

LSHV 381-01 American Literature and the American Idea Spring 2008

Description

Since its colonial beginnings, America's sense of itself and its place in the world has been shaped by a belief in the importance of the individual, in limitless opportunity for the nation and its citizens, and in the possibility of prosperity for every American. The great writers of America are all concerned with these American issues although they all respond differently to them. Through a careful reading of some classic American literature, the course will at once examine the ideas, myths, and beliefs that shape America's sense of itself and consider how the literature of America understands and judges them. As it does so, the course will also try to discover what this literature might tell us about ourselves and the world in which we live today.

Books

Nathaniel Hawthorne, **Young Goodman Brown and Other Stories** (Dover)
Mark Twain, **Huckleberry Finn** (Dover)
Jack Schaefer, **Shane** (Bantam)
Stephen Crane, **The Open Boat and Other Stories** (Dover)
Herman Melville, **Bartleby and Benito Cereno** (Dover)
Sherwood Anderson, **Winesburg, Ohio** (Dover)
Kate Chopin, **The Awakening** (Dover)
F. Scott Fitzgerald, **The Great Gatsby** (Scribner)
Tennessee Williams, **The Glass Menagerie** (New Directions)

Plan of the Course

January 9 **Introductions**

The Individual and Society I

January 16 **The Individual and Society II**
 Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle"
 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown"

The American Tradition of Dissent
 Henry David Thoreau, "Civil Disobedience"
 Martin Luther King, "Letter from the Birmingham Jail"

January 23 No Class

January 30 **The American Adam I**
 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self Reliance"
 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux"
 Ernest Hemingway, "The Killers"
 Richard Wright, "Almos' a Man"

- February 6 **The American Adam II**
 Mark Twain, **Huckleberry Finn**
 Flannery O’Connor, “A Temple of the Holy Ghost”
- February 13 **The American Eden/The Myths of the West I**
 Jack Schaefer, **Shane**
- February 20 **The American Eden/The Myths of the West II**
 Stephen Crane, “The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky” and “The Blue Hotel”
- February 27 **The American Dream I**
 Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener”
 Sherwood Anderson, “Adventure” and “Departure”
 Eudora Welty, “Death of a Traveling Salesman”
- March 5 No Class (Spring Break)
- March 12 **The American Dream II**
 Kate Chopin, **The Awakening**
- March 19 No Class
- March 26 **The American Dream III**
 F. Scott Fitzgerald, **The Great Gatsby**
 Ernest Hemingway, “Soldier’s Home”
- April 2 No Class
- April 9 **Conclusions**
 Tennessee Williams, **The Glass Menagerie**

Assignments

Students are expected to attend class regularly. Those who miss more than two classes will be asked to withdraw from the course. Students are also asked to write a short midterm paper and a longer final paper. The final paper will be due after the course is finished on a date to be determined.

Notes

A. It may be necessary to hold class on January 23 and cancel class on January 30. But we shall not have class on one of those two days.

B. If a class has to be canceled for inclement weather or some other unforeseen situation, it will be made up on Wednesday, April 16. Every effort will be made, however, to conform to the schedule.

Disabilities Statement

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.