

**I. CATALOG DESCRIPTIONS:**

- A. Department Information:  
Division: Humanities  
Department: English  
Course ID: ENGL 260  
Course title: American Literature: To the Mid-1800's  
Units: 3  
Lecture: 3 Hours  
Prerequisite: English 101
- B. Catalog and Schedule Description:  
Reading of representative literary works of significant writers to illustrate the development of literary and intellectual development of American thought from colonial times to the mid-1800's.

**II. NUMBER OF TIMES THE COURSE MAY BE TAKEN: One**

**III. EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS:**

Upon completion of this course a student will be able to:

- A. Read, discuss, and write about the poetry, drama, and fiction in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century American Literature.  
B. Analyze literary works in relationship to their historical contexts.  
C. Read and analyze critical essays on individual authors and works.  
D. Identify literary forms and elements in reading selections,  
E. Write essays that analyze the literary forms and elements

**IV. CONTENT:**

- A. Literary periods
1. Early America (to 1750)
    - a) Concepts of grace and salvation
    - b) Vision of a utopia or New Jerusalem
    - c) Puritan work ethic
    - d) Democratic principles of the May Flower Compact and New England town meetings
    - e) Plain literary style
  2. Reason and Revolution (1750-1800)
    - a) The idea of representative government
    - b) The writings of John Locke
    - c) Political, religious, and economic freedom.
    - d) The idea of separation of church and state
    - e) The Industrial Revolution
  3. Native Grounds (1800-1840)
    - a) Nationalism
    - b) Neoclassicism
    - c) Romanticism
  4. New England Renaissance (1840-1855)
    - a) Transcendentalism
    - b) Intuition versus reason
    - c) Learning from and living in harmony with nature
    - d) Reforming of society
- B. Literary types and concepts
1. Literary genres: poetry, drama, fiction, journals, essays, histories, and sermons.
  2. Period ideas: Puritanism, the Age of Reason, Romanticism, and Transcendentalism.

- C. Literary forms and elements:
  - 1. Narrative: Diaries, journals, letters, descriptions, autobiography, editorials, aphorisms, short story, novel, plot, character sketch, persuasive essay, and personal essay.
  - 2. Poetry: Allusion, controlling imagery, simile and metaphor, heroic couplet, meter, alliteration and assonance, sonnet, sestina, free verse, lyric, and epic.
  - 3. Drama: Social comedy, historical tragedy, sentimental and domestic drama, and melodrama.
  - 4. Literary elements: Flat and round characters, character motivation, point of view, conflict, irony, plot development, theme, symbol.
- D. Composition skills:
  - 1. Develop vocabulary skills and an appreciation of words by examining diction and style.
  - 2. Write compositions that analyze literary elements.
  - 3. React creatively to reading selections by writing journal entries and descriptions, or explanations of an abstract idea.

**V. METHODS OF INSTRUCTION:**

- A. Lecture/discussion – Reading selections will be examined both formally and historically. Students will be asked to discuss period concepts and specific literary forms and devices in selected works.
- B. Audio Visual – Many major novels have been made into successful films (e.g. Scarlet Letter, Last of the Mohicans, and Moby Dick). Hence, films and videos are useful tools that not only make the literary work more visual, but also lead to discussion concerning the relationship of film to novel.

**VI. TYPICAL ASSIGNMENTS:**

- A. After reading and discussing selections in terms of literary forms and elements, students will be asked to write about the author and his times or works. For example, assignments will range from citing evidence defending or attacking a literary opinion to analyzing a character based on his/her actions. Also, students will be asked to compare and contrast a specific theme in two or more author's works.
  - 1. Reading – Find three passages that reveal the essence of Puritanism in William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation.
  - 2. Writing – In three to five paragraphs, analyze the hero of the Deerslayer by examining a quotation.
  - 3. Research – Study the gothic novel to learn its history and its place in the Romantic movement.
  - 4. Film – Be prepared to discuss the following question: How does the film The Scarlet Letter differ from the novel? Have the film maker's decisions significantly altered Hawthorne's message?

**VII. EVALUATION(S):**

- A. Weekly assignments will be given requiring students to summarize the main idea of specific reading selections.
- B. Reading quizzes will be given for factual information.
- C. Unit exams are primarily essay and will be given at the end of each unit to determine the student's ability to interpret the author's intent, to extend the meaning of the literary work, and to establish one's viewpoint.
- D. Term papers will be evaluated primarily on the student's ability to support or develop his/her thesis. For example, read and report on other views of the new American nation, such as those expressed by Alexis de Tocqueville, Francois-Rene Chateaubriand, and Jean de Crevecoeur. Then compare America today with the views expressed by these three Europeans who visited the new republic in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century.

San Bernardino Valley College  
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**VIII. TYPICAL TEXT(S):**

The American Tradition of Literature, Bradley, et al., W. W. Norton and Co, 1992.  
The American Tradition in Literature 8<sup>th</sup> ed., George Perkins, McGraw Hill, 1994.  
The Heath Anthology of American Literature 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Paul Lanter, Houghton Muffin Co., 1998.

**IX. OTHER SUPPLIES REQUIRED OF STUDENTS: None**