

USCDornsife

**Department of
English**

ENGL 263: American Literature
Section 32637D
4.0 Units
Fall 2018
MWF 10:00-11:50pm
Room THH 203

Rick Berg
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Office Hrs: M & W 2 – 3:30
and by appointment
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ENGL 263: AMERICAN LITERATURE

English 263 is a survey of American Literature. As an introduction, the course intends to develop and extend the nodding acquaintance that most students have with American writers and their works. Since it is an introductory course, English 263 is wedded to breadth of study. The course is historically constructed moving from the time before the Republic to our own moment. Students will confront a variety of texts and authors, periods and genres. We will look at how American authors and their works define and re-define our national character; we will look at the many questions these works raise about America, about its sense of itself, about its place in the world, and about literature. – American and otherwise. We will even look at some of the answers they give. The course's goals are many; first, there is the simple celebration of literature's challenge to doxa and all the uninformed opinions that rule and regulate our everyday; secondly there is the desire to offer a foundation for further studies not only in literature and art, but also in other fields; thirdly, there is the wish to recognize and indulge the pleasure one takes from these works; and finally ... the list goes on.

COURSE AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Course Objectives:

This course cultivates a critical appreciation for human expression. Students will learn to read and interpret actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write and speak persuasively in order to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions. Students should expect to analyze various kinds of texts in order to get a more nuanced sense of the subject and to improve their ability to read and to express opinions in a reasonable manner.

Learning Objectives:

1. Cultivate a critical appreciation for forms of human expression;
2. Develop and understanding of the contexts from which these texts emerged;
3. Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions.

REQUIRED READINGS AND SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIALS

Required Texts:

Brooks, Gwendolyn, "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon." (BLKBD)

di Donato, Pietro, Christ in Concrete

Herr, Michael, "Breathing In "(BLKBD)

Hughes, Langston, "Let America Be America Again" (BLKBD)

Jaxon, "Nits Make Lice" Slow Death #7 (1976) (BLKBD)

Levine, Robert S. et al., Norton Anthology of American Literature Shorter (V 1 & 2)

Mirikitani, Janice, "Loving from Vietnam to Zimbabwe" (BLKBD)

Okubo, Miné, Citizen 13660

St. John de Crèvecoeur, J. Hector, "Letter III. What Is an American?" and

"Letter IX: "Description of Charles Town" from,

Letters from an American Farmer: (BLKBD)

Life Magazine 1941 (BLKBD)

Superman Dallies (June 28, 1943 to August 21, 1943) (BLKBD)

Thoreau, Henry David, "Slavery in Massachusetts" (BLKBD)

Yamamoto, Hisaye, "Wilshire Bus" (BLKBD)

Zitkala Ša, "The School Days of An Indian Girl" (BLKBD)

RECOMMENDED TEXTS:

Books:

Bradbury, M. & Ruland, R., From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature

Forster, E. M., Aspects of the Novel (<http://tinyurl.com/ngpadfb>)

Lawrence, D. H., Studies in Classic American Literature

Marcus, Greil, A New Literary History of America (<http://tinyurl.com/pwq7fjl>)

Williams, W. C., In the American Grain

Zinn, Howard, A People's History of the United States: 1492-present

Online Reference Texts

The Chicago Manual of Style Online

<http://tinyurl.com/oettzvx>

The Columbia Dictionary of Modern Literary and Cultural Criticism

<http://literature.proquest.com.libproxy2.usc.edu/getResultsByLetter.do?areaName=ref&letter=all&type=CDC>

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms

<http://literature.proquest.com.libproxy2.usc.edu/getResultsByLetter.do?areaName=ref&letter=a&type=OLT>

The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics

<http://literature.proquest.com.libproxy2.usc.edu/getResultsByLetter.do?areaName=ref&letter=all&type=PEP>

Literature On Line

<http://lion.chadwyck.com.libproxy.usc.edu/>

Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory

<http://literature.proquest.com.libproxy2.usc.edu/getResultsByLetter.do?areaName=ref&type=RENT&letter=s>

Key Terms in Literary Theory

<http://search.credoreference.com.libproxy1.usc.edu/content/title/contlt>

READING SCHEDULE:

M. 8/20
Introduction

Recommended Reading:
Norton Anthology Beginnings to 1700
“Introduction.”

W. 8/22
JOHN WINTHROP (1588 –1649)
A Model of Christian Charity

F. 8/24
ANNE BRADSTREET (c.1612 –1672)
“Before the Birth of One of Her Children”
“Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House”

Recommended Reading:
Norton Anthology: American Literature 1700-1820
“Introduction.”

M. 8/27
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706 –1790)
The Autobiography [Part One]

W. 8/29
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706 –1790)
The Autobiography [Part One]

F. 8/31
PHILLIS WHEATLEY (c.1753 –1784)
“On Being Brought from Africa to America”
“To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth”
Letter to Reverend Samson Occum (**BLKBD**)

M. 9/3
Labor Day

W. 9/5
J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR (1735 –1813)
Letters from an American Farmer: “Letter III. What Is an American?” (**BLKBD**)
Letters from an American Farmer: “Letter IX: “Description of Charles Town” (**BLKBD**)

F. 9/7
J. HECTOR ST. JOHN DE CRÈVECOEUR (1735 –1813)
Letters from an American Farmer: “Letter III. What Is an American?” (**BLKBD**)
Letters from an American Farmer: “Letter IX: “Description of Charles Town” (**BLKBD**)

Recommended Reading:
Norton Anthology: American Literature 1820-1865
“Introduction.”

M. 9/10
RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803 –1882)
“Self-Reliance”

W. 9/12
HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817–1862)
“Resistance to Civil Government”
“Slavery in Massachusetts” (BLKBD)

F. 9/14
HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817–1862)
“Resistance to Civil Government”
“Slavery in Massachusetts” (BLKBD)

M. 9/17
HERMAN MELVILLE (1819–1891)
Benito Cereno

W. 9/19
HERMAN MELVILLE (1819–1891)
Benito Cereno

Recommended Reading:
Norton Anthology: American Literature 1865-1914
“Introduction.”

F. 9/21
FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818–1895)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,
Written by Himself

M. 9/24
FREDERICK DOUGLASS (1818–1895)
Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,
Written by Himself

W. 9/26
EMILY DICKINSON (1830–1886)
249 (“Wild Nights —Wild Nights!”)
258 (“There’s a certain Slant of light”)
510 (“It was not Death, for I stood up”)

F. 9/28
WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)
“Song of Myself” (1881)

M. 10/1
WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)
“Song of Myself” (1881)

W. 10/3
WALT WHITMAN (1819–1892)
“The Wound-Dresser”

F. 10/5
REBECCA HARDING DAVIS (1831–1910)
Life in the Iron-Mills

M. 10/8
REBECCA HARDING DAVIS (1831–1910)
Life in the Iron-Mills

W. 10/10
ZITKALA ŠA (Gertrude Simmons Bonnin) (1876–1938)
“The School Days of An Indian Girl” **(BLKBD)**
JAXON (Jack Edward Jackson 1941 – 2006)
“Nits Make Lice” Slow Death #7 (1976) **(BLKBD)**

F. 10/12
HENRY JAMES (1843–1916)
“Daisy Miller: A Study”

M. 10/15
CHARLOTTE PERKINS GILMAN (1860–1935)
“The Yellow Wall-paper “

W. 10/17
SUSAN GLASPELL (1876–1935)
Trifles

Recommended Reading

Norton Anthology: American Literature 1914-1945
“Introduction.”

F. 10/19
T.S. ELIOT (1888–1965)
The Waste Land

M. 10/22
T.S. ELIOT (1888–1965)
The Waste Land

W. 10/24
LANGSTON HUGHES (1897–1967)
“I, Too”
“Mulatto”
“Let America Be America Again” **(BLKBD)**

F. 10/26
PIETRO di DONATO (1911-1992)
Christ in Concrete

M. 10/29
PIETRO di DONATO (1911-1992)
Christ in Concrete

W. 10/31
PIETRO di DONATO (1911-1992)
Christ in Concrete

F. 11/2
PIETRO di DONATO (1911-1992)
Christ in Concrete

Recommended Reading:

Norton Anthology: American Literature since 1945
“Introduction.”

M. 11/5

ALLEN GINSBERG (1926–1997)

Howl

W. 11/7

GWENDOLYN BROOKS (b.1917 —2000)

“The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till”

A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon.” **(BLKBD)**

F. 11/9

MINÉ OKUBO (1912 – 2001)

Citizen 13660

Life Magazine 1941 **(BLKBD)**

Superman Dallies (June 28, 1943 to August 21, 1943) **(BLKBD)**

M. 11/12

MINÉ OKUBO (1912 – 2001)

Citizen 13660

W. 11/14

HISAYE YAMAMOTO (1921 -- 2011)

“Wilshire Bus” **(BLKBD)**

F. 11/16

MICHAEL HERR (1940-)

“Breathing In “**(BLKBD)**

M. 11/19

JANICE MIRIKITANI, (1941 -)

“Loving from Vietnam to Zimbabwe” **(BLKBD)**

W. 11/21 – 11/23

Thanksgiving Holiday

M. 11/26

TONI MORRISON (1931 -)

“Recitatif”

W. 11/28

GLORIA ANZALDÚA (1942–2004)

“How to Tame a Wild Tongue “

F. 11/30

Conclusion

REQUIREMENTS:

There will be THREE papers and a TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM. Class participation is vital. Students will be expected to have read and prepared the required texts for each session so that they will be ready to engage in an informed discussion.

Papers:

The papers will be 5-7 pages. Topics will be assigned. (If a student wishes to pursue a topic of his/her own, this is acceptable. To do that the student must meet with me before she/he starts writing). Late papers will not be tolerated.

All papers will be typed and follow the proper manuscript conventions. If you are unclear about those conventions, please consult the usual manuals of style (e.g., The Chicago Manual of Style Online <http://tinyurl.com/oettzvx>). When writing the paper, all students are encouraged to meet with me during office hours, consult the folks in the writing center, or consult a writing manual, e.g., Greene, Gayle, Writing a Paper (BLBD). Late papers will not be tolerated.

Since there will be time to revise, it is understood that there will be at least two re-writes before the final draft is submitted. The papers are to be well written. The subject is to be presented in a literate manner. The prose should be clear and concise, free from confusing syntax and awkward or clumsy usage. The spelling and grammar should be correct. The papers should be well organized and coherent. There should be a defined structure, one that is orderly and intelligible. They should have a sound and substantial thesis, one that puts forth a topic. Aspects of the topic should be developed without going into unnecessary detail. Statements must be consistent. They should contain supporting evidence for assertions. When necessary, the papers should also have proper citations from reliable sources for direct quotations, and counter-intuitive or controversial statements.

Exams:

The Final Exam will be a take-home test. It will consist of FOUR essay questions. You will choose TWO. It will be comprehensive. A hard copy of the exam will be placed in my mailbox on or before the due date (DUE DATE TBA). There will be NO LATE EXAMS.

Participation:

Since we will be discussing the particulars of the texts, students should bring the readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. Students are expected to come to class prepared. It goes without saying that the text is to have been read, several times if possible. ("I have not read it," is neither an acceptable response nor one that will be tolerated with good humor.) When reading the texts and preparing for class lectures and discussions, students should keep in mind that we are not engaged in the repeating of received opinions. We are engaged with critical and reflective thinking. The texts we will be reading are challenging. They raise questions about what we know, how we came to know it and the validity and meaning of that knowledge and our understanding, (which might make us apprehensive because we begin to sense that our knowledge might be inadequate). These texts encourage us to engage in critical and reflective thinking and to put our responses and answers to the question, as it were.

Shermis, S. Samuel, Critical Thinking: Helping Students Learn Reflectively (BLKBD)

Occasionally, I will post a discussion topic on Blackboard. When I do, I will send an email notifying you. The responses will be considered part of the participation grade.

Finally, it goes without saying: things happen. Hence changes might occur, and adjustments may be made during the course of the semester. If so the instructor will decide.

GRADING BREAKDOWN

Assignment	Points	% of Grade
1st Paper		20
2nd Paper		20
3rd Paper		20
Final Exam		25
Participation		15
TOTAL	0	100

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICY

Papers:

All papers are due in class on the assigned due date. Please also submit a copy through Turnitin on Blackboard.

The Final Exam:

A hard copy of the exam will be placed in my mailbox on or before the due date (DUE DATE TBA). A BACK-UP copy of the Exam should also be submitted through Turnitin. There will be NO LATE EXAMS.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

Electronic Gadgets

Computers, iPads, iPods, Smart Phones etc. etc., are part of our lives. They are extraordinary tools. They help in a number of ways. They are not only a part of our personal and professional lives; they are also a part of our educational and classroom experience. They are pedagogically useful. But they can also be annoying toys. Therefore, I encourage their use and discourage playing with them in class. To be clear, as long as these tools are used in class for class, as long as they are used to enhance education, everything is fine. But they are not to be used to answer and send emails, to shop, to play online games, or to surf the net, unless the surfing pertains to class. All that behavior is unacceptable. It is rude and disruptive. It interferes with classroom activities. It will not be tolerated.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards”

<https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1-800-273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 - 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. <https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/>

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: <http://sarc.usc.edu/>

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX compliance – (213) 740-5086

Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. <https://equity.usc.edu/>

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/>

Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/>

Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students