

**Moravian College**

**Spring 2007**

**English 101A: American Literature**

Instructor: Mary S.Comfort

Phone: 625-7977

e-mail: memsc01

Office: Zinzendorf 104

Office Hours: M 8:40-10:40

Class Meeting: PPHAC 116, MWF 7:50-8:40

TEXT: Perkins. *The American Tradition in Literature*, 11th edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2007

Course Goals (for instructor)

- To make classes into resources for ideas and information useful for papers and discussion
- To introduce the diverse voices that make up American literature
- To remind students of major works while introducing less familiar writings
- To place readings in their historic, literary, and cultural contexts
- To introduce the vocabulary and conventions used to discuss literature
- To enable students to participate in discourse communities which value literature
- To encourage respect for varied responses in discussion and in essays
- To respond thoughtfully to students' written views as written in essays
- To allow class time for sharing those essays or, lacking that time, to summarize some of the best writing
- To reward preparation by allowing class time for discussion & quizzes
- To offer paper topics to encourage careful analysis and creativity
- To encourage students to welcome the ambiguity of the often challenging beauty in literature

Course Goals (for students)

- To identify many American authors
- To define “American literary tradition”
- To locate authors and works within the American literary tradition
- To learn to discuss characters and actions in the context of textual values.
- To identify literary “movements” and examples
- To enter into and continue discussion about American literature, to use appropriate vocabulary and conventions to analyze literary elements and themes
- To write essays that shape and extend class discussions, to incorporate research about literature when assigned, to incorporate American literature as support for a personal thesis, to write creatively in response to literature
- To understand literal meanings and consider implications in figurative readings
- To tolerate--perhaps to welcome--the lack of closure, the deliberate ambiguity found in complex literature.

GRADES: Three essays @15%-45%. Midterm 15%. Final 20%. Participation (attendance, quizzes, discussion) =20%.

ATTENDANCE: Each absence beyond three may lower your final grade by 1/3. Your fifth absence, for example, might lower your final grade from a B to a C+.

All grades for participation, quizzes, tests, and papers will be assigned at the discretion of the instructor.

Quizzes may not be made up. They may cover assigned readings from any previous day, all material discussed or viewed in class, and material from short lectures. Lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Reading and Discussion schedule: To understand historical context and literary movements, study the assigned materials after studying the headnotes for the periods and for the authors themselves, even if these are not specifically listed on the assignment list. We might not discuss all of these headnotes, but you will be responsible for them on quizzes and tests. Therefore, you should ask about any parts which you find difficult to understand. You may ask orally in class or in writing by handing the instructor your question on a 3 x 5 card at the start of class.

Please follow the Moravian College policy on original work. Do not plagiarize.

#### Assignment Schedule

Week 1: Puritanism, especially Anne Bradstreet, Edward Taylor, and Jonathan Edwards

Week 2: The Enlightenment: especially Benjamin Franklin, Phillis Wheatley

Week 3: Romanticism and Transcendentalism: especially Washington Irving, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry David Thoreau

Week 4: Romanticism: especially Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Herman Melville

Week 5: Romanticism & Slavery: Harriet Jacobs & Frederick Douglass

Week 6: Romanticism to Realism, especially Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson

Week 7: Realists and Regionalists, especially Mark Twain, Booker T. Washington, Henry James

Week 8: Realists and Regionalists, especially Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, Charles Chesnut, and Edith Wharton

Week 9: Literary Renaissance, especially Robert Frost, Susan Glaspell, T. S. Eliot

Week 10: Literary Renaissance: especially Amy Lowell, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams AND A Literature of Social and Cultural Change, especially Eugene O'Neill, Claude McKay, and Edna St. Vincent Millay

Week 11: Crosscurrents, the Jazz Age and the Harlem Renaissance, especially Langston Hughes, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway

Week 12: Second World War and Its Aftermath, especially Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Hayden, Gwendolyn Brooks, Robert Lowell, Ralph Ellison, Bernard Malamud, and Flannery O'Connor

Week 13: WW II and Its Aftermath (cont.) especially John Barth, John Updike, and James Wright

Week 14: A New Century Begins, especially Rita Dove, Cathy Song Tim O'Brien, Amy Tan, and Louise Erdrich