLIACION</b>