

Liverpool John Moores University

Title: National Arguments: 19th Century American Literature
Status: Definitive
Code: **5021ENGLIS** (117966)
Version Start Date: 01-08-2011

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

Team	Leader
Colin Harrison	Y

Academic Level: FHEQ5 **Credit Value:** 24.00 **Total Delivered Hours:** 46.00
Total Learning Hours: 240 **Private Study:** 194

Delivery Options

Course typically offered: Standard Year Long

Component	Contact Hours
Lecture	11.000
Online	12.000
Seminar	22.000
Tutorial	1.000

Grading Basis: 40 %

Assessment Details

Category	Short Description	Description	Weighting (%)	Exam Duration
Essay	AS2	Textual analysis, 1500 words	30.0	
Essay	AS3	Essay, 2500 words	60.0	
Report	AS1	Class contribution: 1x seminar introduction & 4x discussion board posts	10.0	

Aims

to provide an introduction to the literature of 19th century America, with reference to a range of forms from essays and speeches to poetry, short stories and the novel. to explore the relation between fictional representation and the social, cultural, and

historical conditions under which it is produced. to investigate the invention of a 'national literature' as well as the contesting of the idea of nationhood in literary culture.

Learning Outcomes

After completing the module the student should be able to:

- 1 Exercise judgement, using a repertoire of interpretative skills including textual analysis, to engage with published scholarship, and selective reference to historical material.
- 2 Analyse and evaluate the historical construction of ideas and values, and the dynamic relationship between cultural conditions and forms of representation.
- 3 Accept responsibility for acquiring and deploying the following personal skills: public presentation of ideas, co-operation with a group of peers, and communication in an appropriate register for an online discussion.

Learning Outcomes of Assessments

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

Textual analysis, 1500 words	1
Essay, 2500 words	2
Class contribution	3

Outline Syllabus

The syllabus covers a period roughly between the 1830s and 1900, and deals with the following related themes:

*The Discourse of Nationality: Emerson and definitions of "American" Literature
Public and Private Voices: Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson
Slavery as a National Problem: Harriet Beecher Stowe, Herman Melville
Changing identities for women: Harriet Jacobs, Kate Chopin*

The course will be taught largely through the week-to-week reading of primary texts: novels and short stories, poetry and essays. Key areas of concern within these blocks will be the relation between romance and realist representation; the "spaces" of literature (writing as a profession, gender and authorship / readership, the emergence of the "popular"); and the construction and representation of nationhood.

Learning Activities

Lectures, seminars, presentations, and group work; written textual analysis and essay.

References

Course Material	Book
Author	Bhabha, H.K.
Publishing Year	1990
Title	Nation and Narration
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Routledge
ISBN	0415014824

Course Material	Book
Author	Erkkila, B and Grossman, J, eds.
Publishing Year	1996
Title	Breaking Bounds
Subtitle	Whitman and American Cultural Studies
Edition	
Publisher	OUP
ISBN	019509350

Course Material	Book
Author	Jacobs, H.
Publishing Year	1861
Title	Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Norton 2001
ISBN	0393976378

Course Material	Book
Author	Melville, H.
Publishing Year	1970
Title	Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories.
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Penguin
ISBN	0140430296

Course Material	Book
Author	Stowe, H.B.
Publishing Year	1852
Title	Uncle Tom's Cabin.
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	Penguin 1981
ISBN	0140390030

Course Material	Book
Author	Tompkins, J.
Publishing Year	1985
Title	Sensational Designs
Subtitle	The Cultural Work of American Fiction
Edition	
Publisher	OUP
ISBN	0195041194

Course Material	Book
Author	Whalen, T.
Publishing Year	1999
Title	Edgar Allan Poe and the Masses
Subtitle	the Political Economy of Literature in Antebellum America
Edition	
Publisher	Princeton UP
ISBN	0691001995

Course Material	Book
Author	Wilson, I.G.
Publishing Year	2011
Title	Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Nationalism
Subtitle	
Edition	
Publisher	New York: Oxford University Press
ISBN	

Notes

'For it is not metres, but a metre-making argument, that makes a poem,' declared the American philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson. This module addresses his claim that American literature should be fashioned from indigenous materials rather than follow European traditions, looking at the way that writers such as Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Herman Melville and Harriet Beecher Stowe developed new forms of representation for a nation of growing power and confidence. At the same time, it examines some of the fiercely contested arguments about the nation itself – over slavery, race, the status of women, and the profession of writing under industrial capitalism.