

Course Outline for: ENGL 2150 American Literature: Beginnings to 1865

A. Course Description:

1. Number of credits: 4 credits
2. Lecture hours per week: 4
3. Prerequisites: ENGC 0960 (C/P or higher); or
EAP 1100 (C or higher); or
Placement into College-Level Reading; and
Placement into ENGC 1101
4. Corequisites: None
5. MnTC Goals: Goal #6 – Humanities and the Fine Arts

American literature is a window into our past that teaches us about the foundations for beliefs, problems, and triumphs that persist to the present day. Focusing on four main literary genres—fiction, poetry, drama, and literary nonfiction—students explore authors from America's beginnings to the Civil War. We study what these authors' works meant to readers at the time and also analyze how they reflect core aspects of the American experience.

B. Date last reviewed/updated: May 2025

C. Outline of Major Content Areas:

1. Pre-Columbian Voices
2. The Literature of Discovery and Exploration
3. The Literature of European Settlement
4. 17th Century Poets and Polemicists
5. The Colonial Period 1700-1800: Pre-Revolutionary Writers
6. Enlightenment Voices and Revolutionary Visions
7. The New National Literature and the Romantic Vision
8. Voices and the Oppressed
9. The Transcendental Vision
10. Ethical Idealism

D. Course Learning Outcomes:

Upon successful completion of the course, the student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of canonical works, major genres, and styles of American literature. (Goal 6a)
2. Categorize authors and works by major periods and historical developments in American literature. (Goal 6b)
3. Evaluate the contribution of identity, geography, and/or culture to works in American literature. (Goal 6b)
4. Evaluate themes of works read. (Goal 2b, 2c, 6a, 6c)
5. Evaluate characteristic features of literary styles. (Goal 2b, 2c, 6a, 6c)

6. Analyze the political, social, and economic features of the period, noting literary reflections of or reactions to changes in these features. (Goal 2a, 6b, 6c)
7. Follow the process of literary scholarship (Goal 2a, 2b, 2d, 6c 6e):
 - a. Analyze readings closely and critically.
 - b. Formulate questions students of literature use as their chief tools of inquiry.
 - c. Develop ethical and critical insights reflective of personal reaction to texts.

E. Methods for Assessing Student Learning:

Methods for assessment may include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Attendance and participation
2. Tests/quizzes
3. Essays
4. Journals
5. Collaborative Projects

F. Special Information:

None