# English 3611-FDE: Imagining America: Beginnings to Modernism

Course Location: web

Class Times: Mon., Wed. 2:30–4pm

Prerequisites: Two FCEs in English, including at least one half-course at the second-year level, or permission of the Chair of the Department

**Should you require information or documents from our office in another format, please let us know. We are happy to help you. Contact your instructor or our Department of English Administrative Assistant.**

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## Instructor Information


- Instructor: Dr. Daniel Hannah
- Office: RB-3039
- Telephone: 343 8663
- Email: dhannah@lakeheadu.ca

- Virtual Office Hours: Mon. 11am–12pm

## Course Description

A study of American texts written up to World War I, in a variety of genres including travel literature, oral narratives, autobiography, poetry, and fiction, with an emphasis on the following questions: How did various authors imagine America prior to World War One? How were the American borders defined with regards to race, gender, class and sexuality? How did American authors shape literary forms?

## Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

- read American texts from the period critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological, and aesthetic strategies.
- explain how texts of American texts of the period are produced by, and produce, their historical and cultural context.
- write well (grammatically correct, clear, effective prose) about American texts of the period, and communicate ideas effectively and coherently.

## Course Resources

### Required Course Texts

Both required texts are being made available as ebooks by the bookstore.

- Nina Baym and Robert Levine, eds., *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 9th Edition, vols. A and B. Norton, 2017.
- Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*. Norton, 2015 [1918].
- Additional readings will be made available on D2L

### Course Website

- Desire2Learn

In ENGL-3611-FDE, in the context of remote instruction and participation, video and audio recordings of class activities will be made to ensure students' and instructors' easy and comprehensive access to those activities. The recordings are confidential and are intended only for the use of the course students and instructors. They may otherwise not be used or disclosed. During recording, to protect others' privacy, each student should ensure that no one else is present in the location where they are being recorded without that non-student's consent. The recordings are made under the authority of sections 3 and 14 of *The Lakehead University Act, 1965.* Questions about the collection of the images and sounds in the recordings may be directed to the Chair of English, Thunder Bay Campus, division@lakeheadu.ca.

## Course Schedule

### Unit One: Narratives of Origin

**Sept. 9** The Iroquois Creation Story (*N* A33–35)
Christopher Columbus letters (*N* A45–53*)*

**Sept. 14** "First Encounters: Early European Encounters of Native America" (*N* A80–110)
Excerpt from John Smith, *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles* (*N* A111–122)

### Unit Two: The Puritan Imagination

**Sept. 16** William Bradford, excerpt from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (*N* A129–167)
Thomas Morton, excerpt from *New English Canaan* ("The Incident at Merry Mount") (*N* A169–72)

**Sept. 21** Anne Bradstreet, selected poems (*N* A218–46)

### Unit Three: What is an American?

**Sept. 23** Jean de Crèvecoeur, "What is an American?" from *Letters from an American Farmer* (*N* A636–45)
Excerpt from Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part Two, (*N* A515–30)

**Sept. 28** **NO CLASS**

**Sept. 30** Phyllis Wheatley, selected poems (*N* A788–800)

**SECONDARY READING ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 5pm, OCTOBER 2nd**

### Unit Four: Imagining American History

**Oct. 5** Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (*N* A1004–15))
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The May-Pole of Merry-Mount" (*N* B361–368))

**Oct. 7** James Fenimore Cooper, "Natty Bumppo and Chingachgook" (*N* B80–86))
Clatsop Chinook, "Coyote—His Myth" (D2L under Readings)

**READING WEEK (Oct. 12th–16th)**

**Unit Five: American Individualisms**

**Oct. 19** Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (*N* B237–53)

**Oct. 21** Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener” (*N* B1470–96)

**CLOSE-READING ASSIGNMENT DUE BY 5pm, OCTOBER 23rd**

**Unit Six: Imagining Freedom**

**Oct. 26** Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (*N* B1164–1229)

**Oct. 28** Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (*N* B1164–1229)

**Unit Seven: Halloween Special: American Nightmares**

**Nov. 2** Washington Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (*N* B42–62)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown”; (*N* B346–54)

**Nov. 4** Edgar Allan Poe, “Ligeia”; “The Fall of the House of Usher” (*N* B620–42)

**NOTE: Friday, November 6th is the final withdrawal date for Fall courses.**

**Unit Eight: Singing the Nation, Singing the Self**

**Nov. 9** Whitman, “Song of Myself” (*N* B1313–56)

**Nov. 11** Whitman, “Song of Myself” (*N* B1313–56)

**Unit Nine: Secret Imaginings**

**Nov. 16** Emily Dickinson, selected poems (*N* B1654–96)

**Nov 18** Emily Dickinson, selected poems (*N* B1654–96)

**Unit Ten: International Americans**

**Nov. 23** Henry James, “Daisy Miller” (available on D2L)

**Nov. 25** Henry James, “Daisy Miller” (available on D2L)

**RESEARCH ESSAY DUE BY 5PM, NOVEMBER 27TH**

**Unit Eleven: American Genealogies**

**Nov. 30** Kate Chopin, "Desiree's Baby"
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "Turned"
Charles Chesnutt, "The Passing of Grandison" (each of these stories will be made available on D2L)

**Unit Twelve: The Future of America**

**Dec. 2** Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*

**Dec. 7** Willa Cather, *My Ántonia*

## Assignments and Evaluation

| Assignment | Due date | Value | Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| Participation (prepared questions and discussion contributions) | Throughout term | 10% | n/a |
| Secondary Reading Assignment | October 2nd | 15% | 2–3 pages |
| Close-Reading Assignment | October 23rd | 15% | 2–3 pages |
| Research Essay | November 27th | 30% | 5–9 pages |
| Final Exam | TBA | 30% | 3 hours |

**Assignment Policies**

- All assignments are individual assignments and cannot be completed collaboratively.
- Assignments are due to be submitted to the appropriate dropbox folder in D2L by the date and time listed in the syllabus. No late assignments will be accepted unless an extension has been granted or there are extenuating medical or other circumstances.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- The final exam must be written on the date scheduled, so do not make travel plans for the exam period until the exam schedule is posted.
- All assignments must be in MLA format, double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12 point font. For details on the most recent MLA format please consult either the *MLA Style Guide*, 8th edition, or the *OWL Purdue Online Writing Lab*: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation.

## Details of Assignments

### Participation

Participation will be graded specifically on the basis of two requirements: (1) you will be assigned a class-date and text for which you will be required to submit a question that can be posed to the class for the purpose of opening out discussion (a strong question is one that could generate debate about the text); the questions must be sent to me by email 24 hours before the class in which it will be posed; I will post the question on the discussion board for that week (on D2L) and we will pull the question up for discussion during the class; (2) you will need to come to class prepared to contribute to discussion in response to the question(s) being posed; you will probably not be able to contribute to every discussion but you should be prepared to do so and you should make sure you have made at least three strong contributions to discussion during the term (this may include in-person on zoom or by responding on the class discussion board). Your final participation grade will be a reflection of both how well you met these requirements and your overall contributions to the class throughout the term.

### Secondary Reading Assignment

(2–3 pages, MLA format – **due to D2L by 5pm on October 2nd**)

Using either the MLA Bibliography or JSTOR, locate an article in a scholarly journal or a chapter in an edited collection (not an encyclopaedia entry) that offers a reading of a poem or more than one poem by either Anne Bradstreet or Phyllis Wheatley. Write a review of the article/chapter in which you: (a) identify the thesis of the article/chapter; (b) provide a brief summary of its argument; and (c) identify what you think are the key strengths and/or weaknesses in its reading of the primary text. Conclude the assignment with a Works Cited page (not included in the page count), citing the article/chapter in correct MLA format (10% of the grade will be decided by the Works Cited page).

Remember, titles of articles, essays, and poems (if they were initially published inside a longer collection or anthology) should be in quotation marks; titles of stand-alone texts (such as the title of the *Norton Anthology* should be in italics).

### Close-Reading Assignment

(2–3 pages, MLA format – **due to D2L by 5pm on October 23rd**)

Choose a passage of 1–2 paragraphs from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* and identify this passage with quotation marks indicating the beginning and end of the passage and a page reference at the start of the assignment. Develop a close-reading of the passage, an *explication de texte*, that makes a case for why this particular passage is significant in the context of the complete autobiography. Your reading should pay particularly close attention to:

- style (is the passage stylistically distinct? or is it exemplary of Douglass's style throughout? what rhetorical devices does Douglass employ in the passage and what are their effects? how does the style of the passage relate to its subject matter?);
- structure (where is the passage located? does the passage represent a turning-point or a transitional moment in the text? is the passage expository? what is the function of this passage in the larger structure of the autobiography?);
- and audience (who does the passage appear to be addressing? is the implied reader of this passage different from the audience imagined at other points in the narrative? does the passage seem to envisage more than one audience?).

Think of these questions as prompts rather than as an exhaustive list that must be answered one by one; your assignment should have an argumentative structure that makes sense for the particular case that you are making for the passage's significance. Conclude the assignment with a Works Cited page (not included in the page count), citing the *Narrative* in correct MLA format.

**Research Essay**

(5–9 pages, MLA format – **due to D2L by 6:30pm on November 14th**)

1. Discuss how one or two texts from the course endeavour to answer or to complicate Crèvecouer's question, "What is an American?"

2. Discuss how one or two texts from the course explore tensions between individual and communal values.

3. Discuss the significance of acts of reading and/or writing for one or more texts from the course.

4. Discuss how one or two texts from the course handle the relationship between the past and the present.

5. Discuss the relationship between gender and authority in one or two texts from the course.

Alternatively, you may propose your own essay topic but you must come to me with your topic before you hand the essay in – failure to do so will result in mark penalties.

For each question you need to come up with a specific argument about the issues raised by the question. The argument should be indicated in a one- to two-sentence THESIS STATEMENT appearing in the opening paragraph (the introduction) to your essay.

Your essay must demonstrate an awareness of critical readings of the text you have chosen – you must cite at least three secondary sources and one of these must be from an article published in an academic journal. Use the **MLA Bibliography** database, available electronically through the library catalogue, to perform a keyword search for appropriate articles related to your chosen topic.

### Final Exam

Details to be provided at a future date.

### Marking Standards

All assignments will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards[1].

### Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment, all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Student Code of Conduct[2].

## Course Policies

Please keep in mind that proper class participation includes appropriate interactions between students and appropriate behavior in the classroom. Please refrain from speaking when others are speaking. Please refrain from surfing the internet or playing on your phone during classtime. Sexist, homophobic, and/or racist comments or behavior will not be tolerated.

While I will distribute powerpoint presentations after classes through desire2learn, these will not substitute for your own notetaking, these powerpoint displays will make little sense unless you have attended the class and not every class will have a powerpoint presentation. Taking detailed notes will serve you well during exam time. Students are expected to complete ALL assigned readings prior to class.

Keep a copy of all written work—accidents happen, and essays and assignments can go missing. It is the student's responsibility to have a backup ready should this occur.

[1] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marking-standards
[2] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-conduct

## University Policies

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Student Code of Conduct[3].
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities in accordance with the terms of the Ontario Human Rights Code[4]. This occurs through a collaborative process that acknowledges a collective obligation to develop an accessible learning environment that both meets the needs of students and preserves the essential academic requirements of the course. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS)[5] and register as early as possible.

This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage[6] and/or the Desire2Learn[7] site for the course.

[3] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/293/docs/Student-Conduct/Student%20Code%20of%20Conduct%20-%20Academic%20Integrity.pdf
[4] http://www.ohrc.on.ca/en/ontario-human-rights-code
[5] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/student-life/student-services/accessibility
[6] https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english
[7] http://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/d2l/home