

## Liverpool John Moores University

Title: American Classics  
Status: Definitive  
Code: **4019ENGLIS** (118083)  
Version Start Date: 01-08-2014

Owning School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science  
Teaching School/Faculty: Humanities and Social Science

Team	Leader
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**Academic Level:** FHEQ4      **Credit Value:** 24.00      **Total Delivered Hours:** 93.00

**Total Learning Hours:** 240      **Private Study:** 147

### Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Standard Year Long

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	26.000
Online	24.000
Seminar	39.000
Tutorial	2.000

**Grading Basis:** 40 %

### Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Essay	as1	introduction to new edition of given text 1000 words	20.0	
Essay	as2	1500 words critical response	40.0	
Exam	exam	exam 2 hours	40.0	2.00

### Aims

1. To introduce arriving first year students to a sample of American literature and key critical approaches that will be developed on the degree;
2. To problematise the idea of the 'classic' work of literature, and explore the status of such books in American culture as a whole;
3. To give students practice in different modes of reading and critical analysis.

## Learning Outcomes

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 articulate an independent response to given works of literature informed by a knowledge of historical contexts and critical perspectives
- 2 engage with debates about the role and status of reading in American culture
- 3 demonstrate a range of basic skills specific to the reading of literary texts.

## Learning Outcomes of Assessments

The assessment item list is assessed via the learning outcomes listed:

1000 words introduction	1
1500 critical response	2
exam - 2 hour	3

## Outline Syllabus

*The course begins with two weeks problematising the notion of the 'classic' literary work and exploring related issues to do with reading, literacy and canon formation. The following weeks across the year are divided into 3-4 week segments for the extended study of selected texts, under the same basic structure:*

*a) text: language and stylistic qualities*

*b) contexts: exploration of historical context through selected documents*

*c) critical histories: investigation of the text's rereading at different historical moments, the establishing of a history of rereading, and permutations in popular culture (eg film adaptation)*

## Learning Activities

Lectures, seminars, individual feedback consultations.

## References

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Bloom, H.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2000
<b>Title</b>	How to Read and Why

<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Fourth Estate
<b>ISBN</b>	1841150398

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Farr, C.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2004
<b>Title</b>	Reading Oprah: How Oprah's Book Club Changed the Way America Reads
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Albany: State University of New York Press
<b>ISBN</b>	0791462579

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Guillory, J.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	1995
<b>Title</b>	Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation Chicago
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	University of Chicago Press
<b>ISBN</b>	0226310442

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Lauter, P.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	1991
<b>Title</b>	Canons and Contexts New York
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Oxford University Press
<b>ISBN</b>	0195068327

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Nafisi, A.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2004
<b>Title</b>	Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	New York: Random House
<b>ISBN</b>	0375504907

<b>Course Material</b>	Website
<b>Author</b>	
<b>Publishing Year</b>	
<b>Title</b>	New York Times list of best recent American

	fiction: <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/21/books/fiction-25-years.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2006/05/21/books/fiction-25-years.html</a>
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	
<b>ISBN</b>	

<b>Course Material</b>	Book
<b>Author</b>	Gray, R.
<b>Publishing Year</b>	2011
<b>Title</b>	A Brief History of American Literature
<b>Subtitle</b>	
<b>Edition</b>	
<b>Publisher</b>	Oxford: Wiley Blackwell
<b>ISBN</b>	

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## Notes

Example syllabus:

Classics: introduction and discussion of canon-formation / the Great American Novel  
Mark Twain, Huckleberry Finn (1884)

a) text: voice and narration

b) context: slavery and race

c) critical histories: controversies over vulgarity and racism

Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937)

a) text: Southern black vernacular, narrative structure

b) context: Harlem Renaissance; Hurston and anthropology

c) critical histories: neglect and critical rediscovery

Reflections on black history in popular culture; canon formation from race / gender perspectives

Assessment:

1. Editor's Introduction (as if to a new edition), after Segment 1: 1000 words, 20%

2. Critical Response, after Segments 2 and 3: take-home test (1 week), 1500 words, 40%

3. Exam, after Segments 4, 5 and Conclusion: 2 questions in 2 hours, 40%