

American Literature

1880 to Present

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Resources and course materials are embedded in this syllabus. Click the **bold red underlined** links for more information.

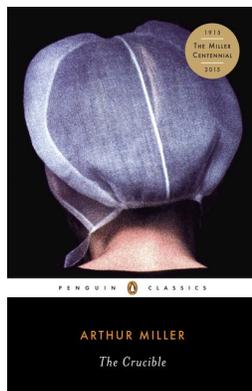
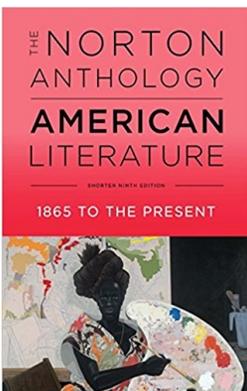
Your instructor:

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Office: Austin/CLAS 114

Office Hours: MW 10-11 AM & by appt. as needed



Course Description & Objectives

This course surveys American literature from 1880 to present, covering canonical and lesser known works and authors. In particular, this course traces legacies of violence across U.S. history as they are constructed in literature and other media. Our progress throughout the course will be framed by the multiple regional, national, and global conflicts throughout this period, as well as movements working for civil and human rights (such as the 20th century Civil Rights Movement, advocacy for LGBTQ rights, and the institution of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, among others) as they are reflected in and digested through literature. We will use these and other events as context for our larger discussion of literary movements and questions. Class time will include short lectures broken up by students' engaged discussion and in-class compositions. Students will complete one major written assignment, one multimodal presentation, as well as midterm and final examinations.

Required Texts

Levine, Robert S., general editor. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Shorter 9th ed., vol. II: 1865 to the Present, Norton, 2017. (ISBN: 978-0-393-26453-1)

Miller, Arthur. 1953. *The Crucible: A Play in Four Acts*. Penguin, 2003. (ISBN: 978-0142437339)

Additional course materials will be posted on HuskyCT and accessible via the schedule page of this syllabus.

Course Components

The work of our class depends upon your consistent reading and intellectual curiosity. In addition to reading, participating in class discussion, you will have two major assignments: a presentation during class and a major composition.

Component Grade Values	
Active Participation	20 %
Presentation & Handout	15 %
Major Composition	20 %
Midterm Exam	15 %
Reading Quizzes	10 %
Final Exam	20 %
	100 %

Presentation & Handout—15 %

You will choose one artifact (such as of art, cinema, legal case, or music) which is not covered on the syllabus and explore it in further detail. You will then create a handout (with bibliography) and give a presentation of no more than 5 minutes which illuminates the cultural and historical contexts of the pieces we explore in class. Your presentation might include interesting facts about or quotations from the artifact, information about how artists were influenced by it, or how it speaks to a course theme or idea.

All work should be submitted through HuskyCT as .pdf, .doc, or .docx unless noted. Email is the best way to reach me with questions or comments about the course. I will do my best to respond to email within 24 hours.

Active Participation—20%

Please come to every class & engage in discussion; students find that this is the best way to interact with the materials assigned for in- and out-of-class work. The goal of the classroom is to work through ideas together, so take notes while you read, ask questions, and pose ideas to your classmates.

Reading Quizzes—10%

We will have approximately one reading quiz per week.

Midterm Exam—15%

Final Exam—20%

Major Composition—20%

You will write one extended essay which examines one text in detail. This composition will be broken into two parts. The first will incorporate a researched history of the text, including perhaps its reception, critical history, and cultural context. For the second part of the assignment, you will use this research to put forth your own argument about the text. I encourage you to choose a text you are interested in, even beyond what we might call “canonical” literature. For this assignment, you will submit two proposals, one researched history of 4-5 pages, and one final critical argument of 6-8 pages. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your ideas!

Course Learning Objectives

Students will

- Read and engage with works of U. S. literature,
- Examine recurring themes across literature and art,
- Form arguments about the “work” of literature and writing,
- Research in depth a specific text,
- Contribute to course knowledge through discussion and writing, and
- Learn about and take part in the debate about what makes “American” literature.

To succeed in our class, read actively by taking notes and recording your questions, be a part of our class discussions, and use projects as a space for exploring your ideas further. At least twice this semester we will be able to engage with our texts in other forms, as the [Connecticut Repertory Theatre performs Miller’s *The Crucible*](#) and as writer Viet Thanh Nguyen, [this year’s UConn Reads writer](#), visits campus in April 2018. If you would like to use the events for part of your essay or earn extra credit for attending and writing on them, please meet with me.

Resources for Students, Writers, & Humans

The University offers a wealth of resources for students for success and health in academic and personal growth. Please see a list of some of those resources linked [here](#). Some important policies are discussed at length below.

In accordance with UConn policies and [Title IX](#), this course will be a designated **safe space** for all students, regardless of background, ability, citizenship, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment at UConn, you can find support and resources at the [Office of Institutional Equity](#). You may also contact [Health Services](#), the [Rainbow Center](#), & [Women’s Center](#).

Please note that I am a mandatory reporter to the Office of Institutional Equity if I become aware of issues that may pose a danger to a student’s health or safety. I know that we all learn through diverse methods. UConn and the English Department are committed to making educational opportunities available to all students. If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability please contact the [Center for Students with Disabilities](#) @ (860) 486-2020. They will determine

with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate and provide me with a letter describing those accommodations. All information and documentation is confidential. Students are encouraged to approach me with any other life circumstances that may affect their participation in the course so that we can discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements, as needed for homework, exams, or class.

Course Policies

Academic Misconduct Late Work

As a student (and human), you have a responsibility to yourself and others to present your work honestly and with integrity. That means taking credit for the ideas and research you have done and attributing to others what you have learned and extended from them. Should you have any questions about whether what you are doing constitutes misconduct, plagiarism, or misuse of sources, feel free to meet with the W Center or speak with me. See [Community Standards' discussion of Academic Misconduct](#). See FYW's program statement [here](#).

Please do your best to stay on track of course work. Our course covers a substantial amount of material and moves at a swift pace — submitting work late may make it difficult to follow long with course discussion and ideas. That said, life events do sometimes occur which make it difficult to maintain our usual schedules. Please meet with me if any circumstances prevents you from maintaining the suggested schedule so that we can work on a plan together. I advise you to speak with me no later than 48 hours before major assignment due dates if you would like to request an extension.

Library Resources

The Homer Babbidge Library has excellent resources for using technology, doing research, as well as printing and copying texts. Students are able to freely borrow laptops, tablets, and cameras by bringing your student ID to the iDesk. See their [Undergraduate Student Start Guide here](#) for more information about library resources.

The UConn Writing Center is a fantastic resource for working with your writing at any stage of the writing process. Check out [their site here](#) for tips, guides, and ways to make appointments with their writing tutors.

Grade Distribution

94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-

Recording & Sharing Course Materials

Please be courteous and respectful with our course materials. My lectures, notes, handouts, and displays are protected by state common law and federal copyright law. They are my own original expression and I've recorded them prior or during my lecture in order to ensure that I obtain copyright protection. Students are authorized to take notes in my class; however, this authorization extends only to making one set of notes for your own personal use and no other use. This American Literature 1880 to Present, 2018 Syllabus by Hayley C. Stefan is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).

Course Schedule

The majority of the texts below can be found in your *Norton* anthology. Prose texts from the *Norton* are followed by page numbers. Texts not found in the *Norton* are linked digitally. Click on titles that are styled **bold, red and underlined** to access these texts. If you are unable to access any of the files, try Google first (there's a remarkable number of these works online). Please email me if you have any trouble.

Writer biographies are important—even though they don't dictate what a work says. Please read the bios that the *Norton* offers for each writer to help contextualize our discussion.

Week One	Mon. 1/15
	MLK Jr. Day
	Weds. 1/17
	Overview & introduction to course
	Fri. 1/19
	<i>Norton</i> : "Introduction" (1-17) <u>Keywords: "America"</u> Whitman: "Song of Myself," cantos 1-6, 11, 13, 15-16
Week Two	Mon. 1/22
	Lazarus: "1492," "The New Colossus" <u>Renan: "What Is a Nation?"</u> <u>Martí: "Our America"</u>
	Weds. 1/24
	Washington: From <i>Up from Slavery</i> (471-479) <u>Keywords: "Citizenship"</u>
	Fri. 1/26
	DuBois: <i>Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others</i> (568-577) Dunbar: "We Wear the Mask"
Week Three	Mon. 1/29
	Zitkala-Ša: "The Soft-Hearted Sioux" (652-655, 660-665) Far: "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" (549-558)
	Weds. 1/31
	Gilman: "The Yellow Wallpaper" (509-523)
	Fri. 2/2
	Gilman: "Why I Wrote 'The Yellow Wallpaper'?" (523-524) <u>Keywords: "Gender"</u>

Week Four	Mon. 2/5
	<i>Norton</i> : "American Literature 1914-1945: Introduction" (667-677) Robinson: "Richard Cory," "Miniver Cheevy" Frost: "Mending Wall," "After Apple-Picking," "Birches"
	Weds. 2/7
	<i>Norton</i> : "American Literature 1914-1945: Introduction" (677-685); Eliot: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," <i>The Waste Land</i> , "The Hollow Men" Lowell: "September, 1918"
	Fri. 2/9
	Pound: "A Pact" cumings: "In Just--," "Buffalo Bill 's," "i sing of Olaf glad and big," ""next to of course god america i" Stein: From <i>The Making of Americans</i> (729-734) Sandburg: "Grass"

Week Five	Mon. 2/12
	<u>cummings: "Poem, or Beauty Hurts Mr. Vinal"</u> H. Crane: "Chaplinesque" <i>Norton</i> : Modernist Manifestos (803-818) Hughes: "Note on Commercial Theatre"
	Weds. 2/14
	Hughes: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "I, Too," "Song for a Dark Girl," "Democracy," "Theme for English B" McKay: "The Harlem Dancer," "The Lynching," "If We Must Die," "Africa," "America"
	Fri. 2/16
Hurston: "How It Feels to Be Colored Me" (948-950; 958-961) Cullen: "Yet Do I Marvel," "Incident," "Heritage" Bennett: <u>"To a Dark Girl," "Hatred"</u>	

Week Six	Mon. 2/19
	Miller: <i>The Crucible</i> , Act One
	Weds. 2/21
	Miller: <i>The Crucible</i> , Act Two
	Fri. 2/23
	Miller: <i>The Crucible</i> , Act Three

Week Seven	Mon. 2/26
	Miller: <i>The Crucible</i> , Act Four; Allan Nevins' "What Is a Communist?"
	Weds. 2/28
	Baldwin: "Going to Meet the Man" (1330-1343); Brooks: "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," "kitchenette building," "the mother," "the white troops had their orders but the Negroes looked like men"
	Fri. 3/2
Baldwin and Brooks, continued	

Week Eight	Mon. 3/5
	Plath: "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy" Rich: "Diving into the Wreck" Sexton: "Sylvia's Death," "Little Girl, My String Bean, My Lovely Woman"
	Weds. 3/7
	Ginsberg: "Howl"; Optional: "America" ; (recordings of Ginsberg reading these poems) Kaufman: One of the following: "Believe, Believe"; "O-Jazz-O War Memoir..."; and "A Terror Is More Certain..." (all poems available here)
	Fri. 3/9
Lorde: "Coal," "The Woman Thing," "Black Mother Woman," "Movement Song" Jordan: "Poem about My Rights" Barnes: <i>The Book of Repulsive Women</i>	

Spring Break Week

Week Ten	Mon. 3/19
	Kingston, from <i>Woman Warrior</i> (1543-1553)
	Weds. 3/21
	Komunyakaa: "Facing It" Balaban: "Mau Than" Jordan: "To My Sister, Ethel Ennis, Who Sang 'The Star-Spangled Banner' at the Second Inauguration of Richard Milhous Nixon, January 20, 1973" Levertov: "A Poem at Christmas, 1972, during the Terror-Bombing of North Vietnam"
	Fri. 3/23
	Morrison: "Recitatif" (1427-1442)

Week Eleven	Mon. 3/26
	Clifton: "miss rosie," "the lost baby poem," "homage to my hips," "wishes for songs"
	Weds. 3/28
	Anzaldúa: "How to Tame a Wild Tongue" (1557-1567) Cisneros: From <i>Woman Hollering Creek</i> (1613-1622), poetry TBA
	Fri. 3/30
	<u>Donadio: "Revisiting the Canon Wars"</u> Gates: From <i>Loose Canons</i> Graff: From <i>Beyond the Culture Wars</i>

Week Twelve	Mon. 4/2
	Spiegelman: From <i>Maus</i> (1587-1604)
	Weds. 4/4
	Alexie: "At Navajo Monument Valley Tribal School," "Pawn Shop," from <i>The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven</i>
	Fri. 4/6
	Responding to the Canon/Culture Wars

Week Thirteen	Mon. 4/9
	Collins: "Forgetfulness," "I Chop Some Parsley while Listening to Art Blakey's Version of 'Three Blind Mice,'" <u>"Taking off Emily Dickinson's Clothes"</u> Lee: "Persimmons," <u>"Immigrant Blues,"</u> "Self-Help for Fellow Refugees"
	Weds. 4/11
	Baraka: <u>"Somebody Blew up America"</u> (text); <u>video</u> <u>Amazing Spider-man, vol. 2, #36</u> Collins: <u>"The Names"</u> Mali: <u>"Depression, Too, Is a Kind of Fire"</u> (video); <u>text</u> Espada: <u>"Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100"</u> Kinnell: <u>"When the Towers Fell"</u> Ferlinghetti: <u>"History of the Airplane"</u> Hahn: From <i>The Narrow Road to the Interior</i> Harjo: <u>"When the World as We Knew It Ended"</u> Danticat: <u>"on the day of the dead"</u> Garrison: <u>"I Saw You Walking"</u> Szyborska: <u>"Photograph from September 11"</u>
	Fri. 4/13
	Kushner: <u>"Only We Who Guard the Mystery Shall Be Unhappy"</u>

Week Fourteen	Mon. 4/16
	Kushner, continued.
	Weds. 4/18
	Black: 8, part one(script / video)
	Fri. 4/20
	Black: 8, part two

Week Fifteen	Mon. 4/23
	Nguyen: From <i>The Refugees</i> Vuong: "Aubade with Burning City," "On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous"
	Weds. 4/25
	Thomas: From The Hate U Give Vuong: "Toy Boat" Betts: "When I Think of Tamir Rice while Driving" Smith: "Alternate Names for Black Boys"
	Fri. 4/27
	Wrapping up & review.

This schedule may change due to our interests & the weather; I will upload an updated version to our HuskyCT course page whenever changes are made.

Mutual Respect

Throughout the semester, we will read texts that introduce complex, diverse, and even controversial subjects. I want this class to be a space in which we all feel safe and comfortable to share our thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Please remember at all times that your thoughts and ideas are **important and valuable**. You are writers and scholars. One of the goals of a university is to challenge us to apply pressure about what we know (and all that we don't know). I will never ask you to change your mind, but I will expect it will remain open in this course. That being said, I will not tolerate disrespectful or implicitly violent comments in this classroom, and those students found to be making such remarks will be asked to leave immediately and will be counted absent for that class session.

American Literature 1880 to Present...as in Today

Many of the artists and theorists whose ideas we will work with are still around today, and several of them are still active thinkers in our world. I encourage you to think of the ideas in our course as living and to try to follow along with their ongoing conversations today. You might follow along with them on Twitter. Check out [Dustin Lance Black](#), [Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#), [Viet Thanh Nguyen](#), [Angie Thomas](#), and [Monique Truong](#), for starters. Find something relevant for class discussion? Tag it for the rest of us & follow along with #AmLit220301 on Twitter.