

Touchstones 2A: American Literature

ENGL 231-01 | Fall 2022

CLASS & INSTRUCTOR DETAILS

MWF 12:00-12:50pm

Class will meet in Stein 202.

Instructor

Hayley C. Stefan, Ph.D.

(she/her/hers)

hstefan@holycross.edu

Please refer to me as Dr. Stefan or Professor Stefan.

I will do my best to respond to emails within 24 hours. If you don't hear back from me after 48 hours, please feel free to send me a nudge/follow-up email.

Office Hours

MW 1-2:00pm in Fenwick 214

Thurs., 10-11am via Zoom

Office hours are designated weekly times for you to come chat about class, your work, or any questions you might have. If my standing hours don't work for you, please email me if you'd like to meet & we can find a time that works for you.

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This course examines the development of American literature from its beginnings to the present, presenting at least six common texts while developing the close reading skills initiated at the introductory level of the major. Authors include Poe, Douglass, Dickinson, Whitman, Faulkner, Morrison, and Alvarez.

As Touchstones 2A positions these texts as central to the U.S. literary canon, we'll ask how these writers and their works persist in academic and public consciousness. We will do so by engaging with their digital archives and commentary. Such resources are frequently curated by scholars, archivists, librarians, students, and the public, even as they center the work of the authors. By addressing the digital archive, we expand the scope of literary history and reflect on how our work as readers deepens and changes in the digital age.

Course Learning Goals

Throughout the end of this course, I hope that you will

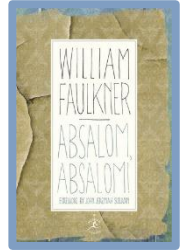
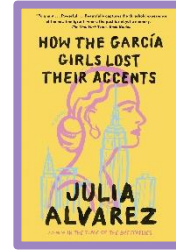
- Practice text analysis & writing skills
- Build an awareness of narrative structures & genre conventions
- Gain initial awareness of U.S. literary history
- Strengthen critical close reading & annotation
- Learn about the mechanisms that maintain & preserve literary canon formation
- Develop information & digital literacy skills, and
- Enjoy reading & talking about literature.

COVID & PUBLIC HEALTH IN OUR CLASS

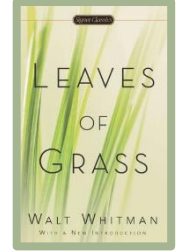
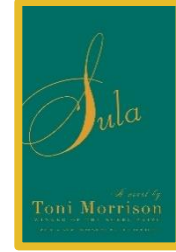
The College has transitioned to an endemic approach to dealing with COVID-19. This means that, while we do not have college-wide masking requirements and we have relaxed most restrictions with regard to social distancing, we are asking all individuals in the College community to apply the wisdom that they've gained over the past two-and-a-half years of the pandemic to mitigate the spread of the virus and, with hope, to conclude the situation that put us into emergency mode in March 2020. For this seminar, I request that if you are sick, please do not come to class. If you've been exposed to COVID, please wear a properly-fitting surgical or N95 (or equivalent) mask to class.

COURSE MATERIALS

1. Julia Alvarez, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*
2. William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!*
3. Toni Morrison, *Sula*
4. Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (Optional)



I will provide additional texts for you online via Canvas, linking you to online writing, art, and videos or sharing PDFs of other texts. You can use any publisher or edition of these texts. You're also welcome to engage with our texts in whatever format works best for you (e.g., audiobook, paperback, eBook, etc.), so long as you actively question as you read and are prepared to discuss how its format influences the way you read it.



If you are unable to afford course materials, please [reach out to Financial Aid](#) or request books via [the Holy Cross Lending Library](#), where they may be able to help. Books can be purchased through the [Holy Cross Bookstore](#) or other retailers. Pro tip: You can search for books on [bookfinder.com](#) to see the varied prices and places you can buy copies. You can also borrow books through your local library via [the Libby](#) and [Hoopla](#) apps.

Technology

In our class, we will use a variety of technology. We will rely on digital archives for reading and contextualizing much of our reading, including those of [The Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore](#), the [Dickinson Electronic Archives](#) (and its previous version, the [Emily Dickinson Archive](#)), the [Walt Whitman Archive](#), and [Digital Yoknapatawpha](#). Many other resources will be available online via Canvas. I ask that you bring access to whatever texts we're discussing each day with you to class. That means bringing either a printed hard copy of the text or a laptop or digital device. If you need hard copies but cannot access them, please let me know in advance and I can provide some for you.

Email

Major announcements from me will be sent via your Holy Cross email. I recommend checking your email in the morning before class, just in case there are any changes or cancellations.



Hypothesis

We will use the LMS & browser extension Hypothesis to analyze & annotate texts together. It works best with Google Chrome, but there are options for other browsers. Make sure you make an account here: <https://web.hypothes.is/start/>.

Canvas

Homework will be listed & submitted on Canvas. To prepare for class or to review a class, check the Weekly Modules available on our Canvas class shell. Each week will have an overview of the activities for each class & will list any homework that is due or upcoming.

RESOURCES & POLICIES

Accessibility & Accommodations

I know that we each learn through diverse methods, and my goal is to make our course as accessible as possible. This means we will work with methods and documents that prioritize how we process information, following the guidelines of the Universal Design for Learning. I know that our daily life directly affects how we engage in our education. This past year has shown us how true this is. Please email or meet with me, as you feel comfortable, to discuss possible adjustments or alternative arrangements, as needed for homework, exams, or class. Please note that consistent with applicable federal and state law, this course may be video/audio recorded as an accommodation only with permission from the Office of Accessibility Services. Students are not permitted to record the contents of this class under any other circumstances without prior instructor & class approval.

Students may also request formal academic accommodations, housing and dining accommodations, modifications to college policies, procedures, and rules; environmental adjustments, and auxiliary aids and services through Holy Cross. Additional policies and procedures regarding accommodations can be found on the [Office of Accessibility Services webpages](#).

Meeting Your Basic Needs

We will be learning a lot this semester, but your wellbeing remains the most important. If you are having difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or if you lack a safe and stable place to live, please talk with me (if you are comfortable doing so), so that I can put you in touch with resources to help you. We are still in the middle of a pandemic, so let's extend care to one another when we can.

Mutual Respect

This class is founded on the basis of mutual respect & shared humanity. In line with respecting others, we will use the names and pronouns that members of this class ask us to use. (If these change across the semester, please also share the name & pronouns you would like for us to use for you with me and/or the class, as you feel comfortable.)

Over the semester, we will read texts that introduce complex, multiply diverse, and occasionally controversial subjects. I want this class to be a space in which we all feel safe sharing our thoughts, ideas, and opinions—even when these conversations are uncomfortable. We will practice thinking about what it means to sit with this discomfort as we engage ideas that stretch our experience or knowledge.

Your thoughts and ideas as developing scholars are important and valuable. One of the goals of college 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 said, dehumanizing others stops us all from learning, and students who make implicitly violent or harmful remarks will be asked to leave immediately & will forego engagement credit for that day's work.

Submitting work

If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we have class, please submit it on Canvas by class time. If homework is scheduled to be submitted on a day when we do not have class, please submit it on Canvas by the "end of the day," which Canvas considers 11:59 PM.

If you need to hand in something after its planned due date, that is okay. *I do not give penalties or deduct "points" for late work.* Each assignment is designed for you to practice or learn new ideas, not to measure how busy you are or how to "manage time." If you're planning to submit your work one day or so beyond the due date, please consider your extension already granted. *If you need an extended due date beyond two days after the due date, please email me.* I'll have us meet to set up a plan of action and coordinate a new date for you to submit the assignment. I want to make sure that we both have a copy of these plans of action so that you have a clear sense of what you need to accomplish and so I know best how I can help you and when to expect the work.

Academic Integrity

Developing your ideas is the basis of our class. Make sure that your work authentically represents your ideas and credits others for theirs. Submitting others' ideas as your own without crediting them is plagiarism, even if it is unintentional. All work in our class should be formatted and cited according to MLA's 9th edition guidelines. Please review Holy Cross's Academic Integrity Policy [here](#). You can also view the Holy Cross English Department's statement on "Academic Honesty" [here](#).

Attendance & Absences

Our class will largely run synchronously via Zoom and in person when it's safe. Your presence in class is crucial to learning and engaging with your classmates' ideas. Your classmates and I will depend on you to be in class. If you are unable to attend a session for any reason, please send me an email to let me know and reach out to your classmates to get a sense of what you missed. See Holy Cross's policies [here](#).

Resources for Students

Holy Cross offers a variety of resources to help you learn and Students can access academic support, guides, and various learning workshops through Academic Services & Learning Resources [here](#). Any student can meet with writing consultants at the [Writer's Workshop](#) for support at any stage of the writing process -whether brainstorming, building ideas, revising, or otherwise.

There are also multiple spaces here at Holy Cross where you can find support for all of life that intersects with our learning. These include the many clubs and organizations at Holy Cross, specific support for first-generation students [here](#), the LGBTQIA+ communities [here](#), and international students [here](#), among others. At any point, you can find support from [the Counseling Center](#), which also offers guidance on how to practice self-care and learn new ways to manage life. The [Office of Student Wellness Education](#) and [Chaplains' Office](#) can also offer resources for your health. If there's anything I can ever do to help, I'm happy to listen. Please note that I am a mandated reporter, and I am required to contact others per state & federal law if you report any risk of harm. You can learn more about these reporting-care mechanisms via the [Office of Title IX & Equal Opportunity](#) & the [Student CARE Team](#).

COURSE COMPONENTS & GRADING

1. Course Engagement - 25 %

Our course prioritizes discussion, built around mini lectures, writing, group work, & other interactive analyses. I will ask you to participate in class & small group discussions, share your writing with one another, & respond thoughtfully to our course inquiry. I'll offer multiple ways to earn credit for your course engagement, from speaking in class to taking & sharing notes for the day. One component of your engagement will include writing short responses to our reading, in which you'll offer your early interpretation of the assigned reading for a particular day.

2. Writing - 35 %

We will practice writing in multiple forms across this semester, with an emphasis on building skills in close reading & revision. These will include one formal longer essay and a social annotation project, each broken into smaller chunks.

3. Leading Discussion - 20 %

You will each be in charge of generating discussing topics and questions for one class session. This will involve analyzing a specific portion of the text from our class & guiding discussion through questions about the text & bringing in a current event, historical references, critical resource, or popular artifact that contextualizes & adds new depth to our class discussion. After the class, you'll compose an essay that brings together close reading of that day's assigned text, contextual analysis using your outside resource, and a reflection of the day's discussion.

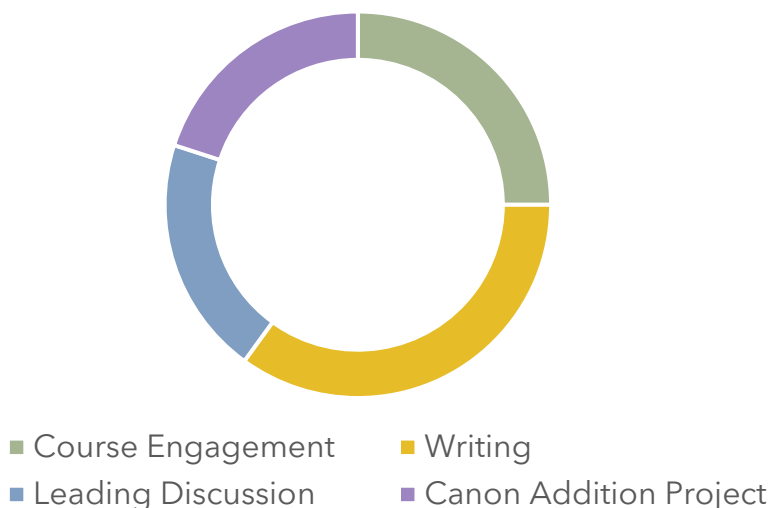
4. Canon Addition Project - 20 %

Our work this semester will culminate in a multimodal project in which you propose an addition to the Touchstones 2A syllabus and/or American literary canon. This project will have multiple parts and options for completion, requiring textual analysis and creative critical design on your part.

Grading Breakdown

A	96
A-	92
B+	89
B	86
B-	82
C+	79
C	76
C-	72
D+	69
D	66
F	≤60

Grading Course Components



SCHEDULE

Below is a tentative weekly outline of what we will be focusing on in each class. I will notify you in advance of any minor changes. The most accurate daily assignments/reading will be on Canvas.

Week 1: The American Literary Canon

Wed., Aug. 31: Overview of the semester.

Fri., Sept. 2: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Week 2: Edgar Allan Poe

Mon., Sept. 5: "The Cask of Amontillado"; "A History of the Poe Society Website."

Wed., Sept. 7: "The Fall of the House of Usher."

Fri., Sept. 9: "The Mask ["Masque"] of the Red Death"; "Editorial Policies and Methods for Preparing Texts."

Week 3: Frederick Douglass & Annotation

Mon., Sept. 12: "Oration" ["Fifth of July Speech" or "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"]

Wed., Sept. 14: "About the Colored Conventions."

Fri., Sept. 16: From "Proceedings of the Colored national convention, held in Rochester, July 6th, 7th, and 8th, 1853"; Carolyne King & Erica L. Ball's "The 'Conventions' of the Conventions."

Week 4: Emily Dickinson

Mon., Sept. 19: All of Emily Dickinson's poems referenced by number here from the 1955 Johnson edition: 328, 505, 251, 258, 289, 254, 159

Wed., Sept. 21: 494, 670, 249, 214, 303, 435, 199, 271

Fri., Sept. 23: 508, 441, 754, 732, 709, 657

Week 5: Dickinson & Whitman/Poetry of the American Civil War

Mon., Sept. 26: 324, 280, 256, 185, 288, 1090, 1277, 1545, 1732, 712

Wed., Sept. 28: Walt Whitman's "Eighteen Sixty-One," "Beat! Beat! Drums!"; "Vigil Strange I Kept on the Field One Night," "Year That Trembled and Reel'd Beneath Me," "Old War-Dreams"; from *Memoranda During the War*.

Fri., Sept. 30: "Memories of President Lincoln" cluster.

Week 6: Walt Whitman

Mon., Oct. 3: "Song of Myself."

Wed., Oct. 5: "Calamus" cluster.

Fri., Oct. 7: "I Hear America Singing," "[States!>"; "Thoughts-4: "Of Ownership..."; "Respondez!"

Week 7: Fall Break

Mon., Oct. 10 - Fri., Oct. 14: No class!

Week 8: William Faulkner

Mon., Oct. 17: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Wed., Oct. 19: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Fri., Oct. 21: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Week 9: Faulkner II

Mon., Oct. 24: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Wed., Oct. 26: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*; Digital Yoknapatawpha.

Fri., Oct. 28: Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*; John B. Padgett's "Using Digital Yoknapatawpha to Analyze Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!* as a Gothic Text."

Week 10: Asian American Literature & the Canon

Mon., Oct. 31: From Frank Chin et al.'s *Aiiieeeee: An Anthology of Asian American Writers*.

Wed., Nov. 2: Toshio Mori's "Tomorrow Is Coming, Children."

Fri., Nov. 4: Tara Fickle's "Behind Aiiieeeee!"

Week 11: Toni Morrison

Mon., Nov. 7: Morrison's *Sula*.

Wed., Nov. 9: Morrison's *Sula*.

Fri., Nov. 11: Morrison's *Sula*.

Week 12: Morrison II

Mon., Nov. 14: Morrison's *Sula*.

Wed., Nov. 16: Morrison's *Sula*.

Fri., Nov. 18: Morrison's *Sula* (overflow).

Week 13: Julia Alvarez

Mon., Nov. 21: Julia Alvarez's *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*.

Wed., Nov. 23: No class!

Fri., Nov. 25: No class!

Week 14: Alvarez II

Mon., Nov. 28: Alvarez's *Garcia Girls*.

Wed., Nov. 30: Alvarez's *Garcia Girls*.

Fri., Dec. 2: Alvarez's *Garcia Girls*.

Week 15: Closing the Semester

Mon., Dec. 5: Alvarez's *Garcia Girls* (overflow).

Wed., Dec. 7: In-class work on Canon Addition Project.

Fri., Dec. 9: Semester wrap-up & reflecting on our course.