English 250—Introduction to Literary Study: American
Spring 2018

Dr. Bethany Hicok
Thompson Clark 305
Cell: 724-612-1763
Office Hours: T, 2-3; W 1-2, and by appointment

Course Description: This course introduces you to a variety of readings in American literature from the 17th century to the present with a focus on evolving concepts of nationhood, identity, and the development of an American literary tradition. The course also introduces you to several critical approaches commonly featured in contemporary literary study and how to use them to help us respond to a variety of texts.

Required Texts:

Course Outcomes: Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate
1. The ability to discuss literature, including engaging in an exchange of ideas and offering and supporting insights
2. The capacity to sustain controlled, critical arguments that analyze and synthesize texts
3. An understanding of the craft of writing, including concision, diction, grammar, and syntax
4. The ability to produce creative writing that shows an awareness of language, freedom from cliché, and an understanding of genre, style, and topic
5. The ability to identify and use a range of sources suitable to the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, to evaluate and integrate source material, and to document accurately
6. An understanding of the literary tradition, the historical and cultural contexts of literature, and critical methods of reading
7. The ability to give well-planned, engaging presentations

We will pursue these outcomes through the following course assignments:

Assignments:

45% Course Papers
(detailed assignments forthcoming)
Essay 1: 15% of grade (outcomes 1-3, 6)
Essay 2: 20% of grade (outcomes 1-3, 5-6)
Creative Assignment: 10% of grade (outcomes 3-4)

30% Take-Home Quizzes (Outcomes 1-3, & 6): These three assignments, each worth 10%
of the course grade, will ask you to respond to essay questions about assigned material. Generally, quizzes will be due two class periods after they are distributed. This interval (which will include the weekend) will give you enough time to refine your thinking and to polish your prose.

15% Discussion Forum (Outcomes 1, 3, 6-7): Discussion is crucial to testing ideas and creating knowledge. You learn more by engaging directly and actively with our readings, with me, and with your peers. In order to ensure a high degree of participation from everyone and encourage a collaborative environment, you have been placed in teams. Each team will lead discussion for that day’s reading a total of four times during the semester. On the day you are responsible for the readings, please post to the forum for your group a response of 300 to 500 words on your assigned section on D2L at least 24 hours in advance of our class meeting. You will find the forums by clicking on the Discussion tab and then clicking on the appropriate forum. To post, begin a new thread. Each post should include the following:

- What are the major ideas/arguments in the reading? What interested you most about this reading? What surprised you? What values are being emphasized? What characteristics or values are condemned? What does the reading have to say about American identity and nation building? What are some of the major themes? What are the major metaphors or similes used to describe characters and actions and how do they relate to the major themes? What binaries are in play? What critical methodologies can usefully be applied to the reading? How does the reading challenge or reinforce gender/race/class/other stereotypes? How does the reading reflect its historical context? As we explore specific concepts, ideas and historical periods in class over the course of the semester, you should explore these as they arise and add these concepts to your critical arsenal.

In your post you may respond to one or several of the questions above. Your post should, however, include the following components:

1. At least two specific references to the reading under consideration.
2. At least one specific reference to a passage from a different text, which provides some comparative perspective.
3. A question or idea for further consideration.

In addition, you should respond to at least one post per week. Each of your four posts is worth 20 points. You earn all 20 points by posting on time and by keeping to the 300- to 500-word parameters. Your weekly response is worth 2 points each, and there should be at least 10 of them.

Teams: Team 1: Anderson, Boeringer, Chock-Wong, Costabile; Team 2: Hess, Himmelman, Homan, Keating; Team 3: Keegan, Keith, Kresak, McNatt; Team 4: Pierce, Redmond, Romeo, Seinkner; Team 5: Shunk, Sutherland, Walter, Young

10% Presentation (Outcomes 1-2, 5-7): At the end of the course, you will prepare a group
presentation to be given during the final period. The presentation will examine works of your choice within historical, theoretical, and generic (genre) contexts. Complete details will follow.

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<tr>
<th>GRADING SCALE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100% - 94% = A</td>
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<td>93% - 90% = A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>83% - 80% = B-</td>
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**Policies:**

**Late Work:** Papers, exams and presentations are due on the day they are due. Late work will be penalized 5% per day unless prior arrangements have been made.

**Academic Integrity:** The lasting reward of academic integrity is a good character and the ability to learn on your own. Those seem worthy aspirations. Plagiarism or cheating of any kind will result in a failing grade for the assignment, as well as notification of the dean. More than one instance will result in a failing grade for the course and further administrative action. Please review the college’s Academic Integrity Policy beginning on p. 66 of the undergraduate catalogue.

**Attendance:** You are required to come to class. Missing class more than three times will reduce your final grade by half a letter for each missed day. I expect students to have done the day’s reading prior to class so that we can have a lively discussion even if you’re not leading discussion that day. Believe me, you’ll appreciate it when you have to lead a discussion and your classmates are prepared. Exceptions to this policy will only be made in extreme circumstances, and you must discuss it with me.

**Accessibility Statement:** Westminster College actively strives for the full inclusion of all students. Students with disabilities who require access solutions for environmental or curricular barriers should contact Faith Craig, Director of Disability Resources, located in 209 Thompson-Clark Hall. Phone: 724-946-7192; e-mail: craigfa@westminster.edu.
## Schedule of Readings:

*Schedule is subject to change

### January

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 16</td>
<td>Introductions and Course Overview; Close Reading Texts</td>
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### Part I: Early Encounters: Defining America through the 18th Century

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<th>Reading</th>
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| Th 18 | Vol. I Introduction (1-17); Timeline 26-28  
1630-1650: Bradford “Of Plymouth Plantation” (69-72, 73-77)  
Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (92-93, II: 101-104) |
Structuralism (Bressler 5: 85-105, 119); lecture on Structuralism  
**Team 1 Posts 24 hours before class; decides who will lead discussion** |
| Th 25 | 1680s: “King Phillip’s Speech” (40-41); Rowlandson, “A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration…” (130-top of 139, 140 [19th Remove]-145, last two paragraphs 150-151)  
**Team 2 Posts 24 hours before class; decides who will lead discussion** |
| T 30 | 1730s-1780s: Lecture: Eighteenth Century and the Enlightenment:  
Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence” (352-360)  
hand out “bold and arduous project forms”  
**Take Home Quiz will be uploaded on D2L.** |

### February

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| Th 1 | Cherokee Women (483), Franklin (204-207), “Remarks Concerning the Savages…” (216-220), and the “Autobiography” (221-238 top of the page, and 272-84)  
Complete your own “Bold and Arduous Project for Achieving Perfection” (to be handed in)  
**Team 3 posts; leads discussion** |
| T 6 | “American Literature, 1820-1865” (489-510); Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”  
**DUE: Take-Home Quiz #1, upload to D2L**  
**Team 4 Posts; leads discussion** |
| Th 8 | Hawthorne, “The Minister’s Black Veil”; make sure to read the author’s headnote  
**Team 5 Posts; leads discussion** |
Emerson, “The American Scholar” and authors’ headnote for all readings
Thoreau, Selections from Walden: “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For”
Reader-Oriented Criticism (Bressler 4: 65-84)
Team 1

Melville, “Benito Cereno” and author’s headnote
Postcolonialism & African-American Criticism (Bressler 10, 11: 197-219)
Team 2

Finish discussing Melville.
DUE: ESSAY #1, upload to D2L

Poe, “The Black Cat” and “Annabel Lee” and author’s headnote
Deconstruction (Bressler 5: 105-122)
Take home Quiz #2 will be uploaded
Team 3

Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass and author’s headnote
DUE: Take-Home Quiz #2, upload to D2L

March
Finish Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
Team 4

SPRING BREAK

Move to Second Volume: “American Literature, 1865-1914” (1-20)
Whitman, “Song of Myself” (Sections 1-15) and author’s headnote
Team 5

“Song of Myself” (Sections 16-33, 48, 52)
Team 1

Lincoln “Gettysburg Address”
Whitman’s Lincoln elegy: “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed”
Team 2

DUE: Creative Assignment
Dickinson Poems
Team 3

My Bleasby at 7 p.m. on the American Women’s Poetry Movement. Please plan to attend.

Dickinson Poems.
Team 4
## EASTER BREAK

### Part Three: Modernism and Postmodernism

#### April

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<td>Th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>“American Literature, 1914-1945” (667-87) Lecture on Modernism. Modernist Poets Selection: Stevens, Williams, Frost, Moore, Hughes and headnotes. <strong>Take Home Quiz #3 will be uploaded</strong></td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>10</td>
<td><strong>DUE: Take Home Quiz #3, upload to D2L</strong> Modernist Poets Continued; Fitzgerald, “Winter Dreams” and headnotes. <strong>Team 5</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Th</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>“American Literature since 1945” (1069-90) Miller, <em>Death of a Salesman</em> and headnote. <strong>Team 1</strong></td>
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<td>T</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Miller, <em>Death of a Salesman</em> <strong>Team 2</strong> Discuss Essay #2</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Allen Ginsberg’s <em>Howl, Part I</em>, “A Supermarket in California” and headnote <strong>Team 3</strong></td>
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**URAC April 18**

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<td>T</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Selections from poets Bishop, Lowell, Plath, Rich, Lorde, Harjo, Dove, Tretheway <strong>Team 4</strong></td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Morrison’s “Recitatif” <strong>DUE: ESSAY #2</strong> <strong>Team 5</strong></td>
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#### May

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<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Preparation Time for Final Group Assignment</td>
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<td>Th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prep Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Final Period (3-5:30 p.m.) <strong>Final Group Presentations</strong></td>
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