



Phillis Wheatley

Survey of American Literature

English 204-09

Fall 2006

TR 1:50 PM – 3:05 PM

Knutti Hall, Room 204

Dr. Timothy K. Nixon

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Office Hours: MW 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM,
and by appointment



T. S. Eliot

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a critical study of representative writers and works from Native American oral traditions to the present, reflecting a broad range of literary and philosophic ideas and the cultural and ethnic diversity of the American experience. Prerequisite: ENGL 101 and ENGL 102, 103, or 104.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to familiarize students with the rich variety of literature produced in America—from the Colonial through the Modern periods. Students will be exposed to a range of writers and traditions that constitute the diverse and multicultural American experience, through discussion and through critical thinking and writing about significant literary works. ENGL 101 and ENGL 102, 103, or 104 are *required* for entry into ENGL 204. Thus, students are expected to enter this course already having received instruction in how to render clear, cogent ideas; how to structure well-developed essays; and how to employ standard written English correctly. This course will provide further practice—but not instruction—in these skill areas.

SKILLS AND OUTCOMES

Essential skills and outcomes to be acquired through this course include:

1. an ability to render close textual analysis;
2. an ability to synthesize information from multiple texts;
3. an understanding of ethnic/cultural diversity;
4. an aesthetic and critical judgment for literature;
5. a concept of chronology associated with literary periods;
6. an understanding of the inter-relationship of the arts, history, and philosophy through the study of literature;
7. an ability to see connections between literature and life outside the classroom.

REQUIRED TEXT

Baym, Nina, et al., eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Shorter 6th ed. New York: Norton, 2003.

ASSIGNMENTS

2 Critical Essays, 20% each (12% composition, 8% revision)
Mid-Term Exam, 20%
Final Exam, 20%
Reading Quizzes, 20%

CRITICAL ESSAYS

Twice during the semester on the dates laid out below, students will submit thesis-driven, critical essays on material covered in the class. These papers will be relatively short; each one will be about 1,000 words in length. In these essays students should interpret or critique a work from the syllabus. While the focus of these papers is to assess students' critical skills rather than their research abilities, the incorporation of outside sources (one or two per paper) that strengthen the argument or establish credibility is expected. The students will receive grades reflecting their success at analysis (30 pts.), style and clarity (15 pts.), paragraphing (15 pts.), use of sources (15 pts.), grammar and mechanics (15 pts.), and adherence to the MLA format (10 pts.). Students will be expected to revise these papers based upon feedback from the instructor.

The critical essays must be typed and double-spaced. *Everything* in the papers should be double-spaced, including block quotations and the works cited list! Black ink on white paper is customary for scholarly work. Students should use one-inch margins on all four sides of the page and a legible, fairly standard font when preparing their papers. (Examples of acceptable fonts include Times New Roman 12 pt. or Arial 11 pt.) There should *not* be an extra line between paragraphs, but paragraphs should begin with a half-inch indentation. The student's name, the course title, the instructor's name, and the date should appear in the upper left-hand corner of the paper's first page. Students should number all pages in the upper right-hand corner. *The entire package is to be stapled together before being submitted for a grade!* Students should not come to class expecting the instructor to have a stapler for their use. References to all works under consideration and any secondary sources should be documented following Modern Language Association (MLA) conventions, and a works cited list, adhering to the sixth edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, should be included as part of the paper.

READING QUIZZES

This course is a literature survey, and as such, keeping up with the assigned reading is a major component of its requirements. In order to evaluate how diligent students are being with the reading, brief quizzes will be given throughout the semester. The questions on these quizzes will be straight-forward and relatively easy for those who have completed the assigned reading for that day's class. To this end, students should come to class each day prepared for a quiz. The following guidelines apply: 1) Quizzes will be given promptly at the start of class, and questions will not be repeated for students who arrive in class after the last question has been asked. 2) The quiz component of the student's grade will be calculated by averaging all quiz scores *after the lowest three quiz scores have been dropped*. 3) Missed quizzes cannot be made up.

GRADING SCALE

This course will employ the grading scale recommended by the Department of English and Modern Languages:

A	100 – 90
B	89 – 80
C	79 – 70
D	69 – 60
F	59 – 0

SPECIAL NOTE

Any student who may need an accommodation due to a disability should make an appointment to see the instructor during his office hours or at another mutually agreed upon time. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as is possible so the instructor can make appropriate arrangements.

CLASS POLICIES

Students are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for discussion whenever the class is scheduled to meet. However, things conflicting with class attendance invariably arise. At this point, each student should have the maturity and professionalism necessary to monitor his or her own attendance. If there is some extenuating circumstance that prevents the student from attending class, he or she may rely on three of the lowest reading quizzes being dropped. Beyond three absences, the student should talk with the instructor before or after class or during his office hours about this matter. For his part, the instructor reserves the right to fail a student for excessive absences.

Plagiarism is a serious matter and contrary to the ethos of higher education. Students should make every attempt to ensure that their work is original and others' words and ideas are attributed appropriately. The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a failing grade on the assignment. Depending on the offense, plagiarizing may also result in failure of the course or expulsion from the University.

Out of respect for colleagues and the instructor, students are asked to turn off (or leave at home) cell phones and pagers before coming to class.

If a student wants to discuss a grade on a quiz, the essays, or an exam, she or he should meet with the instructor in his office during office hours or at a mutually agreed upon appointment. The instructor will not discuss grades in the classroom.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1—Introduction and Early Literature	
8/22 (T)	Introductions, review of syllabus.
8/24 (R)	"The Iroquois Creation Story" (19-21); excerpts from <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i> (76-94) by William Bradford.

Week 2—Early Literature (cont'd.)	
8/29 (T)	“The Author to Her Book” (124) and “To My Dear and Loving Husband” (125) by Anne Bradstreet; excerpts from <i>A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson</i> (136-52) by Mary Rowlandson.
8/31 (R)	“Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” (227-30) by Benjamin Franklin; “A Short Narrative of My Life” (294-99) by Samson Occom.
Week 3—Early Literature (cont'd.)	
9/5 (T)	Excerpts from <i>The Autobiography</i> (231-92) by Benjamin Franklin.
9/7 (R)	Excerpts from <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself</i> (351-61) by Olaudah Equiano; “On Being Brought from Africa to America” (367) and “To His Excellency General Washington” (374-75) by Phillis Wheatley.
Week 4—A Young Nation Finds Its Voice	
9/12 (T)	“Rip Van Winkle” (448-60) by Washington Irving; “Thanatopsis” (470-72) and “To a Waterfowl” (472-73) by William Cullen Bryant.
9/14 (R)	“An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man” (477-82) by William Apess; “Memorial of the Cherokee Council, November 5, 1829” (574-78) and “Memorial of the Cherokee Citizens, December 18, 1829” (578-81).
Week 5—A Young Nation Finds Its Voice (cont'd.)	
9/19 (T)	“Nature” (485-14) by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
9/21 (R)	“Young Goodman Brown” (610-19) and “The May-Pole of Merry Mount” (619-26) by Nathaniel Hawthorne.
Week 6—A Young Nation Finds Its Voice (cont'd.)	
9/26 (T)	Due—Critical Essay #1. “To Helen” (697), “Annabel Lee” (703-04) and “The Fall of the House of Usher” (714-27) by Edgar Allan Poe.
9/28 (R)	“Resistance to Civil Government” (837-53) and “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” from <i>Walden, or Life in the Woods</i> (895-905) by Henry David Thoreau.
Week 7—Literature at Mid Century	
10/3 (T)	Excerpts from <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself</i> (942-73) by Frederick Douglass.
10/5 (R)	<i>Song of Myself</i> (1003-47) by Walt Whitman.
Week 8—Literature at Mid Century (cont'd.)	
10/10 (T)	Mid-Term Exam
10/12 (R)	Poems 49, 341, 435, 465, 712, 754, 986, and 1129 by Emily Dickinson.
Week 9—Literature at Mid Century (cont'd.)	
10/17 (T)	<i>Benito Cereno</i> (1111-67) by Herman Melville.
10/19 (R)	<i>Life in the Iron-Mills</i> (1191-1217) by Rebecca Harding Davis.

Week 10—Literary Expression at the End of the Nineteenth Century	
10/24 (T)	“The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County” (1240-43) by Mark Twain; “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” (1474-81) by Bret Harte.
10/26 (R)	“I Am Alone” (1462-63) by Cochise; <i>Impressions of an Indian Childhood</i> (1794-1805).
Week 11—Literary Expression at the End of the Nineteenth Century (cont'd.)	
10/31 (T)	“The Storm” (1603-07) and “Désirée’s Baby” (1607-11) by Kate Chopin; “The Goophered Grapevine” (1632-39) by Charles W. Chesnutt.
11/2 (R)	“The Open Boat” (1721-38) by Stephen Crane; “To Build a Fire” (1762-73) by Jack London.
Week 12—Literature in the New Century and Modernism	
11/7 (T)	Due—Critical Essay #2. “The Captured Goddess” (1874-75) and “Madonna of the Evening Flowers” (1876) by Amy Lowell; “Mending Wall” (1880-81), “The Road Not Taken” (1887), and “Nothing Gold Can Stay” (1890) by Robert Frost; “Chicago” (1917-18) and “Grass” (1918) by Carl Sandburg.
11/9 (R)	“The Emperor of Ice-Cream” (1922) by Wallace Stevens; “The Young Housewife” (1935), “The Red Wheelbarrow” (1940), “This Is Just to Say” (1940), and “Landscape with the Fall of Icarus” (1944-45) by William Carlos Williams; “Helen” (1956-57) by H. D.; “Recuerdo” (2109-10), “Apostrophe to Man” (2110), and “I Forgot for a Moment” (2112) by Edna St. Vincent Millay.
Week 13—Literature in the New Century and Modernism (cont'd.)	
11/14 (T)	“The Waste Land” (1981-94) by T. S. Eliot.
11/16 (R)	“Sweat” (handout) by Zora Neale Hurston; “A Rose for Emily” (2160-66) by William Faulkner.
Week 14—Literature in the New Century and Modernism (cont'd.)	
11/21 (T)	Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class!
11/23 (R)	Thanksgiving Holiday—No Class!
Week 15—Literature in the New Century and Modernism (cont'd.)	
11/28 (T)	“Africa” (2084), “America” (2085-86), and “If We Must Die” (2086) by Claude McKay; “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (2227), “I, Too” (2228), and “Song for a Dark Girl” (2229-30) by Langston Hughes; “Heritage” (2246-49) by Countee Cullen.
11/30 (R)	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (2301-63) by Tennessee Williams.
Week 16—Recent Voices	
12/5 (T)	“Everyday Use” (2581-87) by Alice Walker; “Clarence and The Dead” (handout) by Randall Kenan.
12/7 (R)	“The Christmas Play” (2515-21) by Rudolfo Anaya; Sandra Cisneros—“My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn” (2595-96) by Sandra Cisneros.