

American Philosophy & Literature

American Studies Program

University of Jordan

Spring 2011/2012

Instructor: Dr. Hala Abu Taleb
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Course Description:

This seminar provides a comprehensive introduction to the study of American Philosophy and literature. We are going to study the different eras and schools of thought and closely examine the literary texts written by American authors within their historical context. Part of this course sheds the light on the American literary canon from the beginnings to the end of the Eighteenth century. The portion dedicated for the nineteenth century will trace the beginning of the emerging American literature through the works of distinguished writers in order to acquaint the students with the literary movements that have affected American literature. The last part of our seminar will tackle the literary productions during the twentieth century and beyond with a twist to some current issues and ideologies that are shaping the American literary and cultural tradition.

Course Requirement:

There will not be a specific textbook for this seminar; rather the instructor will put together a photocopied reader and sometimes distribute some material as the class unfolds. The reader contains chapters from different books in addition to academic articles. Other visual material will be added as the course unfolds and students will be informed of any new material beforehand.

Course Assessment:

Active participation and class facilitation: 10%: we meet once a week and thus we should make the best of our time as we make sure that we come prepared by having read the assigned material, jotted down ideas and views and are ready to share and discuss issues in class. 5% will be dedicated to class participation and discussion while the other 5% will go to the class facilitation.

Exams: Midterm Exam 30% - Due April 2nd (approximately)

Final Exam 40%

Term paper 20%: Each student will be required to hand in a term paper by the end of the semester. This is your chance to reflect on a topic, author, school of thought etc of your interest. You can select a topic from what you have discussed in class or something new as long as it relates to the nature of this class. A first draft will be due on April 30th and students should be ready to present their work in class (we will decide on those presentations as the class unfolds.) This is a serious business, and the final project should be a genuine work of the student, done according to solid academic and research methods and professionalism. **Plagiarism WILL NOT be tolerated and it can lead to losing the whole 20 marks assigned for this paper.**

Course Plan:

Week	Text	Page no.
Week 1 Feb 6 th	Orientation	
Week 2 Feb 13 th	Orientation: What is American Studies “What’s in a name?” “The Borders and Limits of American Studies: A Picture from Beirut”	
Week 3 Feb 20 th	Literature to 1700: -Native American Narratives: Stories of the Beginning of the World - Christopher Columbus Bernal Diaz Del Castillo - Bradford; <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i> From Book I - Ann Bradstreet "The Prologue" - Edward Taylor “Huswifery”	-Identity & Experience -Racial ID -Puritanism
Week 4 Feb 27 th	American Literature 1700 – 1820: - De Crevecoeur Letters from an American Farmer: From Letter III. What is an American? - Thomas Paine: Common Sense - Thomas Jefferson: <i>from</i> The Declaration of Independence <i>From</i> The Federalist: No.1	
Week 5 March 5 th	American Classic 1840-1870: - Ralph Emerson: From “Self-Reliance”+ From "The American Scholar" - Henry Thoreau: From <i>Walden</i>	Transcendentalism
Week 6 March 12 th	- Nathaniel Hawthorne - Edgar Allan Poe - Twain -Howells	Romanticism Realism
Week 7 March 19 th	- Frederick Douglass: From <i>What the Black Man Wants</i> - Abraham Lincoln: Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg	

	- Chief Seattle: "This Sacred Soil"	
Week 8 March 26th	- Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Speech to the First Women's Rights Convention - Sojourner Truth: "Ain't I a Woman" - Emily Dickinson: "This is my letter to the World"	Women Writers
Week 9 April 2nd	MIDTERM	
Week 10 April 9th	-Ezra Pound -Gertrude Stein - T.S. Eliot -Wallace Stevens	Modernism
Week 11 April 16th		Postmodernism
Week 12 April 23rd	- Toni Morrison - Virginia Woolf	Individualism
Week 13 April 30th	The Arrogance of Power	
Week 14 May 7th	Black Skin, White Masks	
Week 15 May 14th	Edward Said Spivak	