American Literature
Fall 2016

American Literary History I (ENGL214101)
Students need not take these courses in chronological order.
Fulfills the pre-1900 requirement.
American Literary History 1 follows the development of American literary history from the landing of the Mayflower to the tumultuous decade of the 1850s, moving from such early writers as Bradstreet, Rowlandson and Taylor through such writers of the Revolution and Early Republic as Equiano, Franklin and Rowson to such antebellum writers as Child, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Poe, Douglass, Whitman, and Melville. Course assignments include regular participation in class discussions, mid-semester and final examinations, and either one ten-page or two five-page essay(s). Students considering careers in secondary English education will be given the option of writing about approaches to teaching course texts.
Professor Paul Lewis

Versions in Black: Genres of Black Women's Writing (ENGL220101)
Satisfies Core requirement for: Cultural Diversity
The phrase "Black Women's Writing" suggests that such writing is a fixed or homogeneous body of work that can be neatly defined and represented. Our course constitutes itself against this idea. By re-thinking these works, we also re-examine notions of literary canon, race, gender, sexuality, community, and history. Significantly, we "de-construct" common notions of Black Women's Writing by examining the varied genres these writers use to express their imaginings. Required readings come from the fields of science fiction (Octavia Butler), prose/experimental (Gayl Jones and Martha Southgate) novels, drama (Suzan-Lori Parks), poetry (Elizabeth Alexander), and autobiography/memoir (Toi Derricotte).
Professor Rhonda Frederick

Introduction to American Studies (ENGL227701)
This course offers an introduction to the interdisciplinary study of American culture. It is not a survey of American cultural history; rather, we will concentrate on approaches, methods, and themes of interest as we assemble critical skills for making interpretive arguments about aspects of culture in their historical moment. The forms we analyze will include examples from literature, film, painting, music, theater, landscape, and architecture, among others. Members of the American Studies faculty will present guest lectures to highlight various aspects of the field.
Professor Lori Harrison-Kahan

The American Renaissance (ENGL440701)
Fulfills Pre-1900 requirement
American literature flourished in the two decades before the Civil War. Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman, and other writers produced some of their most important work during this time. In addition, cheap (often
scandalous) magazines, popular theater, dime novels and photography also flourished. This course will examine the relationship among literary “masterpieces,” including Melville’s *Moby-Dick* and Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass*, and the popular culture and entertainment of nineteenth-century America. Students will have the opportunity to do digital and archival research as we explore the connections and contrasts of the “high” and “low” culture of the era.

*Professor Adam Lewis*

**American Fiction to 1860 (ENGL441001)**

Fulfills the pre-1900 requirement

The origin and development of the American tradition in the novel, from its local beginnings in sentimental fiction to its international triumph. We will read novels by such authors as Charles Brockden Brown, Catherine Sedgwick, James Fenimore Cooper, William Wells Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Elizabeth Stoddard. The contributions of such subgenres as the epistolary novel, bildungsroman, the historical novel, Gothic romance, and "woman's fiction" will be considered. The aim of the course is to understand the work American novels have done in the development of American political and cultural life.

*Professor James Wallace*

**Boston:History,Literature&Culture II (ENGL450201)**

Covering the period from the Civil War to the present, this is the second half of a two-semester, interdisciplinary course on Boston’s history, literature, and culture. Team-taught by a History and an English professor, and drawing on faculty in other departments and experts in the Boston area to provide insights into Boston’s culture broadly defined, the class examines Boston’s literature, film, art, music, and other cultural forms in relation to political and social developments. Site visits will take students out to the streets, museums, and archives of one of the most historic cities in the United States.

*Professor Carlo Rotella*

**ENGL4523 4th Genre: Contemporary American Creative Nonfiction (Fall:3.0)**

The "fourth genre" refers to works of nonfiction that contain literary features more commonly associated with fiction, poetry, and drama. We will examine a few pioneers of the form, including Woolf and Thoreau, but our study will focus primarily on subgenres of contemporary American creative nonfiction, including immersion journalism, memoir, lyric essay, and travel writing. Readings will include work by Wolfe, Didion, Talese, McPhee, Dillard, Kincaid, Spiegelman, and Slater.

*Professor Lad Tobin*
Am Studies Senior Seminar: Studies in Am Culture (ENGL462601)
Admission by permission of instructor
In this seminar, which also draws on elements of a writing workshop and a course in methodology, we examine selected subjects in American culture: music, landscape, sport, work, childhood, crime, and more. Seeking to develop effective ways to balance storytelling and interpretation, character and argument, we draw on a variety of models for approaching the problem of writing analytically about culture. Authors on the syllabus may include Tom Wolfe, Anne Fadiman, William Finnegan, Jennifer Price, Henry Louis Gates Jr., and David Simon and Edward Burns.
Professor Carlo Rotella

Contemporary American Women Writers (ENGL551001)
Focusing on literature written by American women from 1980 to the present, this course will explore issues of space, family dynamics, immigration, power, race, violence, grief, and embodiment, as well as gender. We will ask questions such as: How do these writers define space, and use literature to claim a space of their own? What is the relationship between gender and race or ethnicity, in a given text and in contemporary American culture? How do women writers represent the intangible dynamics of emotional connection and loss? How does fiction represent changing experiences of embodiment, including pregnancy, obesity, illness, and aging?
Professor Laura Tanner

ATS: History, Memory & Culture in American Lit (ENGL553901)
This course focuses on nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first century fiction, memoir, and experimental nonfiction, examining what writers and critics have had to say about the psychological and narrative dimensions of memory in American literature. Texts considered include Willa Cather's My Antonia (a novel made to look like a memoir); Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway's modernist fiction; Fae Mae Ng's bone (a book narrated in reverse time); war memoirs by Stephen Crane, Dexter Filkins, or Michael Herr; and Walter Benjamin’s, Tillie Olsen’s or John Edgar Wideman's blending of ethnic autobiography and experimental fiction.
Professor Christopher Wilson