



# Lincoln University

## ENG 86 – Survey of American Literature

### COURSE SYLLABUS Fall 2023

<b>Instructor:</b>	Prof. William Hyman
<b>Lecture Schedule:</b>	Thursday, 3:30 PM – 6:15 PM
<b>Credits:</b>	3 units / 45 lecture hours
<b>Level:</b>	Introductory (I)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	By appointment <b>e-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:william@lincolnuca.edu">william@lincolnuca.edu</a> <b>Phone:</b> (510) 229-2210
<b>Last Revision:</b>	August 15, 2023

### CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The course covers development of American literature from 1850 until recent times, including Whitman, Dickinson, Twain, James, Melville, Crane, and Faulkner concentrating on understanding of the American literary traditions. Social and political forces shaping the American character from the colonial period are carefully considered.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Development of American literature from the American renaissance of the mid-nineteenth century to modern times. Social and political forces shaping the American character are carefully considered. A wide variety of American writers and poets will be presented including New England's Emily Dickinson (from the 19th Century), and Robert Frost, Katherine Anne Porter, Kate Chopin, Ernest Hemingway and Fitzgerald (early 20th), and modern prose stylists like William Saroyan of Fresno, California and song writers Woodie Guthrie and Bob Dylan of the American Mid-West.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course is designed to introduce students to the wonders and beauties of American writing. We will discuss what literature is and the meaning of greatness. Do the works we study apply to Americans and Europeans only or are they universal? We will discuss matters such as inspiration, spiritual and mundane, social and historical background, the borders that great artists typically cross, fearlessness, rule-breaking, and the meaning of existence.

## INSTRUCTIONAL METHODS

The readings are selected to be simple in vocabulary, but not in meaning, such that a serious reader can appreciate and benefit from the works presented, their depth, beauty and their repercussions. The readings will be short (a poem, a song, a short story or prose segment, an essay, a speech, an epistle) all written to communicate important ideas in the most interesting and exciting ways they can.

Assignments and projects require students to actively use resources of the library. A detailed guide to business *resources of the library* as well as the description of Lincoln University approach to *information literacy* are available at the [LU Library](http://lincolnuca.libguides.com) website (lincolnuca.libguides.com).

## TESTING

There will be a final examination, vocabulary quizzes, and a short paper for students to write, a critique or analysis of a work of literature. As an alternative, a student might choose to write an original piece of fiction, a journal, memoir, poem or song, which reflect and bear upon the student's native culture, as American literature draws from and bears upon the unique American spirit.

## ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend every class and to be punctual. They will be held responsible for anything they miss because of absence or lateness. I have a hard time assigning a high grade to students who come late or not at all.

## TEXTBOOK

I will recommend text books for interested students, but will not assign any.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Students will have occasional homework assignments of some short readings, and regular vocabulary assignments. The greatest obstacle to an acquaintanceship with literature is a limited vocabulary. Serious students will likely enrich their own vocabularies by a few hundred words.**

## GRADING

Grading will be based on the following criteria:

In-Class Discussions	: 40 per cent
Final Examination	: 20 per cent
Class Attendance and vocabulary quizzes	: 40 per cent
<b>Total:</b>	<b>: 100 per cent</b>

### Grading Standard:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	F
Points	94-100	90-93	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	60-66	0-59

Classroom Protocol: Students are expected to behave with maturity, respecting each other's homeland and points of view.

### COURSE CALENDAR

Lectures		Topic
#	Date	
1	24-Aug	Introductory remarks about literature, what it is and isn't, etc., plus works of literature on the theme of civil protest and disobedience
2	31-Aug	Literary pieces read in class (poetry, songs, and short prose pieces either fiction or non-fiction). Theme: civil rights
3	7-Sep	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: trespass and the law
4	14-Sep	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: love and marriage
5	21-Sep	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: escape and addiction
6	28-Sep	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: innocence and experience
7	5-Oct	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: poverty and wealth
8	12-Oct	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: appearance and reality
9	19-Oct	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: labor and migration
10	26-Oct	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: racism and imperialism
11	2-Nov	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: injustice and exploitation
12	9-Nov	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: the generation gap
13	16-Nov	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: the American dream
	23-Nov	Thanksgiving Break
14	30-Nov	Literary pieces read in class. Theme: review of the literature we have covered and discussed, read, sung and seen (I intend to show two American classic films)
15	7-Dec	Final Exam

#### Please Note:

Revisions to the schedule, if necessary, will be announced in class.