





English (ENGL) 344

American Literature I (Revision 6)

Status:

Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode:

Individualized study online 

Credits:

3

Areas of study:

Arts or Humanities

Prerequisites:

ENGL 211 and **ENGL 212** or equivalent first year English course(s).

Precluded:

None

Challenge:


ENGL 344 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty:

[Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences](#) 

Overview

This course introduces students to American literature, its history and development, and its rich variety of forms and techniques. It surveys American literature from its beginnings to approximately 1900 and includes Native orators, Puritan authors, writers of the Enlightenment and Romantic periods, slave narratives, and works that would set the stage for the entry of the United States into the literary world of the twentieth century.

Through a critical examination of these literary works, students will develop a deeper understanding of some of the main issues and movements that shape American culture as we see it today. They will also build a good foundation for proceeding to [ENGL 345: American Literature II](#) .

Note: Since this is a senior course, we expect students to have good reading and writing skills as well as the basic critical tools and knowledge of literary forms and techniques that are acquired in introductory university English literature courses like Athabasca University's ENGL 211 and ENGL 212. Students who do not have the recommended credits in introductory English literature courses might experience significant difficulty with the essay assignments and examinations.

Outline

- Lesson 1: Pre-Columbian America: Creation Stories
- Lesson 2: Puritan Writings: Winthrop, Bradstreet, and Taylor
- Lesson 3: *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- Lesson 4: The American Enlightenment: Franklin, de Crèvecoeur, Paine, and Jefferson
- Lesson 5: The Professional Writer: Irving, Cooper, and Poe
- Lesson 6: Transcendentalism: Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller
- Lesson 7: Whitman and Dickinson
- Lesson 8: *Ruth Hall* by Fanny Fern
- Lesson 9: *Billy Budd, Sailor* by Herman Melville

- Lesson 10: Slavery: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- Lesson 11: Slavery: African American Writings by Douglass and Jacobs
- Lesson 12: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain
- Lesson 13: *The Red Badge of Courage* by Stephen Crane

Learning outcomes

ENGL 344 is designed to introduce students to American literature to the end of the nineteenth century and to its authors, works, forms, and history. During their studies in the course, students will achieve the following broad course outcomes:



1. Read and understand a variety of significant American literary works up to the end of the nineteenth century.
2. Acquire a general overview of American literature to the end of the nineteenth century and a historical perspective on that literature's development.
3. Develop an appreciation of the techniques used by writers in various literary genres.
4. Develop an appreciation of each work as an individual work with its own formal integrity.
5. Improve the critical tools and communication skills acquired in previous literature courses.
6. Increase their interest in, and ability to read, literature.
7. Increase their knowledge and understanding of themselves and others through their experience with American literature to the end of the nineteenth century.
8. Improve their understanding of the United States, its people, and its culture.
9. Acquire a good knowledge and skills base for proceeding to further literary studies, particularly to Athabasca University's English 345: American Literature II.
10. Develop basic research skills, including integration of secondary material and documentation of sources.

To achieve these broad objectives, students are expected to read the course materials and all the assigned texts very carefully so that they will be able to accomplish the following specific course objectives.

1. Identify specific literary forms and techniques as they occur in the works.
2. Identify works and authors by means of their form, style, and content.
3. Summarize (paraphrase, outline) the plots and thematic concerns of works.
4. Analyse works from the perspective of their literary elements, including narrative point of view, characterization, plot, theme, setting, atmosphere, style, imagery, structure, and organization.
5. Analyse interrelationships among, and relative importance of, literary elements in a work.
6. Evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques used in a work, and analyse the work's strengths and weaknesses.
7. Recognize recurring themes, literary devices, and elements in the works.
8. Compare and contrast the works studied.
9. Participate in informed and thoughtful discussion of American literature to the end of the nineteenth century.
10. Develop the skills necessary to write literary criticism in the form of essays with correct grammar, a lucid style, and a coherent and sustained argument that makes use of evidence from the primary text(s).

Above all, because the Study Guide Lessons will not analyse all the works in the same way, nor with the same level of detail, it is important that students be able to transfer the skills and critical tools acquired in the study of one work to the study of others.

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for ENGL 344: American Literature I, students must complete and submit all of the assignments, and write the final exam. Students must achieve a minimum grade of **D (50 percent)**  on each of these credit requirements and an overall grade of at least D (50 percent) for the course.


Students will be evaluated on their understanding of the concepts presented in the course and on their ability to apply those concepts. The final grade in the course will be based on the marks achieved for the following activities.

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1-A: Summary	5%
Assignment 1-B: Response	5%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	40%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#) section of the Calendar.

To learn more about assignments and examinations, please refer to Athabasca University's [online Calendar](#).

Materials


Crane, Stephen. *The Red Badge of Courage: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*. Fourth Edition. Edited by Donald Pizer and Eric Carl Link. Norton Critical Edition, W. W. Norton & Company, 2008.  (Print)

Fern, Fanny. *Ruth Hall: A Domestic Tale of the Present Time*. Introd. and

Notes by Susan Belasco. Penguin Books, 1997.  (Print)

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter and Other Writings: Authoritative Texts, Contexts, Criticism*. Second Edition. Edited by Leland S. Person.

Norton Critical Edition, W. W. Norton & Company, 2017.  (Print)

Melville, Herman. *Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories*. Introd. and Notes by Peter Coviello. Penguin Books, 2016.  (Print)

Other Materials

All other materials are available online.


Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about [challenge for credit](#)  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.





Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for ENGL 344 challenge for credit, students must pass the essay and the examination. Credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis only.



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

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View [previous revision](#) 
