

English 11A: American Literature

Syllabus

Course Central Motif: Multicultural Literature in the United States

Students will examine both fiction and nonfiction texts written in the United States, examining how each culture is reflected in American literature

Students will think about these essential questions as they continue through the course:

1. How does the culture of an author influence his or her writing style?
2. How do the many cultures within the United States come together to form an American culture?
3. Is the United States a “Melting Pot” of cultures, or is there a better symbol to represent the American culture?

These essential questions as well as the central motif will be revisited throughout the course. Students are expected to think about these questions as they respond to all of their assignments and participate in the discussions.

This course is heavily research-based and will require a lot of effort on the students’ part. If the student has any questions or concerns about the material covered or the assignments, the student should contact the instructor, and the instructor will try to help clarify the question or direct the student to where the information can be received.

Cultures and Sub-Cultures

Students will examine the following cultural literature from the United States of America:

- Native American
- European
- Hispanic/Latino
- African
- Asian
- Middle Eastern
- Non-ethnic cultures

Each cultural genre will require students to refine their skills in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. All units require students to do research about the cultural background covered in that unit. Students will also analyze key texts from American authors in that culture in order to master common core standards. Each culture will require literary analysis and writing in order to provide practice for students to master common core standards.

Students will receive feedback from the teacher of submitted general assignments as soon as the teacher can review their work. Students are encouraged to ask the teacher questions via the course message system.

Grade Eligibility Agreement

Before students are able to access the course material, they must complete the Grade Eligibility Agreement. In the GEA, you must agree to the following:

- **Equivalency:** You will complete the equivalent of 90 hours of coursework in the semester, which is the equivalent to a site-based traditional school.
- **Duration:** You will log into your course regularly, and will actively work in your course for a minimum of 4 weeks or 28 days.
- **Pacing:** You will spend a minimum of 11-15 hours per unit and a minimum of 3-4 days per unit actively working within the course. You can submit a maximum of 2 units per week, and you must submit your assignments as you complete them.
- **Assignments:** You will be assessed on all coursework. You will complete 100% of the course assignments for all units. Assignments not submitted by the course deadline will earn “0” points.
- **Plagiarism:** You will not plagiarize by presenting someone else’s work as your own. If you use someone else’s ideas or words, you must acknowledge and/or use quotations for their words.
- **Academic Plagiarism Check:** Your work will be checked for plagiarism using an online plagiarism technology (where applicable), and if you are caught plagiarizing, you will not be eligible to earn a final grade for this class.
- **Removal:** You will work actively in your course and submit assignments as you complete them so that you can receive teacher feedback. If you do not log in and actively participate in the course on a weekly basis, you may be dropped from the course due to a lack of participation.
- **Gradebook:** You will keep your parents/guardians up to date on your course progress by sharing your gradebook. You will not alter or misrepresent the information presented in your course gradebook in any manner.

In addition, students will need to complete a Grade Eligibility Check after every 2 units. In those GEC, students once again agree to the items in the GEA. Students should not complete the GEC until they have completed all assignments in the units they are working in. Once they have completed the GEC, students need to send a message to their instructor, informing him/her that they have completed it. Once the instructor has reviewed the student’s gradebook and participation, the next units will be unlocked.

Academic Honesty, MLA, Credibility, and Writing Pre-Test

All students must show their understanding of academic honesty, MLA, and credible resources before they begin working in this class. Because there is so much research and writing done in this class, it is important for students to thoroughly comprehend these items. To show this, there are 3 assignments students must complete and have cleared before any of their other work will be graded. The points for these assignments will not count towards their over-all grade, but students must earn full credit on the 3 assignments in order to clear them. Students may resubmit these 3 items as many times as they need to clear them. All 3 items are located in the “START HERE” link in the top left side of the course.

The Academic Honesty & MLA Quiz is a 15 multiple choice question quiz about plagiarism and MLA citations. There are links to PowerPoint presentations and other resources that will teach students about these things if they are not already familiar with them.

The Credibility assignment goes over how to determine if a source is reliable or not. Wikipedia is not an acceptable source for any research assignment. Review the PowerPoint lecture and then complete the assignment as directed.

The Writing Pre-Test is a research essay designed to show the instructor the students' writing style and that they can apply the use of credibility and MLA in an essay. Students may write about any topic they wish, but they must complete research on the topic, and include a minimum of 3 different *types* of credible sources in their essays. Students must include in-text citations that correlate with the sources listed in the Works Cited page.

Reading Material

There is no required textbook for this course. All reading material can be downloaded or read online, and links are provided. Students who wish to read hard-copy versions of the material can go to their local library to borrow it, or purchase it from another source, such as Amazon.

Reading Quizzes

Every unit has a reading quiz with reading comprehension questions about the required reading selections. Students should read the required selections and take the quiz before continuing on to complete the assignments for the unit. It is advised that students review the unit's lectures and assignments before taking a quiz to become more familiar with the reading material. If the students do not understand the reading material or they have further questions about the reading material, they are encouraged to contact their instructor for help and clarification before they use outside resources.

Background Research

Students will be required to do research about a particular subject relating to each unit's theme. Research can be done with traditional books as well as online, but all sources must be properly cited according to MLA Standards.

Unit Assignments

Each unit has a group of assignments for students to work on towards their understanding of common core standards in relation to the reading assignments. Questions require students to analyze the literature read in that unit, and should not require any outside research unless otherwise stated. Students must answer the assignment questions in well thought out responses, including supporting details from the literature in that unit. All responses should follow basic grammatical rules. Students should be sure to submit their work using the provided worksheet as an attachment to the appropriate dropbox. Any assignment submitted in the comment box for the assignment will not be accepted. All submitted work should be in a .doc, .pdf, or .ppt format for your instructor to be able to view it in the course.

Vocabulary & Grammar

In this course students will be studying in depth parts of speech. Students will learn the 8 different parts of speech and how they are used in specific ways to enhance an author's writing.

Each unit will provide resources to learn about the part of speech covered in that unit and an assignment applying what they learned to the literature from that unit, and there will be a final using the skills learned in the 8th unit.

Writing Workshops and Unit Assessments

At the end of every unit there is an Unit Assessment that is usually a formal writing assignment that shows the instructor that the student understood the material covered in that unit. Before the Unit Assessment, students must complete the Writing Workshop. The Writing Workshop will prepare the student for the Unit Assessment. Students should pay close attention to the directions in the Writing Workshop and Unit Assessment. If students would like feedback on their work prior to submitting their final draft Unit Assessment, they should leave a comment for the instructor with the Writing Workshop assignment submission or send a message to the instructor with an attachment of a draft of the writing assignment. Because Unit Assessments are considered like a unit test, they cannot be made up unless the instructor specifically allows it; therefore, students should be sure to submit their Unit Assessment free from errors and on topic. The [NU Writing Center](#) is a free writing tutoring service for all NUVHS students, and students are highly encouraged to use the Writing Center for help with their writing.

Threaded Discussions

Every unit has a minimum of 2 discussion topics that students must respond to. Discussions count for students' participation grade, so it is very important for students to actively participate in discussions. In order to earn full participation credit, students must post an original response to each unit's discussion topics. Original responses should be well developed and thought out, citing specific examples from the texts and sources used in the course. Original discussion posts should be at least 200 words long.

In addition to the student's original response, for every discussion topic, students must respond to a minimum of 2 other classmates' posts. Discussions cannot be one-sided. Students must actively engage with their classmates in every discussion. They should be very specific when they respond to their classmates. They cannot just say that they agree or disagree with a classmate; they should state specifically why, citing examples from their text. If a classmate responds to a student's post, that student should be polite and respond back, engaging in the conversation, and developing the content of the threaded discussion topic. Responses to classmates should be at least 100 words long each. If a student's responses to 2 classmates do not total at least 200 words, the student should respond to more classmates' posts to increase the amount of words responded to classmates. If a student is the first or second student to post to a discussion topic, he or she should go back at a later date and respond to classmates once more have participated. As long as a unit is still open, student are encouraged to go back to previous unit discussions and further participate in the threads. If a student is working at a faster pace than all other classmates, and there are discussions where that student is the only poster, and the student has completed the course, the student needs to contact the instructor.

Midterm

At the end of the 4th Unit, there is a course Midterm. This midterm is an essay format that will show the instructor how students are learning the material in the class by that point, and their ability to put that information from the different units together to answer a direct question.

Finals

In the 8th Unit, at the end of the course, there will be 4 final exams and a threaded discussion. Students will be asked to read certain selections pertaining to the over-all theme of the course. There will be no lectures provided to assist students' understanding of the material, but students are welcome to ask the instructor clarifying questions and can also review credible resources for better understanding of the material; however, all work done in the finals must be completely original work with proper citations for any outside sources used in the finals.

Final I is a reading assessment, similar to the Unit Assignments from Units 1-7. This is to test the students' analysis of the final exam reading material. Each response should be well developed and cite specific examples from the reading selection to support the student's response. Unless otherwise stated, no outside sources should be used in the responses.

Final II is a written exam, where students will be asked to write an essay on a specific topic. Students should plan their essay with their preferred pre-writing technique, write a rough draft of their essay, then make any revisions necessary, and submit the final draft version for this exam. Essays must follow traditional conventions in structure and grammar, as well as following MLA format for citations.

Final III is a timed exam to check for reading comprehension and analysis. It consists of multiple choice, short answers (approximately 1 paragraph each), and an essay response (a minimum of 3 paragraphs, with an introduction, body, and conclusion). Students have 2 hours to complete this timed exam.

Final IV is a review of the vocabulary and grammar assignments from the whole course. Students will apply the lessons of the V&G to a single assessment. It would be helpful for students to take notes throughout the V&G assignments, and then they can use those notes on the exam.

Course Project

At the **end of the course**, students will be completing a two-part artistic and formal essay project where they will create a piece of art representing the American Culture and writing an essay on one of the course essential questions. Students should read through the project guidelines and work on the project throughout the course, to submit at the end of the course.

Course Outline

| Unit | Activities |
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| Unit 1 Native American | <p>Read Native American Creation Myths (“The World on Turtle’s Back,” “When Grizzlies Walked Upright”) and Biblical Creation Story (Genesis 1-3); “Remarks by Chief Powhatan to John Smith;” and “The General History of Virginia”</p> <p>Review Lectures on Native American Tradition and Culture and Narrative Accounts</p> <p>Take Reading Quiz</p> |

Do Background Research PowerPoint about the history of Native American Culture

Complete Unit Assignments

Complete Vocabulary & Grammar Assignment on Nouns

Complete Writing Workshop about Compare/Contrast Essays

Complete Unit Assessment Writing a Compare/Contrast Essay on Creation Myths or Narrative Accounts

Participate in Threaded Discussions

Unit 2
European

Read *My Ántonia*

Review Lectures on *My Ántonia*

Take Reading Quiz

Do Background Research PowerPoint about the History of European Culture in the United States

Complete Unit Assignments

Complete Vocabulary & Grammar assignment on Pronouns

Complete Writing Workshop about Historical Investigation Reports

Complete Unit Assessment Writing a Historical Investigation Essay on 1 of the Given Topics

Participate in Threaded Discussions

Unit 3
Hispanic/Latino

Read *The House on Mango Street*, “Immigration Documentary,” “Snow,” and “Catch the Moon”

Review Lectures on Point of View, Unreliable Narrator, Imagery, Figurative Language, and *The House on Mango Street*

Take Reading Quiz

Do Background Research PowerPoint on the History of Hispanic and Latino Culture in the United States

Complete Unit Assignments

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|--------------------------|---|
| | <p>Complete Vocabulary & Grammar assignment on Adjectives</p> <p>Complete Writing Workshop about Vignettes</p> <p>Complete Unit Assessment Compiling 8 Personal Vignettes</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> |
| Unit 4 African | <p>Read from <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>, from <i>My Bondage and My Freedom</i>, “We Wear the Mask,” “Still, I Rise,” from <i>Roots</i>, and from “Dust Tracks on a Road”</p> <p>Review Lectures on Slave Narratives and “We Wear the Mask”</p> <p>Take Reading Quiz</p> <p>Do Background Research PowerPoint on the History of African Culture in the United States</p> <p>Complete Unit Assignments</p> <p>Complete Vocabulary & Grammar assignment on Verbs</p> <p>Complete Writing Workshop about Schaffer Basic Essay Method</p> <p>Complete Unit Assessment Writing a Basic Essay on the Topic of African Americans</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> <p>Complete Midterm Essay Writing Assignment</p> |
| Unit 5 Asian | <p>Read “The Girl Who Wouldn’t Talk,” Japanese Internment Poetry, “Two Kinds” from <i>The Joy Luck Club</i>, and “Mother Tongue”</p> <p>Review Lectures about Japanese Internment, Reflective Essays, Memoirs, and Amy Tan</p> <p>Take Reading Quiz</p> <p>Do Background Research PowerPoint on the History of Asian Culture in the United States</p> <p>Complete Unit Assignments</p> <p>Complete Vocabulary & Grammar Assignment on Adverbs</p> <p>Complete Writing Workshop about Reflective Essays</p> |

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| | <p>Complete Unit Assessment Writing a Personal Reflective Essay</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> |
| <p>Unit 6 Middle Eastern</p> | <p>Read <i>Funny in Farsi</i> (Chapter 10 “The F-Word” and Chapter 16 “Me and Bob Hope”), Poetry by Naomi Shihab Nye, “Letter from Naomi Shihab Nye,” <i>The Madman</i> (“War” and “The Other Language”)</p> <p>Review Lectures about Arab-American Poetry, Naomi Shihab Nye, Arab-American Literature</p> <p>Take Reading Quiz</p> <p>Do Background Research PowerPoint about the History of Arab Culture in the United States</p> <p>Complete Unit Assignments</p> <p>Complete Vocabulary & Grammar assignment on Prepositions</p> <p>Complete Writing Workshop about Pre-Writing Techniques</p> <p>Complete Unit Assessment Writing an Essay about Arab-American Literature</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> |
| <p>Unit 7 Non-Ethnic Cultures</p> | <p>Read <i>The Story of My Life</i> (Part I), “Why I Must Come Out,” “Now I Become Myself,” “Walking Our Boundaries,” “My Grandmother’s Love Letters,” “Young Goodman Brown,” and “A Wagner Matinee”</p> <p>Review Lectures about Religion and American Culture, Hawthorne, Symbolism and Allegory, The Gay and Lesbian Presence in American Literature, Disabled Literature, “Young Goodman Brown,” and “A Wagner Matinee”</p> <p>Take Reading Quiz</p> <p>Do Background Research PowerPoint about the Historical Background of a Smaller Sub-Culture in the United States</p> <p>Complete Unit Assignments</p> <p>Complete Vocabulary & Grammar assignment on Conjunctions and Interjections</p> <p>Complete Writing Workshop about Expanding on the Basic Essay</p> |

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| | <p>Writing Structure</p> <p>Complete Unit Assessment Writing an Essay about Prejudice and Discrimination</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> |
| Unit 8 Finals | <p>Read from <i>Letters of an American Farmer</i>, “Leaves of Grass,” “Multicultural Literature in the United States,” Every Culture: United States of America, “Everyday Use,” and “For My Children”</p> <p>Take Final I: Reading</p> <p>Take Final II: Writing</p> <p>Take Final III: Timed Assessment</p> <p>Take Final IV: Vocabulary & Grammar</p> <p>Participate in Threaded Discussions</p> |
| Project | <p>Complete Two Part Project</p> <p>A. Artistic Rendition of America’s Culture</p> <p>B. Essay Exploring the Metaphor of the “American Melting Pot”</p> |

Point Values

Each submitted activity has a specific point value. It is important to complete *all* assignments to the best of your ability. There is no way for your instructor to tell you how many assignments you need to complete to pass the course. It depends on how well you complete your assignments. Here is the break-down of the activities and their point values:

| Activity | Point Value |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Background Research | 10 points each |
| Finals | 50 points each |
| Midterm | 50 points |
| Project | 100 points |
| Reading Quizzes | Unit 1 = 10 points Unit 2 = 25 points Unit 3 = 10 points Unit 4 = 8 points Unit 5 = 8 points Unit 6 = 9 points Unit 7 = 12 points |
| Threaded Discussions | 10 points each |
| Unit Assessments | 25 points each |
| Unit Assignments | 10 points each |
| Vocabulary & Grammar | 10 points each |
| Writing Workshops | 10 points each |
| Total Points Possible: 1048 | |



| Letter Grade | Percentage Earned |
|--------------|-------------------|
| A | 95%+ |
| A- | 90% - 94% |
| B+ | 87% - 89.9% |
| B | 84% - 86.9% |
| B- | 80% - 83.9% |
| C+ | 77% - 79.9% |
| C | 74% - 76.9% |
| C- | 70% - 73.9% |
| D+ | 67% - 69.9% |
| D | 64% - 66.9% |
| D- | 60% - 63.9% |
| F | 59% and lower |