

REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO USE W-DESIGNATION

LSC # 197
Action _____

COVER SHEET: Request for Approval to Use W-Designation

TYPE I. PROFESSOR COMMITMENT

- () Professor Matt Willen Phone 74879
() Writing Workshop? (If not at IUP, where? when?) See attached
() Proposal for one W-course (see instructions below)
() Agree to forward syllabi for subsequently offered W-courses? Yes

TYPE II. DEPARTMENT COURSE

- () Department Contact Person _____ Phone _____
() Course Number/Title _____
() Statement concerning departmental responsibility
() Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

TYPE III. SPECIFIC COURSE AND SPECIFIC PROFESSOR(S)

- () Professor(s) _____ Phone _____
() Course Number/Title _____
() Proposal for this W-course (see instructions below)

SIGNATURES:

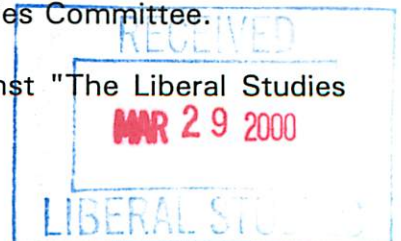
Professor(s) [Signature] 3/21/00
Department Chairperson [Signature] 3/27/00
College Dean [Signature] 3/28/2000
Director of Liberal Studies [Signature] 4-20-00

COMPONENTS OF A PROPOSAL FOR A WRITING-INTENSIVE COURSE:

- I. "Writing Summary"--one or two pages explaining how writing is used in the course. First, explain any distinctive characteristics of the content or students which would help the Liberal Studies Committee understand your summary. Second, list and explain the types of writing activities; be especially careful to explain (1) what each writing activity is intended to accomplish as well as the (2) amount of writing, (3) frequency and number of assignments, and (4) whether there are opportunities for revision. If the activity is to be graded, indicate (5) evaluation standards and (6) percentage contribution to the student's final grade.
- II. Copy of the course syllabus.
- III. Two or three samples of assignment sheets, instructions, or criteria concerning writing that are given to students. Limit: 4 pages. (Single copies of longer items, if essential to the proposal, may be submitted to be passed among LSC members and returned to you.)

Please number all pages. Provide one copy to Liberal Studies Committee.

Before you submit: Have you double-checked your proposal against "The Liberal Studies Committee's Most Frequently Asked Questions"?



Dr. Matt Willen
Proposal for Approval to Use W-Designation—Professor Commitment

Re: Writing Workshop

While I have not completed a writing workshop offered at I.U.P., I would argue that I am qualified to teach w-designated courses on the basis of the fact that I hold both a Ph.D. and M.A. in English with emphases in Composition. My graduate and post-graduate work have both revolved around the study of how writing is used in various disciplinary and cultural contexts and around the study of how to integrate writing in courses across the curriculum to facilitate learning (at Pitt, for instance, I served on the College Writing Committee, which reviewed and approved proposals for w-designated courses).

Summary of Writing Assignments for EN 212 - WILLEN

Assignment	Pages	# of Assignments	Graded (yes/no)	Revisions (yes/no)	% of Final Grade
Reading Responses	15-30 (1-2 each)	15	Y	NO	20
Difficulty papers	4-6 (2-3 each)	2	Y	optional	15
Exams	5-10	2	Y	no	25
Critical Essay	10	1 collaborative	Y	Y	40

WRITING SUMMARY – EN 212 AMERICAN LITERATURE: BEGINNINGS TO 1900

EN 212, American Literature: Beginnings to 1900 is proposed for identification as a “W” designated course. The course is taught each semester and is a required course for the English major. It is not listed as a Liberal Studies Elective. Most students in the class are sophomore and junior English majors; class size is limited to 25.

There are four types of writing which occur in this class:

I) READING RESPONSES:

These are one to two page papers written in response to questions on the reading which ask students to identify specific passages for discussion and do one of two kinds of work:

- 1) To explain how a text is representative of writing (and associated assumptions, values and interests) of a particular historical period. Students may be asked, for instance, to explain the ways in which William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation” embodies certain tenets and beliefs that may characterize the Puritan Period. The objectives with this sort of assignment are (a) to help students apply information presented during class lecture to their reading of specific texts and (b) to foster close readings of texts.
- 2) To explain how one text may be written in response to another from the same or different period. Students may be asked to comment on how Thoreau’s “Walden” might be read as a response to Ben Franklin’s Autobiography in terms of form and assumptions about the perfectibility of humans. The objectives here are (a) to help students learn to read “intertextually” by putting several texts in conversation with one another (something many students have difficulty with) and (b) to help them understand the ways in which American literature is organized.

Students complete one of these each week for a total of fifteen, and they are graded on a scale of 0 (not completed), 1 (completed quickly with little thought) and 2 (completed carefully and thoughtfully). Students must identify and discuss specific passages to complete these successfully. 20% of grade.

II) DIFFICULTY PAPERS:

Each semester, there are several readings with which students have a great deal of difficulty (Thoreau, Whitman and Emerson are key culprits here), and students often assume that the problem stems from their lack of ability as readers (“I don’t know; I just don’t understand!”). The difficulty paper provides the student with the opportunity to identify and discuss precisely what it is about how a text is written that makes it particularly difficult. Students are asked to puzzle over and speculate how that aspect of the text might be understood as something done deliberately by the writer, to get you to read in a certain way. For this sort of assignment, students grapple with specific passages and learn to see the difficulties presented by a text not as point of frustration where they stop reading but as a point where they start to work closely with a text, naming the source of difficulty and trying to understand it. Difficulty papers are two to three pages long. Students complete two of these in response to readings of their choice. If they would like to complete more than two of these, they may do so in lieu of reading responses. They are graded on a scale of 50 points on the basis of how carefully and closely students work with passages and on the extent to which they accomplish the tasks outlined in the assignment description (see attached). Students may choose to revise these in response to my comments. 15% of grade.

III) EXAMS:

Students take two written examinations in essay format during the semester, one at mid-term and one during the final exam period. Each focuses on the periods of American literature covered during a seven-week portion of the term, with the final asking students to work on a comprehensive question in which they reflect on the organization of and general transformations in American Literature. The exams serve the purposes of evaluating student progress and of providing students with the opportunity to synthesize and review material from the class. Questions are of two types: one which asks students to place an anonymous passage within a particular period of American literature and to discuss why they elected to place it there; and the other, to identify the author of an anonymous passage which we have focused on in class discussion and to explain how the passage is representative of the author's purpose in writing the piece. Several passages are distributed in class before the exam period, from which a few are selected. Students are evaluated equally on the basis how comprehensively they discuss passages and on the clarity and composition of their responses. We discuss strategies for writing essay exams in class. 25% of grade.

IV) CRITICAL ESSAY AND PRESENTATION:

One of the difficulties with teaching 300 years of American literature in a single semester is covering the important book-length works along with all of the shorter pieces because of the amount of time it takes to read and study entire books. The critical essay and presentation project provides a way of negotiating this difficulty by allowing students to focus specifically on an author and a work of interest to them that we are not able to discuss in class. Teams of two students write a ten-page critical essay in which they study a long, book-length work by an author of particular interest to them. During the semester teams provide twenty to thirty minute presentations on the works and authors they have been studying. The objective here is to allow students to develop their skills in writing critical essays (we look at several samples during the semester to give students a sense of how this sort of essay is constructed, do a peer review workshop, and discuss revision). While these essays are not research projects but interpretive, students are expected to investigate relevant historical information, such as the author's biography and how the work was reviewed and received when first published. Students select a topic by week three, bring completed drafts to class at week ten for peer review, submit "final" papers to me for preliminary evaluation at week twelve, and resubmit revisions by the final exam period. Essays are evaluated on the basis of the degree to which they are "critical" rather than reportage and on their presentation in written form. 40% of grade for both essay and presentation (see attached guidelines).

Course Syllabus

Catalog Description

En212 American Literature: Beginnings to 1900

Prerequisites: none

3c—01-3sh

A survey of American Literature covering the major movements, authors and works from settlement and colonization to the period of American realism.

Course Objectives:

- A. To introduce you to and to help you become familiar with some of the central texts, figures and literary movements of American Literature
- B. To provide you with an introduction to the historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts that influence the work of American writers prior to 1900
- C. To develop your writing skills in a manner that allows you to become stronger, more careful and critical readers of American Literature

Course Outline

- A. The Literature of Settlement and Exploration (2 weeks)
- B. The Literature of Colonization (3 weeks)
- C. The American Enlightenment (3 weeks)
- D. Romanticism and Sentimentalism (3 weeks)
 - American Romanticism
 - Transcendentalism
 - The Sentimental Novel
 - The Slave Narrative
- E. The Realist Period (4 weeks)
 - Regionalism
 - Realism
 - Naturalism

Evaluation Methods:

Final course grade is calculated on the basis of the following:

- | | |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 25% | Two major examinations (mid-term and final) consisting of short essay responses identifying periods and authors of specific passages. |
| 20% | Fifteen Reading Responses of 1 to 2 pages in response to questions about the readings. |
| 15% | Two Difficulty Papers of 2 pages in which you explore the difficulties presented to a reader by two of the readings over the semester. |
| 40% | Critical Essay (10 pages) and Presentation (20 minutes) on a book-length work of American literature. |

Required Texts:

Baym, et al. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol. 1

Nagel and Quirk, The Portable American Realism Reader.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Sample Topics for Reading Responses

- 1) How might Philip Freneau's "Religion of Nature" be read as an extension or practice of the philosophy that Thomas Paine articulates in his "Theology?"
- 2) Compare the ways in which John Winthrop and Jonathon Edwards use metaphor in their respective sermons? How might you explain the differences with reference to the historical periods within which they write?
- 3) In what ways does Thoreau's Walden appear to be written as a response to the philosophy of self-improvement outlined in Ben Franklin's Autobiography?
- 4) How does Ben Franklin's Autobiography exhibit certain philosophical tenets of the Enlightenment?
- 5) Based on your reading of naturalist writers Frank Norris and Jack London, what would you say is the difference between naturalism and realism? Is naturalism a new literary movement or something derivative of realism?

Sample Comprehensive Questions from Final Examination:

- 1) In the first piece we read this semester, the excerpt on "American Literature" from Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman compared literature to little ships "compassing what measureless values of reminiscence, contemporary portraitures, manners, idioms and beliefs, with deepest inference, hint and thought, to tie and touch forever the old, new body, and the old, new soul!" Having been a passenger on one of these ships for the past fifteen weeks, I would like you now to comment on its cargo. What "values," "manners," "idioms and beliefs" seem to you to be carried through the ages, seem to be those which tie all or most of the works we have traversed this semester together. What, in other words, is so American about American literature? Please be sure to refer to specific pieces, although it is not necessary to cite passages from them.
- 2) One of the things we have discussed throughout this semester is the notion of influence, how the literary traditions that have become prominent at one time or another have not simply appeared but have been crafted in response to values, assumptions and beliefs that preceded them and shaped the literature from another period. For this piece, select one of the pieces that we have read this semester that seems most interesting or most entrenched in tradition and history, and place it in the context of pieces that either precede or follow it. That is to say, please take the piece and discuss how the values and/or assumptions that it embraces have been written in response to and/or are responded to by other pieces from other periods.

Guidelines for Writing Difficulty Papers

Undoubtedly, throughout the semester you will encounter texts that you find opaque, impossible to get through and make sense of. In some cases this may be due to the fact of your cultural and historical distance from the piece (you probably don't organize your life around the same assumptions about the nature of the world and morality as, for instance, many Puritan writers did); some of it may stem from the composition of the piece itself, how its sentences are crafted, how it progresses from one idea to the next; some of it may stem from your experience as a reader with different types of texts. The purpose of the difficulty paper is to allow you identify, name and puzzle over the sources of those difficulties, to see how they might serve as a starting point for developing a complex reading of a text. You should feel free in these papers to speculate, to be "wrong". But you should also be sure to demonstrate that you have thought carefully about the way a text is composed and crafted.

In your papers you should do the following:

- 1) Name precisely what sort of difficulty are you experiencing and what precisely about the text presents that difficulty to you? You will not be given credit if you simply state that you are having difficulty "understanding what the author means," because that formulation of the problem implies that you are paying attention only to what a writer says and not to how he or she says it. You will need to think about how you are reading the text and how that way of reading is resisted by the way the text is constructed. You might begin by asking yourself, "what do I expect of this text?," and consider how your expectations are not being met. Or you might allow yourself to get frustrated and then ask what precisely is it about the way that a text is written that frustrates you.
- 2) Identify at least two specific passages to incorporate into your paper which illustrate that feature of the text that poses a problem. In this case, you will need to quote directly from the text, and you will probably need to quote several sentences.
- 3) Discuss how the passages you cite are similar in the way they are constructed or the way they operate. Here you are attempting to talk about the way the passages have been crafted or written and attempting to come to terms with the method or logic behind the way this writing works.
- 4) Speculate about how what you have discovered that a text is trying to do might complement its subject matter, what the author might be trying to say. What kind of reader does the text want?

Papers should be 2 to 3 typed pages, double-spaced. You will be graded on the extent to which you complete the tasks outlined above, and on the extent to which you show that you have worked closely with specific passages from the text. You may choose to revise these in response to my comments for a better grade.

Guidelines for Critical Essay and Presentation Project

One of the difficulties associated with covering three hundred years of literature in fifteen weeks stems from trying to read the important book-length works along with all the important shorter works. In order to give you the opportunity to become acquainted with important long works of American Literature, without holding everyone responsible for reading each, I will ask teams of two to select and read an important book from American Literature. Each team will be responsible for reading and researching the book and its author, composing a critical paper that discusses both, and presenting the work to class for about half of a period. I have provided a list to choose from below. If there is another book you are interested in which is not on the list, let me know and we'll see if it will work. You should choose a teammate and select a book promptly. You will need to select a topic by week three and prepare a draft by week ten of the semester. Preliminary drafts are due to me for evaluation by week thirteen. You may choose to revise in response to my comments by the final exam period.

Your critical essay should provide a discussion of the author's project or commentary on American culture by paying attention to three facets of the book and its reception: (1) how the piece participates in or responds to the assumptions, values and beliefs that are characteristic to a particular period of American literature; (2) how the book was received and reviewed by "the public" when it was first published; and (3) what the author's status in American culture might suggest about how s/he constructs the text. Note: you are being asked here to discuss the book critically by attending to how it is shaped by both its author and the culture in which s/he writes. We will look at examples of critical essays throughout the semester which you might use as model approaches. We will do a revision workshop at week ten in which you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on your project from your classmates, and you will submit a preliminary version of the final paper for my comments by week twelve. Revisions will be due at the final exam period. You will be graded on (1) how well you represent the work historically and (2) on the composition of your essay (each worth 40% of the total project grade).

For your oral presentation, you should provide the class with handouts that include biographical information on the author, some form of summary of the book (preferably using a chart or graphics that appeal to people's visual sense), and a passage or two from the book which seem to you to be representative of how it is written and to be important to understanding it. You should provide a discussion of the book's importance, how it fits into the literary categories we have discussed, how it relates to the other works we are looking at, and you should offer a reading or interpretation of the passages you provide. Please do not read your essays. I encourage you to use visual aids and to take creative approaches to presenting the information to class. Each group will have 20-30 minutes for their presentation. You will be graded on how well you render the book accessible to the members of the class based on their evaluations of your presentation and handouts (20% of total project grade).

Possible Books From Which To Choose

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. William Bartram | <u>Travels.</u> |
| 2. Susanna Rowson | <u>Charlotte.</u> |
| 3. R. W. Emerson | <u>Nature.</u> |
| 4. Herman Melville | <u>Billy Budd.</u> |
| 5. Harriet Beecher Stowe | <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin.</u> |
| 6. Frederick Douglass | <u>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.</u> |
| 7. Mark Twain | <u>Roughing It.</u> |
| 8. Henry James | <u>Daisy Miller.</u> |
| 9. Kate Chopin | <u>The Awakening.</u> |
| 10. Edith Wharton | <u>Ethan Frome.</u> |
| 11. Stephen Crane | <u>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets.</u> |

Guidelines for Critical Essay and Presentation Project

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Your critical essay should provide a discussion of the author's project or commentary on American culture by paying attention to three facets of the book and its reception: (1) how the piece participates in or responds to the assumptions, values and beliefs that are characteristic to a particular period of American literature; (2) how the book was received and reviewed by "the public" when it was first published; and (3) what the author's status in American culture might suggest about how s/he constructs the text. Note: you are being asked here to discuss the book critically by attending to how it is shaped by both its author and the culture in which s/he writes. We will look at examples of critical essays throughout the semester which you might use as model approaches. We will do a revision workshop at week ten in which you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on your project from your classmates, and you will submit a preliminary version of the final paper for my comments by week twelve. Revisions will be due at the final exam period. You will be graded on (1) how well you represent the work historically and (2) on the composition of your essay (each worth 40% of the total project grade).

For your oral presentation, you should provide the class with handouts that include biographical information on the author, some form of summary of the book (preferably using a chart or graphics that appeal to people's visual sense), and a passage or two from the book which seem to you to be representative of how it is written and to be important to understanding it. You should provide a discussion of the book's importance, how it fits into the literary categories we have discussed, how it relates to the other works we are looking at, and you should offer a reading or interpretation of the passages you provide. Please do not read your essays. I encourage you to use visual aids and to take creative approaches to presenting the information to class. Each group will have 20-30 minutes for their presentation. You will be graded on how well you render the book accessible to the members of the class based on their evaluations of your presentation and handouts (20% of total project grade).

Grading: You will be awarded team grades on the project that are based on the total project grade. I expect that team members will participate equally on the project and thus deserve to receive equal credit. However, because inequities in group work are known to occur, I will ask you to complete self and team evaluations in which you document and estimate the percentage of time you and your partner have spent on a project. I will ask you to complete one of these evaluations around mid-term. If there is a discrepancy of more than 10% of effort put into the project, I will ask to conference with you and your teammate to address any problems. I will ask you to complete another of these at the end of the term, if at this point the difference in time spent on the project exceeds 10%, I will again conference with team members and adjust the project grade individually in accordance with the time spent on the project. If at any point you are concerned about a discrepancy in effort put into the project and are concerned about how this will affect your grade, you should inform me immediately.

WRITING SUMMARY – EN 212 AMERICAN LITERATURE: BEGINNINGS TO 1900

EN 212, American Literature: Beginnings to 1900 is proposed for identification as a “W” designated course. The course is taught each semester and is a required course for the English major. It is not listed as a Liberal Studies Elective. Most students in the class are sophomore and junior English majors; class size is limited to 25.

There are four types of writing which occur in this class:

I) READING RESPONSES:

These are one to two page papers written in response to questions on the reading which ask students to identify specific passages for discussion and do one of two kinds of work:

- 1) To explain how a text is representative of writing (and associated assumptions, values and interests) of a particular historical period. Students may be asked, for instance, to explain the ways in which William Bradford’s “Of Plymouth Plantation” embodies certain tenets and beliefs that may characterize the Puritan Period. The objectives with this sort of assignment are (a) to help students apply information presented during class lecture to their reading of specific texts and (b) to foster close readings of texts.
- 2) To explain how one text may be written in response to another from the same or different period. Students may be asked to comment on how Thoreau’s “Walden” might be read as a response to Ben Franklin’s Autobiography in terms of form and assumptions about the perfectibility of humans. The objectives here are (a) to help students learn to read “intertextually” by putting several texts in conversation with one another (something many students have difficulty with) and (b) to help them understand the ways in which American literature is organized.

Students complete one of these each week for a total of fifteen, and they are graded on a scale of 0 (not completed), 1 (completed quickly with little thought) and 2 (completed carefully and thoughtfully). Students must identify and discuss specific passages to complete these successfully. 20% of grade.

II) DIFFICULTY PAPERS:

Each semester, there are several readings with which students have a great deal of difficulty (Thoreau, Whitman and Emerson are key culprits here), and students often assume that the problem stems from their lack of ability as readers (“I don’t know; I just don’t understand!”). The difficulty paper provides the student with the opportunity to identify and discuss precisely what it is about how a text is written that makes it particularly difficult. Students are asked to puzzle over and speculate how that aspect of the text might be understood as something done deliberately by the writer, to get you to read in a certain way. For this sort of assignment, students grapple with specific passages and learn to see the difficulties presented by a text not as point of frustration where they stop reading but as a point where they start to work closely with a text, naming the source of difficulty and trying to understand it. Difficulty papers are two to three pages long. Students complete two of these in response to readings of their choice. If they would like to complete more than two of these, they may do so in lieu of reading responses; however, difficulty papers written in lieu of reading responses will be graded as reading responses. They are graded on a scale of 50 points on the basis of how carefully and closely students work with passages and on the extent to which they accomplish the tasks outlined in the assignment description (see attached). Students may choose to revise these in response to my comments for a stronger grade. 15% of grade.

III) EXAMS:

Students take two written examinations in essay format during the semester, one at mid-term and one during the final exam period. Each focuses on the periods of American literature covered during a seven-week portion of the term, with the final asking students to work on a comprehensive question in which they reflect on the organization of and general transformations in American Literature. The exams serve the purposes of evaluating student progress and of providing students with the opportunity to synthesize and review material from the class. Questions are of two types: one which asks students to place an anonymous passage within a particular period of American literature and to discuss why they elected to place it there; and the other, to identify the author of an anonymous passage which we have focused on in class discussion and to explain how the passage is representative of the author's purpose in writing the piece. Several passages are distributed in class before the exam period, from which a few are selected. Students are evaluated equally on the basis how comprehensively they discuss passages and on the clarity and composition of their responses. We discuss strategies for writing essay exams in class. 25% of grade.

IV) CRITICAL ESSAY AND PRESENTATION:

One of the difficulties with teaching 300 years of American literature in a single semester is covering the important book-length works along with all of the shorter pieces because of the amount of time it takes to read and study entire books. The critical essay and presentation project provides a way of negotiating this difficulty by allowing students to focus specifically on an author and a work of interest to them that we are not able to discuss in class. Teams of two students write a ten-page critical essay in which they study a long, book-length work by an author of particular interest to them. During the semester teams provide twenty to thirty minute presentations on the works and authors they have been studying. The objective here is to allow students to develop their skills in writing critical essays (we look at several samples during the semester to give students a sense of how this sort of essay is constructed, do a peer review workshop, and discuss revision). While these essays are not research projects but interpretive, students are expected to investigate relevant historical information, such as the author's biography and how the work was reviewed and received when first published. Students select a topic by week three, bring completed drafts to class at week ten for peer review, submit "final" papers to me for preliminary evaluation at week twelve, and resubmit revisions by the final exam period. Essays are evaluated on the basis of the degree to which they are "critical" rather than reportage and on their presentation in written form. Team members will be awarded individual grades for their project which will be calculated on the basis of their team grade and how they rate themselves and each other on self and team evaluation forms upon completion of the project (see attached guidelines for description or policy). 40% of grade for both essay and presentation (see attached guidelines).

Course Syllabus

En212 American Literature: Beginnings to 1900

Prerequisites: none

3c—01-3sh

Catalogue Description: This course provides an understanding of American Literature from its beginning to about 1900. The course will concentrate upon a relatively small number of major works, each of which will help to illustrate the “spirit of the age” it represents. (Offered as EN213: American Literature: Beginnings to the Present prior to Spring 1998)

Course Objectives:

- A. Student will be able to identify major periods in American Literature.
- B. Students will be able to identify and explain the controlling idea or ideas of each major period; for example, romanticism or realism.
- C. Students will be able to identify major and minor American writers and their works.
- D. Students will be able to identify a topic, research it, and write about it in a literary paper.

Course Outline

1. Puritans/Calvinism (approx. three weeks)
2. 18th Century Rationalism (approx. three weeks)
3. Romanticism (approx. three weeks)
4. Realism (approx. three weeks)
5. Naturalism (approx. three weeks)

Evaluation Methods:

Final course grade is calculated on the basis of the following:

- 25% Two major examinations (mid-term and final) consisting of short essay responses identifying periods and authors of specific passages.
- 20% Fifteen Reading Responses of 1 to 2 pages in response to questions about the readings.
- 15% Two Difficulty Papers of 2 pages in which you explore the difficulties presented to a reader by two of the readings over the semester.
- 40% Critical Essay (10 pages) and Presentation (20 minutes) on a book-length work of American literature.

Grading Scale:

- A = 93-100
- B = 83-92
- C = 73-82
- D = 65-72
- F = Below 65

Required Texts:

Baym, et al. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol. 1

Nagel and Quirk, The Portable American Realism Reader.

SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Sample Topics for Reading Responses

- 1) How might Philip Freneau's "Religion of Nature" be read as an extension or practice of the philosophy that Thomas Paine articulates in his "Theology?"
- 2) Compare the ways in which John Winthrop and Jonathon Edwards use metaphor in their respective sermons? How might you explain the differences with reference to the historical periods within which they write?
- 3) In what ways does Thoreau's Walden appear to be written as a response to the philosophy of self-improvement outlined in Ben Franklin's Autobiography?
- 4) How does Ben Franklin's Autobiography exhibit certain philosophical tenets of the Enlightenment?
- 5) Based on your reading of naturalist writers Frank Norris and Jack London, what would you say is the difference between naturalism and realism? Is naturalism a new literary movement or something derivative of realism?

Sample Comprehensive Questions from Final Examination:

- 1) In the first piece we read this semester, the excerpt on "American Literature" from Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*, Whitman compared literature to little ships "compassing what measureless values of reminiscence, contemporary portraitures, manners, idioms and beliefs, with deepest inference, hint and thought, to tie and touch forever the old, new body, and the old, new soul!" Having been a passenger on one of these ships for the past fifteen weeks, I would like you now to comment on its cargo. What "values," "manners," "idioms and beliefs" seem to you to be carried through the ages, seem to be those which tie all or most of the works we have traversed this semester together. What, in other words, is so American about American literature? Please be sure to refer to specific pieces, although it is not necessary to cite passages from them.
- 2) One of the things we have discussed throughout this semester is the notion of influence, how the literary traditions that have become prominent at one time or another have not simply appeared but have been crafted in response to values, assumptions and beliefs that preceded them and shaped the literature from another period. For this piece, select one of the pieces that we have read this semester that seems most interesting or most entrenched in tradition and history, and place it in the context of pieces that either precede or follow it. That is to say, please take the piece and discuss how the values and/or assumptions that it embraces have been written in response to and/or are responded to by other pieces from other periods.

Guidelines for Writing Difficulty Papers

Undoubtedly, throughout the semester you will encounter texts that you find opaque, impossible to get through and make sense of. In some cases this may be due to the fact of your cultural and historical distance from the piece (you probably don't organize your life around the same assumptions about the nature of the world and morality as, for instance, many Puritan writers did); some of it may stem from the composition of the piece itself, how its sentences are crafted, how it progresses from one idea to the next; some of it may stem from your experience as a reader with different types of texts. The purpose of the difficulty paper is to allow you identify, name and puzzle over the sources of those difficulties, to see how they might serve as a starting point for developing a complex reading of a text. You should feel free in these papers to speculate, to be "wrong". But you should also be sure to demonstrate that you have thought carefully about the way a text is composed and crafted.

In your papers you should do the following:

- 1) Name precisely what sort of difficulty are you experiencing and what precisely about the text presents that difficulty to you? You will not be given credit if you simply state that you are having difficulty "understanding what the author means," because that formulation of the problem implies that you are paying attention only to what a writer says and not to how he or she says it. You will need to think about how you are reading the text and how that way of reading is resisted by the way the text is constructed. You might begin by asking yourself, "what do I expect of this text?," and consider how your expectations are not being met. Or you might allow yourself to get frustrated and then ask what precisely is it about the way that a text is written that frustrates you.
- 2) Identify at least two specific passages to incorporate into your paper which illustrate that feature of the text that poses a problem. In this case, you will need to quote directly from the text, and you will probably need to quote several sentences.
- 3) Discuss how the passages you cite are similar in the way they are constructed or the way they operate. Here you are attempting to talk about the way the passages have been crafted or written and attempting to come to terms with the method or logic behind the way this writing works.
- 4) Speculate about how what you have discovered that a text is trying to do might complement its subject matter, what the author might be trying to say. What kind of reader does the text want?

Papers should be 2 to 3 typed pages, double-spaced. You will be graded on the extent to which you complete the tasks outlined above, and on the extent to which you show that you have worked closely with specific passages from the text. You may choose to revise these in response to my comments for a better grade.

Possible Books From Which To Choose

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| 1. William Bartram | <u>Travels.</u> |
| 2. Susanna Rowson | <u>Charlotte.</u> |
| 3. R. W. Emerson | <u>Nature.</u> |
| 4. Herman Melville | <u>Billy Budd.</u> |
| 5. Harriet Beecher Stowe | <u>Uncle Tom's Cabin.</u> |
| 6. Frederick Douglass | <u>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.</u> |
| 7. Mark Twain | <u>Roughing It.</u> |
| 8. Henry James | <u>Daisy Miller.</u> |
| 9. Kate Chopin | <u>The Awakening.</u> |
| 10. Edith Wharton | <u>Ethan Frome.</u> |
| 11. Stephen Crane | <u>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets.</u> |

COURSE DESCRIPTION

EN 213: American Literature from its Beginning to the Present

Goals and Standards:

To inculcate an understanding of American literature from its beginning to roughly the middle of the present century. The course will concentrate attention primarily upon a relatively small number of major works, each of which will help to illustrate the "spirit of the age" it represents. Eight such periods will be studied and the course will seek to explore both the works and their context (theological, philosophical, literary, political, etc.) for a greater illumination of both. Other works and authors will be presented against this background but will receive less attention.

At the conclusion of the course, students are expected to possess a basic knowledge of the controlling idea of each major period in American literature as well as a knowledge of some of the most important works that grew out of them.

Course Content:

Authors or titles preceded by an asterisk are required; other selections are optional.

I. Puritans/Calvinism:

- A. William Bradford
- *B. Edward Taylor
- C. Anne Bradstreet
- D. Michael Wigglesworth
- *E. Jonathan Edwards

II. 18th Century Rationalism:

- *A. Franklin: Selections from Autobiography
- B. Political Writers

III. Romanticism:

A. Early

- 1. Philip Freneau
- 2. Cooper
- 3. Bryant
- 4. Irving

B. Middle

- *1. Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter
- *2. Thoreau, Walden
- *3. Melville (either Benito Cereno or Billy Budd)

C. Late

- *1. Whitman (selections)
- 2. Dickinson

IV. Realism:

- *A. Twain, Huck Finn
- B. Selected regionalists and local colorists

SAMPLE SYLLABUS FOR EN 213: American Literature from its Beginning to the Present

Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify major periods in American Literature.
 Students will be able to identify and explain the controlling idea or ideas of each major period; for example, romanticism or realism.
 Students will be able to identify major and minor American writers and their works.
 Students will be able to identify a topic, research it, and write about it in a literary paper.

Texts:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vols. I and II and paperback copies of individual works.

Requirements:

Two literary papers, three to four pages in length. Midterm. Final examination.

Week 1

- M Introduction to the course. Assignment of first paper.
 W Lecture on Puritans/Calvinism.
 F Anne Bradstreet: "As Weary Pilgrim"; "Meditations Divine and Moral."

Week 2

- M Edward Taylor: "Meditation 8 (First Series)"; "Meditation 38 (First Series)."
 W Taylor, cont. "Housewifery"; "Treatise Concerning the Lord's Supper."
 F Jonathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

Week 3

- M Benjamin Franklin: "Selections from Autobiography."
 W Thomas Paine: "The Crisis, No. 1"; The Age of Reason.
 F Thomas Jefferson: The Autobiography.

Week 4

- M Philip Freneau: "The Indian Burying Ground"; "On the Religion of Nature"
 Cooper: "Notions of the Americans."
 W Bryant: "Thanatopsis"; "Rip Van Winkle."
 F Hawthorne: The Scarlet Letter.

Week 5

- M The Scarlet Letter.
 W Thoreau: Walden.
 F Thoreau: Walden.

Week 6

- M Melville: Billy Budd.
 W Melville: Billy Budd.
 F Whitman: "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"; "The Wound-Dresser";
 Dickinson: Nos. 241, 280, 465, and 712.

Week 7

- M Midterm Examination
 W Lecture: Realism and Naturalism
 F Twain: Huckleberry Finn.

Week 8

M Twain, cont.
 W Crane: Maggie.
 F Crane, cont. Paper Due.

Week 9

M Chopin: "The Awakening." Assign second paper.
 W Lecture: "WWII Equals Renaissance II"; Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby.
 F Fitzgerald, cont. Hemingway: In Our Time.

Week 10

M Hemingway, cont.
 W Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury.
 F Faulkner, cont.

Week 11

M Faulkner, cont. Lecture: "Modern Poetry and Criticism."
 W Eliot: "The Waste Land."
 F Eliot, cont.

Week 12

M Frost: "Mending Wall"; "Home Burial"; "Birches"; "The Gift Outright."
 W Stevens: "Sunday Morning"; "Anecdote of the Jar."
 F O'Neill: The Hairy Ape.

Week 13

M Dos Passos: USA; Steinbeck: Grapes of Wrath (throughout the week)
 W Langston Hughes: "Mulatto"; "Central High"; Countee Cullen: "Incident";
 "Uncle Jim."
 F Tate: "Ode to the Confederate Dead."

Week 14

M Williams: The Glass Menagerie.
 W Roethke: "I Knew a Woman"; Jarrell: "Cinderella"; Brooks: "A Song in
 the Front Yard"; Dickey: "Cherrylog Road"; Sexton: "Sylvia's Death."
 F Lecture: "Where We've Been, Where We Are, and, Where Now?"

V. Naturalism:

*A. Crane, Maggie

B. Optional transition to 20th century: Anderson, Winesburg, Ohio

VI. The Twenties: Renaissance II:

A. Fiction

*1. Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

*2. Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises (or In Our Time)

*3. Faulkner, The Sound and the Fury

B. Poetry

*1. Eliot (bridging into the 30's)

*2. Frost (bridging into the 30's and 40's)

*3. Stevens (bridging into the 30's and 40's)

*C. Drama

Selection from O'Neill

VII. The Thirties: Revival of Naturalism and the Political Left:

*1. Either Dos Passos, USA or Farrell, Studs Lonigan

*2. Steinbeck, The Grapes of Wrath

3. Selected poems

VIII. The Forties: War and Post-War:

*1. Tennessee Williams

2. Arthur Miller

3. Selected poems

Course Work and Materials:

Texts

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volumes I and II. Supplemental texts may also be used.

Papers and Examinations

One long paper (5-8 pages) or several shorter ones (3-4 pages) are required. A final examination is required (but it may be a take-home exam if the instructor wishes) and either a mid-term or quizzes (or both). Whatever means the instructor chooses, the testing of the knowledge of the materials should be in depth.

Requisite Background for Teaching the Course:

Formal preparation in the field of American literature at the graduate level is an adequate background, but other evidence of a mastery of the material presented in the various periods (and of information about the periods themselves) is also sufficient. The following bibliography indicates the requisite background information (in addition to knowledge of the primary materials themselves):

BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR EN 213: American Literature from its Beginning to the Present

Edwin Cady, The Light of Common Day

Richard Chase, The American Novel and its Tradition

Charles Feidelson, Jr., Symbolism and American Literature

James D. Hart, The Oxford Companion to American Literature

Granville Hicks, The Great Tradition

Frederick Hoffman, The 20's: American Writing in the Postwar Decade

Randall Jarrell, Poetry and the Age

Alfred Kazin, On Native Grounds

F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance

Perry Miller, American Thought

Kenneth B. Murdock, Literature and Theology in Colonial New England

Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought

Walter B. Rideout, The Radical Novel in the United States

Robert E. Spiller, et al. Literary History of the United States

Charles C. Walcutt, American Literary Nautralism, A Divided Stream