

COURSE OUTLINE **LT 215 American Literature I**

Course Description:

LT 215. American Literature I: Colonial to 1865. 3 hours credit. Prerequisite: English Composition I (EG 101) with a C or better. This course includes representative work in prose and poetry from the beginnings of American Literature to the Civil War. Emphasis on those writers whose works illustrate philosophies which still affect modern American thought. This is a basic course recommended for all English majors.

Course Relevance:

We read to learn a body of knowledge, find facts and information, take direction, and find enjoyment. Literature helps us respond to and feed our emotions. It helps us see the world. It helps us see all aspects of humanity. It helps us see life, not school. It shows us philosophies at work. It shows us people dealing with issues that often are struggles for us as well. It helps us interpret our own world. Literature is relevant to understanding the human experience. American Literature 1 applies the benefits of studying literature to a focused reading area that allows students an appreciation of this country's literary and philosophical foundations, and provides grounding for further studies in American and other English-speaking literatures.

Required Materials:

Text & other materials:

Perkins, George and Barbara. *The American Tradition in Literature*. Shorter Edition in One Volume. (12th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill, 2010.

Miscellaneous:

Students with impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills are encouraged and have the responsibility to contact their instructor, in a timely fashion, regarding reasonable accommodation needs.

Learning Outcomes:

Successful completion of American Literature 1 indicates that the student can:

1. understand and appreciate the genres and the differentia of poetry, fiction, drama, and exposition;
2. utilize literary concepts in developing understanding and appreciation of literature through discussion and compositions;

3. use literary concepts and skills in constructive, meaningful leisure time activities and in solving individual problems through vicarious experiences;
4. demonstrate an appreciation of the contexts and underpinnings of American Literature, and apply this appreciation to the contemporary world.

Learning PACT

Through involvement in this course, the student will develop and document achievement of the following PACT skills:

Primary skills (developed and documented):

1. Reading
 - Students will read various literary genres.
2. Critical thinking
 - Through reading assignments and classroom discussion activities, the students will develop critical thinking and analytical skills.
3. Historical interpretation
 - Students will read about, interpret, and contextualize human behavior and events.
3. Aesthetic Response
 - Students will articulate an informed personal response to works of literature.
4. Writing
 - Students may write short-essay responses on examinations, compose papers of literary analysis, and/ or produce a thesis-oriented seminar length paper that makes use of scholarly apparatus conventionally used in the literary field, including the deployment of evidence, the use of primary and secondary sources, and the appropriate citation of sources.

Secondary skills (developed but not documented):

Self-concept
Teamwork
Valuing Diversity
Listening
Speaking
Computer Literacy
Internet Use

Assessment Tasks:

These learning outcomes and primary Learning PACT skills will be demonstrated by:

1. Writing a thesis-directed seminar paper during the second half of the course.

Course Content:

- I. Themes - Key recurring concepts that run throughout this course:

- A. Fiction
 - B. Poetry
 - C. Drama
 - D. Expository writing
- II. Issues - Key issues that will be addressed in this course: areas of conflict that must be understood in order to achieve the intended outcome:
- A. Fiction – plot, character, setting, narration, symbolism, tone, theme, style, tone, and irony
 - B. Poetry – reading poetry, word choice, word order, tone, imagery, figures of speech, sound, patterns of rhythm, poetic form
 - C. Drama – reading drama, types of drama
 - D. Exposition – reading political and philosophical texts, as well as personal narratives.
- III. Concepts – Key concepts that must be understood to address the issues:
- A. Fiction – elements of plot, character types, setting to create atmosphere, points of view (types of narration), types of symbolism, tone, common themes, style, and types of irony
 - B. Poetry – how to read a poem, diction, denotation, connotation, types of imagery, metaphor, simile, symbol, allegory, irony, patterns of rhyme, alliteration, patterns of rhythm and meter, various poetic forms
 - C. Drama – how to read a drama, elements of drama
 - D. Exposition – how to read exposition: purpose, audience, technique, use of evidence, use of allusion, classic tropes of rhetoric
- IV. Skills - Actions that are essential to achieve the course outcomes:
- A. Develop an awareness of literary concepts as used in various texts
 - B. Develop awareness and appreciation of the genres and the differentia of poetry, fiction, drama, and exposition
 - C. Understand and utilize literary concepts to develop greater understanding and appreciation of literature through discussion and compositions.

Learning Units:

Caveat: As instructors are free to divide American Literature 1 according to their immediate needs, these “units” may be visited sequentially, concurrently, and with different degrees of focus.

- I. Poetry
 - A. Identify differences in poetic style: poetic devices and symbolism
 - B. Evidence through discussion and composition perception of poetic style and symbolism in individual poems
 - C. Use the differentia of poetry to determine types
 - D. Construct through reading, reflective thinking, discussion, and composition the great themes and universal truths embodied in the poems studied
- II. Drama
 - A. Identify the dramatic elements of character, plot, theme, setting, dialogue, symbolism, style, and conventions, such as the chorus, the aside, the soliloquy, and the curtain

- B. Evidence through discussion and composition perception of dramatic elements and conventions in individual dramas studied
- C. Construct through reading, reflective thinking, discussion, and composition the universality of human experiences, basic truths, and great themes embodied in the drama studied

III. Fiction

- A. Identify the elements of fiction: theme, plot, character, setting, point of view, symbolism, and style
- B. Evidence through discussion and composition perception of these elements in the study of representative fiction
- C. Construct through reading, reflective thinking, discussion, and composition the imaginative truth in fiction

IV. Exposition

- A. Identify the modes of expository writing
- B. Identify the rhetorical purposes and techniques of expository writing
- C. Contextualize, historically and aesthetically, the examples of expository writing encountered in our course

Learning Activities:

Classroom:

Methods of class instruction will include class discussion/notes, open lecture, exams, tests (including quizzes and chapter or unit tests), handouts, audio-visual aids, study guides, writing assignments (included in a portfolio), panel discussions, reports, and individual conferences. All instructors may use these methods individually or in combination. The Center for Independent Study (CIS) provides tutors for those students having difficulty in a particular area to seek additional assistance in course work.

Out of Classroom:

Methods of instruction out of classroom instruction may include, but are not limited to, conference participation, cinema, field trips, library research, and out of class writing. All instructors may use these methods individually or in combination.

Grade Determination:

Evaluations are based on the following: attendance/participation, exercises and exams, and the portfolio. Grades are determined by total points and are distributed in the following fashion: 90% and above - A, 80% - B, 70% - C, 60% - D. Any questions about grades should be directed toward the instructor.