INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor: Dr. Melissa M. Pennell, Professor of English  
Instructor Availability: Mon 11-12, Wed. 11-12 and 3:30 to 4:30, & by appointment  
Office Location and Telephone Number: O'Leary Library, Rm. 483, x. 44198  
E-mail: Melissa_Pennell@uml.edu

COURSE INFORMATION:

Course Number/Title/Credits: 42:282 American Literary Traditions, Sect. 202 (3 Credits)  
Meeting Time and Place: MW 2 to 3:15 p.m., O'Leary 500 M, South Campus  
Catalog Description: A survey of American literary history from early contact between Native American populations and European colonists through contemporary American writing.  
Prerequisites for the course: 42. 101 and 102--College Writing I and II  
Students for whom course is intended: English majors at the sophomore level and above who wish to fulfill a requirement in the major, students who may be considering an English major or minor (or an English concentration in the BLA program), or those who simply enjoy reading American literature. This course does not fulfill a Gen Ed requirement.

COURSE PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES:

Our purpose in reading, discussing, and writing about the selected texts is to develop a greater understanding of the changes that occur in American Literature from the time of the early English settlements of the 17th century to the mid-twentieth century. The course is designed to provide English majors with an understanding of the chronology of American literature, the major literary movements in which writers are often placed, and the various genres in which writers work. In addition, we will consider the interrelationship between American culture and American literature in order to analyze the ways in which American authors and poets sustain, evaluate, and critique the values that shape their world and the individual experiences about which they write.

Course Goals and Major Themes:

1. To explore briefly the literature of exploration and early encounters.

2. To note the emergence of genres important to American consciousness, including the captivity narrative, the jeremiad, and the slave narrative and to identify their components and characteristics.
3. To define the changes emerging during the transition from a “British” to an “American” sensibility from the period of the Revolution through the early nineteenth century.

4. To wrestle with the implications of slavery in American culture and the conflicts that emerge as abolition of slavery becomes a major social movement and moral cause.

5. To trace the transformation in poetic sensibilities that emerge in the work of Emerson and Whitman and to note how these transformations are embraced, modified, and challenged by poets who succeed them.

6. To identify the qualities of narrative technique as influenced by Romanticism, Realism, and Naturalism; to explore the impact of attitudes toward gender, race, class, and ethnicity on the literature of the late 19th and early 20th century.

7. To consider the shifts in culture and literary sensibility that usher in modernism; to sample the work of later modernists and a few post-modernists as they continue to experiment with style and form.

These concerns have influenced the selection of readings that appear on the syllabus and will shape the questions for exams.

This course is also designed to encourage students to develop or improve skills and habits of thought that will contribute to personal learning and to successful performance in other courses and/or disciplines. Thus students will be encouraged to:

--articulate observations clearly
--trace a thought to its logical conclusion in discussion and in written work
--read texts critically
--strengthen skills in close reading
--write organized and accurate responses to exam questions
--present thoughtful, analytical, well written essays that reflect critical reading

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES

1. This course relies upon class discussion and group discussion as well as lectures to cover material. You are responsible for any material assigned or discussed. Your attendance is important; if you miss class discussions and activities, you will find it difficult to prepare for exams and develop the material for your project/paper.

2. You are expected to read all of the assigned material. You are encouraged to keep a reading journal (this may be a section of your course notebook) to assist you in preparation for class and for papers. In this journal you should record your responses to characters, ideas you have about themes, insights you have about symbols, motifs, etc. You can also jot down questions you have as you are reading and that come to mind as you reflect upon material. This will help you make contributions to class discussion and be useful as you prepare your project/paper and review for exams.
3. Brief quizzes on assigned readings may be given at any time; these are intended to encourage completion of reading assignments and class attendance. There are no "make-ups" on these quizzes. Short response papers will also be assigned to help you prepare for class discussion. Response papers are due at the beginning of the next class period and will not be accepted outside class or as late submissions. Some response papers may be done as in-class writing.

4. There are two "hour" exams during the semester. Each exam includes a "short answer" section to test your knowledge of specific details, definitions, and concepts from readings and lectures as well as an essay question to test your ability to synthesize ideas and analyze the readings as you develop your response. The tests will occur on February 19 and March 31. There will be a final exam given during the exam period. It will follow the same format as the "hour" exams and will cover the last “third” of the course material. The date and location for the exam will be announced on the registrar's exam schedule.

5. There is a 5 to 7 page formal paper due on April 25. Detailed instructions will be distributed after we complete the first hour exam.

6. In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will provide accommodation for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Their office is on North campus, in Cumnock Hall C6, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: Disability@uml.edu. This documentation is confidential. I cannot provide accommodations without an official notification.

7. I assume that all students in my classes are adults and will behave accordingly. This means exhibiting professional and respectful behavior that is conducive to a beneficial learning environment in the classroom. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: text messaging, listening to music, cell phone use (other than the campus alert system), late arrivals, early departures, use of laptops for other than class purposes, disrespectful comments or behavior, intentional disruptions, failure to follow faculty directives. Students in violation of these standards may be asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

GRADING POLICIES:
Your grade will be determined as follows:
- participation, response papers, wiki posts & quizzes = 10%
- first test = 20%
- second test = 20%
- project/paper = 30%
- final exam = 20%

Texts for Course:
McMichael et al. Concise Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed. (Longman)

Additional materials supplied on our wiki at http://amer-lit-studies-resources.wiki.uml.edu/home
COURSE CALENDAR: Approximate Discussion and Evaluation Schedule for Course
(The schedule may be adjusted as we progress through material)

Wk 1
Jan 22
Intro to Course

Wk 2
Jan 27 - 29
Some basics on the Reformation, the Puritans, the Errand
Early Encounters and Settlements/The Importance of History

Read: Smith, History of Virginia, Third Book, Ch. 2
Bradford, Plymouth Plantation, Ch. 4, 9, 10, 11, 12,

Genre: Captivity Narrative
Read: Rowlandson, “A Narrative”

Wk 3
Feb 3 - 5
Puritan Poetry: Bradstreet and Wigglesworth

Read: Bradstreet (all in text except “Contemplations” and “Flesh and Spirit”)
Read: Wigglesworth: poems on wiki

Genre: The Jeremiad

Religious Revivals and “Great Awakenings”
Read: Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands”

Wk 4
Feb 10
“American” Identities

Read: Jefferson’s Notes on the State of Virginia, from Query XVIII and XIX
Crevecoeur: “Letter III”
Adams, “Dissertation on the Canon and Feudal Law” (on wiki)

Feb 12
“American” Identities
Read: Franklin, Autobiography, Part I

Wk 5
Feb 17
UML Closed – Presidents’ Day

Feb 18
The Issue of Slavery, Part I

Genre: The Slave Narrative
Read: Excerpts from Equiano (on wiki)

Read: Wheatley, poems in text
Crevecoeur, Letter IX
Feb 19

FIRST HOUR TEST – February 19

Wk 6
Feb 24-26

An Emerging American Genre: the Short Story (Part I/Romance)
Read: Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”
    Poe, “Fall of the House of Usher”
    Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”

Emerson and Transcendentalism
Read: “Self-Reliance” and excerpt from “The Poet” (on wiki)

Wk 7
March 3-5

Transcendental Experiments
Read: Thoreau, Walden, Ch 1 (to bottom of 804), Ch. 2, and Conclusion

The Issue of Slavery, Part II
Read: Stowe, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Ch. 1 and Ch. 7
    Douglas, Narrative, Ch. 9
    Jacobs, Incidents, Ch 10, Ch. 41

Wk 8
March 10-12

Two Great Poetic Voices
Read: Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” selections from Drum Taps
    and “When Lilacs”

    Dickinson, list will be given

March 15-23

Spring Break

Wk 9
March 24-26

The Short Story (Part II/Realism)
Read: Freeman, “New England Nun”
    Howells, “Editha”
    Twain, “Story of the Bad Little Boy”

The Short Story (Part III/Naturalism)
    Norris, “A Deal in Wheat”
    Crane, “The Open Boat

Wk 10
Mar 31-Apr 2

SECOND HOUR TEST – March 31

Toward Modern Poetry
Read: Frost, “After Apple-Picking” and “Birches”
    Sandburg, “Chicago”
Wk 11
Apr 7-9  
**The Short Story (Part IV/Toward Modern Fiction)**

**Read:**  
James, *The Jolly Corner*  
Cather, “Paul’s Case”  
Wharton, *The Other Two*

**Note 4/9:** Last day to drop with W

**The Harlem Renaissance**  
**Read:** McKay, “White Houses”  
Hughes, “Aunt Sue’s Stories,” “I, Too,” and “Harlem”  
Cullen, “From the Dark Tower” and “Scottsboro”

Wk 12
Apr 14-16  
**The Proponents of “High Modernism”**

**Read:** Eliot, “Prufrock”  
Pound: “Salutation,” “A Pact,” and “The River-Merchant’s Wife”

**The Short Story Part V/Modernist Fiction**

**Read:** Fitzgerald, “Winter Dreams”  
Faulkner, “Barn Burning”

Wk 13
Apr 21  
UML closed – Patriots’ Day

April 23  
**Modern and Mid-20th Century Poetry**

Read:  
Williams, “The Red Wheel Barrow,” “Between Walls,” and  
“Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”  
Bishop, “The Armadillo” and “One Art”  
Lowell, “Skunk Hour”

April 25  
**Note Friday class meeting!**  
**Mid-Century Poetry and Beyond**

Reading selections TBA  

**Paper due**

Wk 14
Apr 28-30  
**The Short Story (Part V/Mid-20th Century Fiction)**

Steinbeck, “Chrysanthemums”  
Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”

**A Taste of Post-Modernism**

Reading selections TBA

Wk 15
TBA  
**Final Exam**
Additional course information:

Emerson says: “There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.” Needless to say, plagiarism and cheating violate this principle and will not be tolerated. Please see the UML catalog for additional explanations of academic integrity and academic dishonesty and the penalties that may be incurred:

http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm

A helpful resource on documentation and style

The Purdue Owl: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl