



**LIVING &
LEARNING**

ENGLISH 230: Literature in Context

(3 credits)

Quito, Ecuador

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

According to the critic J. Hillis Miller, a literary text "is inhabited by a long chain...of presences, allusions, guests, and ghosts of previous texts." We will explore the implications of this statement by looking at how mid-nineteenth century American writers have shaped the collective imagination of the nation at large and modern/contemporary authors specifically. We will, for example, trace the influence of Henry David Thoreau on such writers as Annie Dillard, Wendell Berry, and Jonathan Krakauer. We will listen carefully to the dialogue that took place between American Renaissance writers themselves and to the conversation they began with writers who would succeed them. We will connect the past and present through a series of critical dialogues between Emily Dickinson and Sylvia Plath; Harriet Beecher Stowe and Terrence Malik;

Nathaniel Hawthorne and Henry James; Edgar Allan Poe and William Faulkner; and Ralph Waldo Emerson and Robert Bellah. The main texts will be from the American Renaissance period, but we will examine essays, short stories, poems, and films from the modern/contemporary period.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Learning Outcome #1: o Gaining a broader understanding of the Transcendental movement and mid-nineteenth century literary culture, and tracing their impact on American identity.

Learning Outcome #2: Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, documents and points of view. We will read authors from different historical periods than ours, and examine the ideas and assumptions that gave shape to their worldview. By exploring the points of view and historical shifts occurring during the mid-nineteenth century, we will come to understand our contemporary moment more clearly. As we study the literature of this period, we will evaluate our own assumptions, the lens through which we read these authors.

Learning Outcome #3: o Developing skills in expressing oneself orally and in writing. This course seeks to enhance your critical reading and writing skills by providing you with tools for analyzing literature. You will write formal essays and post informal reading responses. Finally, you are expected to participate

actively in class.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

<i>House of Seven Gables</i>	Nathaniel Hawthorne,	(Oxford)
<i>Minister's Wooing</i>	Herman Melville,	(Oxford)
<i>Wild</i>	Harriet Beecher Stowe,	(Penguin)
<i>can Literature</i>	Jonathan Krakauer,	(Anchor)
		, Volume B (Norton)

COURSE EXPECTATIONS:

- _____:
Engagement and participation are essential to learning in any environment. Active course participation is therefore considered mandatory. Therefore it is required that students arrive ON TIME and attend each class session. If there is some extreme emergency for missing a class or arriving late, please contact the professor by phone or e-mail with as much advanced notice as possible (contact information on page 1). Absences, tardies and participation will impact the final grade (see grading information). Good preparation on the part of all members of the class will enhance the learning experience for everyone. Any student that misses 50% of the course sessions will not receive credit for the course.
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Class hours will be focused on the class content and the community within the classroom. All cell phone use, social networking and e-mailing should be avoided. Cell phones should be turned off in consideration of others. Failure to do so could impact the final grade. Students may use laptop computers to take notes as long as the computer is used solely for class purposes.
- _____
 1. All written assignments should be typed in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, in APA format, with 1-inch margins, with properly formatted citations and References/Works Cited page.
 2. Whether students quote or paraphrase the ideas, concepts, or words of another author they are required to give credit to the author by citing the source (in-text & in works cited page). Wikipedia is not to be used as a credible source.
 3. All written assignments will have a length specified in the assignment description. Points will be deducted for assignments that do not meet the specified length – unless a range has been provided, and the specified length is a minimum. In striving for clear and concise writing, students should not exceed the specified length by 20%. References/Works Cited pages do not count towards the word or page length of a written assignment.

4. Written assignments are expected to have few, if any, grammatical, punctuation or spelling errors. Points will be deducted for such errors.
5. Avoid long quotes and seek to put information into your own words.
6. Any work that is plagiarized will be given a failing grade. For a clearer understanding of the types of plagiarism and how to avoid it, see:
<http://www.plagiarism.org/>

Course assignments (e.g., homework, projects, exams) will generally not be accepted late. Late work, when accepted, will not be awarded full credit.

The syllabus is a guideline, not a contract, and is subject to change at the instructor's discretion as circumstances warrant. Changes will be communicated via email and/or in-class.

Evaluation of your work is based on many factors. These include but are not limited to: participation, written assignments, and examinations. A "C" grade indicates adequate performance, a "B" grade indicates good, competent and complete work, and an "A" grade indicates creative excellence that is integrative and exceeds requirements.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Essay #1: 15% (1200 words);
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.
- Essay #2: 20% (1600 words)
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.
- Midterm: 15 %: In-class essay on the readings from the first half of the semester
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.
- Presentations: 10%
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.
- Participation: 15%; see requirements below
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.
- Discussion posts: 25%; 10 responses total; 200-250 words each (you must complete at least 7 out of 10 in order to receive a passing grade). Posts must be done by **midnight** on the night before class.
 - o Fulfills LO #1, #2 & #3.

Oral Presentations:

- Discussion Questions & Biography Presentation: Each week, you will post one

discussion question that pertains to the week's reading. Your question should be one of analysis rather than comprehension. Questions must be posted by **midnight** on the night before class. We will start class each week by discussing this question. You will also present a biography on an assigned author. You will be evaluated on how effectively you present your material. A rubric for this presentation will be discussed in class.

Extra-credit Assignments & Revisions of Essay:

- There will be no rewrites of your essay or extra-credit assignments to make up for a low grade or absences after the final draft of the essays have been submitted. You will have opportunities to revise your essays by submitting working drafts of your essays and receiving both oral and written feedback. Please take each assignment seriously, striving for excellence and meeting all the deadlines. Moreover, come to class on time, participate actively in discussion and do not miss more than two classes. If you do so, you will perform well in class.

Grading Scale	
Letter Grade	Numerical Equivalent
A	93 - 100
A-	90 - 92
B+	88 - 89
B	83 - 87
B-	80 - 82
C+	78 - 79
C	73 - 77
C-	70 - 72
D+	68 - 69
D	65 - 67
F	0 - 64.9

COURSE OUTLINE:

Week 1: Introduction,

In Class: Introductions; Syllabus; Canvas Introduction; Discussion on Worldview

Homework:

Reading: Read Emerson, "Self-Reliance" (, pp. 269-286); Bellah, "Finding Oneself" (link is on Canvas under "Modules"); Krakauer, , pp. ix-150.

Discussion Post: 1. How do Emerson's "Self-Reliance" and Bellah's "Finding Oneself" help you think about your identity and relationship to the larger community?

Discussion Question: Post one discussion question on Canvas.

Week 2: Emerson and Bellah

In Class: Discussion Question; Discuss Emerson and Bellah; Video

Homework:

Reading: Read Emerson, "Divinity School Address" (pp. 256-269); Bellah, "Religion" (link is on Canvas under "Modules"); Thoreau, , Chapter 1, 2 and Conclusion (, pp. 981-1033, 1147-1155); Krakauer, , pp. 151-206.

Discussion Post: Bellah writes that for some Americans, "the ultimate meaning of the church is an expressive-individualist one" (230). How might this be true in the way you or others around you approach faith? What might be the repercussions of this expressive-individualist faith? Please respond by engaging both Emerson and Bellah.

Discussion Question: Post one discussion question on Canvas.

Week 3: Emerson and Bellah

Thoreau and

Krakauer

In Class: Discussion Question; Discuss Emerson and Bellah; Author Biography Presentation Instructions; Prompt for Essay #1; In-class writing: How does Chris McCandless's life embody Emersonian or Thoreauvian principles? Do you admire him for attempting to live by these principles or see him ultimately as a selfish individualist?

Homework:

Reading: Read Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher" (, pp. 654-667); Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (document is on Canvas under "Modules"); Hawthorne, , pp. 5-132.

Discussion Post: Engage Hawthorne's work to reflect on how you have been shaped by the "house(s)" you have inhabited? "House" can be literal or metaphorical.

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Biography Presentation: Spend 2 hours researching the author of your choice. Directions and rubric will be posted in Canvas and discussed in class.

Essay #1: Brainstorm how you will respond to this essay.

Week 4: Poe, Faulkner, Hawthorne

In-Class: Discussion Question; Return in-class writing; Discuss Poe and Faulkner; Discuss Hawthorne and essay approach.

Homework:

Reading: Read Hawthorne, , pp. 133-319.

Discussion Post: In what ways do you see Hawthorne as a “voice” in more contemporary literature? Do any authors who preceded Hawthorne appear as a “voice” in his writing?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Essay #1: Complete a rough draft of essay #1 (1,200 words).

Week 5: Hawthorne

In-Class: Discussion Question; Rough Draft Writing Workshop

Homework:

Reading: Read Lincoln, “A House Divided” (, pp. 732-738); Bellah, “The House Divided” (link is on Canvas under “Modules”); Stowe, , pp. 3-98.

Discussion Post: 1. How do Lincoln and Bellah help you think about the ways in which a divided nation cannot stand and will ultimately harm itself?

2. What are some ways in which we can mend the divisions that exist in our nation?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Essay #1: Final draft of essay #1.

Biography Presentation: Spend 2 hours researching and beginning to organize your speech. If you have time, work on a visual.

Week 6: Lincoln and Bellah, Stowe (

In-Class: Discussion Question; Discuss Lincoln and Bellah; Discuss Stowe; Collect Final Essay; Discuss Author Biography; Midterm Instructions.

Homework:

Reading: Read Stowe, , pp. 99-332.

Discussion Post: How does Stowe’s text help you think about the way you approach faith and the problem of suffering?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Midterm: Prepare to take the midterm next week.

Week 7: Midterm Exam

In-Class: Discussion Question; Midterm Exam; Return Essay #1

Homework:

Reading: Read Melville, , pp. 1-150.

Discussion Post: What “whale” do you have in your life? How does that affect the way you live? **Or:** What experience have you had watching others pursue “whales” in their lives? What is the outcome of this chase?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Biography Presentation: Presentation is due next week.

Week 8: Melville

In-Class: Discussion Question; Author Biography Presentation: Return Midterm; Discuss Melville; Start ; Essay Prompt #2.

Homework:

Reading: Read Melville, pp. 151-350

Discussion Post: How does the “voice” of Melville appear in

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas

Essay #2: Brainstorm and outline how you will respond to this essay. Do research and

find 3 additional sources (spend at least 4 hours on this).

Week 9: Melville

In-Class: Discussion Question; Discuss Melville; Return Author Biography Presentation Grade; Finish watching

Homework:

Reading: Read Melville, pp. 351-508

Discussion Post: What role does "chasing one's dreams" play in American society? At what point does a "dream" become an "obsession"? How is that tied to our notion of success?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas.

Essay #2: Write at least half of your essay (3 of the 6 pages). Bring it to class next week.

Week 10: Melville

In-Class: Discussion Question; Discuss Melville; Rough Draft Writing Workshop

Homework:

Discussion Post: What essential learning and growth has happened in this class throughout this semester?

Discussion Question: Post one Discussion Question on Canvas (there is no assigned reading this week, so your question is open-ended).

Essay #2: Complete a rough draft of essay #2 (1,600 words)

Week 11: Melville and Final Wrap-Up

In-Class: Discussion Question; Rough Draft Writing Workshop; Course Debrief and Evaluation

Homework:

Essay #2: Final draft

COURSE EVALUATION:

Essay #1	15%	
Essay #2	20%	
Midterm	15%	
Presentations		10%
Participation	15%	
Discussion Posts	<u>25%</u>	
Total:	100%	