

## Inventing America: 19<sup>th</sup> Century American Literature

7.1 Module Overview									
<b>Module Number</b>		<b>Module Title</b>	Inventing America: 19 <sup>th</sup> Century American Literature						
<b>Stage of Principal Programme</b>			2	<b>Semester</b>	2	<b>Duration.</b> (Weeks F/T)	12	<b>ECTS</b>	5
<b>Mandatory / Elective (M/E)</b>	M	<b>Hours of Learner Effort / Week</b>	2.3						
Analysis of required hours of learning effort									
<b>Teaching and Learning Modalities</b>					<b>✓if relevant to this module</b>	<b>Approx. proportion of total (hours)</b>			
<b>Contact Hours</b>									
In person face-to-face					✓	28			
Synchronous									
<b>Indirect/Non-Contact Hours</b>									
Asynchronous									
Work Based									
Other:									
• Independent self- direct reading					✓	42			
• Research, preparation and completion of assessment					✓	25			
• Exam Preparation					✓	30			
<b>Total</b>						125			

<b>Pre-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title</b>	N/A
<b>Co-Requisite Module, if any. Module # and Title</b>	N/A
<b>Maximum number of learners per instance of the module</b>	120
<b>Specification of the qualifications (academic, pedagogical and professional/occupational) and experience required of staff working in this module.</b>	
<b>Role e.g., Tutor, Mentor, Lecturer, Research Supervisor, etc.</b>	<b>Qualifications &amp; experience required</b>
Lecturer	A minimum level 9 qualification in English Literature or closely cognate area
Tutor	A minimum level 9 qualification in English Literature or closely cognate area
	<b>Staff - Learner Ratio X:Y</b>
	1:120
	1:20

Assessment Techniques – percentage contribution					
<b>Continuous Assessment</b>	40%	<b>Proctored Exam – in person</b>	60%	<b>Practical Skills Based</b>	
<b>Project</b>		<b>Proctored Exam – online</b>		<b>Work Based</b>	
<b>Capstone (Y/N)?</b>	N	<b>If Yes, describe</b>			

7.2 Minimum Intended Module Learning Outcomes (MIMLOs)	
<b>MIMLO</b> On completion of this module a learner will be able to:	<b>Related MIPLO #</b>

1. Demonstrate a critical awareness of the works of major American writers from the nineteenth century and discuss how they contributed to a new and distinctly American mode of writing.	<b>1, 2, 3, 4</b>
2. Analyse prescribed texts in relation to key literary and historical contexts within American culture and society.	<b>3, 4, 8</b>
3. Identify and critically evaluate seminal and transformative developments in both poetry and prose in the literature of this period.	<b>1, 3, 4</b>
4. Fully engage with core themes of the course through classroom discussion and debate, and communicate ideas through written, verbal and digital means.	<b>3, 5, 6, 7, 8</b>

### 7.3 Indicative Module Content, Organisation and Structure

Lectures and seminars will be organised in key thematic blocks centred around the history, theorization, and critical interpretation of key texts of nineteenth-century American Literature. The module will begin by examining the origins of modern American cultural identity by focusing on the influence of early colonisers before analysing the new spirit and direction in American literature and culture that emerged in the early to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. It will analyse how key American authors contributed towards the naissance of a new and consciously independent American literary culture, while also analysing how their work critiques and interrogates the character of a young American nation.

This module will also foster an understanding of the relationship between American literature and the politico-economic, social, religious, and literary contexts informing its production, including: the evolution of American democracy; slavery, religion, and theories of race; (proto)Feminism and evolving gender identities; the growth of the city and emerging urban cultures; Conceptions of Nature, emerging modes of environmentalism and ecological perspectives; evolving conceptions of self and sanity; and the growth of key aesthetic modes, such as the Southern Gothic, realism, and naturalism.

Through its analysis of seminal works of American poetry and fiction, the module will extend the learner's comprehension of key literary genre, and through its exploration of a variety of critical responses to the texts under discussion, it will deepen the learners' critical skills and competencies; this will productively build on a knowledge base established in the 'Virtues of Poetry' and 'Fiction, Criticism and Interpretation' modules.

### 7.4 Work-based learning and practice-placement *(if applicable)*

N/A

### 7.5 Specific module resources required *(if applicable)*

N/A

### 7.6 Application of programme teaching, learning and assessment strategies to this module

Lectures will present information to learners in a variety of ways: from lecturer-led presentation of relevant historical, cultural, and critical context, to more discursive teaching formats offering greater opportunity to engage in detailed critical analysis of primary texts. In lectures, learners will be strongly encouraged to discuss and interrogate a range of interpretative positions related to the literature under discussion, while tutorials will also provide further opportunity for close-text analysis and debate, learner-led discussion, as well as assistance with assessment. Lecture content will primarily be displayed using Microsoft PowerPoint, but other presentation software will be deployed as needed: such as Mentimeter or Prezi.

Learners will access class notes, PowerPoints, and relevant articles and documents on Moodle, which will act as the digital interface for the course. A range of weblinks will also be accessible through Moodle, including documentaries, archival recording, and links to other primary sources of relevance to the course. This will

facilitate asynchronous learning and encourage learners to develop their sense of cultural context for the texts being considered.

The assessment for the module consists of a proctored written examination (60%) and continuous assessment worth (40%).

**Exam:** The exam will be a two-hour exam in which learners answer questions that allow them to demonstrate the achievement of MIMLOs 1, 2, and 3. Questions will be designed to encourage learners to analyse core texts in terms of key module themes and to reflect on how course texts reflect and interrogate their historical, cultural and artistic contexts.

**Continuous Assessment:** The continuous assessment asks learners to design a poster presentation focused on one of the core course texts in terms of its potential interest to a 19<sup>th</sup> century American audience. Learners must demonstrate their capacity to communicate in both visual and written forms using digital means (meeting MIMLO 4) as well as demonstrate an understanding of the distinct thematic and aesthetic properties of seminal American literary texts (meeting MIMLO 3). This assessment will also have a formative aspect as learners must workshop their poster presentation in a tutorial where they will receive feedback from their peers and the tutor.

7.7 Summative Assessment Strategy for this module		
MIMLOs	Technique(s)	Weighting
1, 2, 3	<b>Two hour Proctored Exam:</b> learners answer questions related to key modules themes and contexts in relation to core texts	60%
3, 4	<b>Poster:</b> learners design a poster focused on one of the core course texts in terms of its potential interest to a 19th century American audience	40%

## 7.8 Sample Assessment Materials

### Continuous Assessment Question (40%)

Imagine you are a living in the United States in the 19th century when the writers on the course were first publishing their work. Produce a poster, presented as a powerpoint slide, for a window display for one of the texts on the course. You should provide an overview of the text and outline at least three notable and/or original aspects of the writing that might attract readers' interest. Your poster should include at least one image.

*(Remember to avoid anachronisms. Your poster has to be made from the perspective of someone living in America in the 19th century. The poster does not have to reflect your own opinion of the author's work.)*

#### Marking Rubric

- Efficacy of language and visual appeal of poster. [40%]
- Accuracy of information, relevance of content, sensitivity to context. [40%]
- Fluency in expression and accuracy in grammar, syntax and punctuation [20%]

#### Exam (60%)

Representative Exam Questions:

1. With reference to the work of one or more writers on the course, write an essay analyzing the conception of self in their writing. In your answer, you may wish to consider how the writer depicts the self in relation to other individuals, society, and/or the larger universe.
2. Assess the ways in which any one or more writers on the course adapts gothic themes, devices, or settings to explore the causes and nature of profound psychological disturbance and suffering.
3. Outline the ways in which any one writer on the course challenged and/or reinvented the literary conventions and norms of their era. In your answer, you may wish to consider formal and thematic innovations in the genres of poetry or fiction.
4. In relation to one or more texts on the course, write an essay on the meaning and nature of Nature.

5. With reference to one or more texts on the course, write an essay assessing one of the following themes: Death and the afterlife; representation of American urban space; the influence of Emersonian transcendentalism.

Marking of assessments will be in line with the Marking Assessment Guidelines as outlined in Section 3.3 of the College's [Regulations in Relation to Assessment and Standards](#) unless otherwise indicated.

## 7.9 Indicative reading lists and other information resources

### Indicative Core Reading:

Reading lists should maintain a gender balance in the primary texts.

Chopin, Kate, *The Awakening* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2014)

Jacobs, Harriet Ann, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990)

Levin, Roberts S. and Arnold Krupat (eds) *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume B (1820 - 1865)* (New York and London: W.W. Norton and Co, 2007)

### Indicative Other Resources:

#### The list below will be supplemented with articles relevant to individual texts/themes

Bercovitch, Sacvan (ed) *Reconstructing American Literary History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986)

Bradbury, Malcolm and Richard Rutland, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Castronovo, Russ, (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Cunliffe, Marcus *The Literature of the United States* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986)

Donoghue, Denis *The American Classics*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2005)

Edmundson, Mark, *Song of Ourselves: Walt Whitman and the Fight for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2021)

Gray, Richard, *A History of American Literature* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2004)

Keetley, Dawn & Matthew Wynn Sivils, (eds), *Ecogothic in Nineteenth-Century Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2017)

Li, Wanlin, *Global Ambiguity in Nineteenth-Century American Gothic: A Study in Form, History, and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2021)

Matterson, Stephen, *American Literature: The Essential Glossary* (London: Arnold, 2003)

Matthiessen, F.O., *American Renaissance* (London: Oxford U.P., 1980)

Reynolds, David S., *Beneath the American Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989)

Roy Harvey Pearce, *The Continuity of American Poetry* (Princeton: Guildford: Princeton University Press, 1977)

Winter, Molly Crumpton. *American Narratives: Multiethnic Writing in the Age of Realism*. (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 2007)

### Relevant Websites:

Ed Folsom and Christopher Merrill, 'Every Atom: Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself"' MOOC Pack, *International Writing Programme*, University of Iowa <https://www.distancelearningiwp.org/atom14> [Accessed, 10 October, 2023]

Blegvad, Peter, Sophie Koko, Tomas Kemp, Oswald Skillbard, 'Poetry of Perception', *Harvard X Neuroscience*, <https://vimeo.com/139929853> [Accessed, 10 October, 2023]