

Introduction to American Literature (seminar)

Instructor: Renáta Zsámba
e-mail: zsamba.renata@ektf.hu
zsamba.reni@gmail.com

Office hours: Tuesday 12:45 pm -13:45 pm

Room: 213

This course provides an opportunity to get an overview of some outstanding voices in American Literature. The selection is based on a wide spectrum of themes and types of writing, from Colonial Period up to World War II, regional and ethnic writing as well as modernist fiction.

Week 1 Introduction—Colonial Period

W. Bradford: “Of Plymouth Plantation” (Ch I, IX, X, XII, XXXII)

M. Rowlandson: “A Narrative of Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson” (1, 2, 3, 12, 20th Remove)

Crèvecoeur: “Letters from an American Farmer”

Week 2 Nationmaking:

T. Jefferson: “The Declaration of Independence”

B. Franklin: *Autobiography* (abstracts)

Week 3 The Knickerbockers

Washington Irving: “Rip Van Winkle”

Week 4 Finding the American voice: The American literary imagination expanding:

E. A. Poe: “The Murders at the Rue Morgue”

Week 5 The American Renaissance: Transcendentalism and Late Romanticism

R. W. Emerson: “Self-Reliance”, Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Young Goodman Brown”

Week 6 Slave Narratives

Frederick Douglass: *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

Week 7 The American Poet

Walt Whitman: “Song of Myself” (1,2,5,6,15)

Week 8 **Midterm quiz**

Week 9 **Regionalism and Realism**

Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
Kate Chopin: "The Storm"

Week 10 **Naturalism:**
Jack London: "To Build a Fire"

Week 10 **The Jazz Age:** F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Week 11 **The Modernists**

Ernest Hemingway: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro"

Week 12 **The Harlem Renaissance**

Zora Neale Hurston: "How it Feels to Be Colored Me", "John Redding Goes to Sea"

Langston Hughes: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers",
"I, Too"

Week 13 **End-term paper**

Week 14 **Evaluation**

Course requirements:

As the course is a seminar, attendance is compulsory **Anyone missing the class more than three times will not be evaluated! Students are expected to read the reading material for every lesson which will be checked on in forms of short quizzes during the seminars. Please note that presence without any contribution in the seminars is not an achievement and cannot be considered in the final evaluation!**

Final grading will be based on students' contribution to classroom discussions, short quizzes and the results of the mid-term and end-term paper.

Evaluation:

Short quizzes: 20	100%-90% = 5
Mid-term test: 30	89% - 75% = 4
End-term test: 30	74% - 62% = 3
Classroom attendance and performance: 20	61% - 51% = 2
Total: 100	50% - 1% = 1

List of useful secondary sources

- Abádi-Nagy Zoltán. *Válság és komikum: A hatvanas évek amerikai regénye*. Budapest: Magvető, 1982.
- . *Az amerikai minimalista próza*. Budapest: Argumentum, 1994.
- . *Mai amerikai regénykalauz, 1970-1990*. Budapest: Intera, 1995.
- Bercovitch, Sacvan, ed. *The Cambridge History of American Literature*. Vol. 7: Prose Writing, 1940-1990 and vol. 8. Poetry and Criticism, 1940-1995. Ed. Cyrus R. K. Patell. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996.
- Bradbury, Malcolm, and Richard Ruland. *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature*. New York: Penguin, 1991.
- Cheyfitz, Eric, ed. *The Columbia Guide to American Indian Literatures of the United States Since 1945*. New York: Columbia UP, 2006.
- Elliott, Emory, gen. ed. *Columbia Literary History of the United States*. New York: Columbia UP, 1988.
- . *Columbia History of the American Novel*. New York: Columbia UP, 1991.
- Ford, Boris, ed. *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*. Vol. 9. American Literature. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988.
- Gray, Richard. *American Poetry of the Twentieth Century*. London: Longman, 1990.
- . *A History of American Literature*. London: Blackwell, 2004.
- Hilfer, Tony. *American Fiction since 1940*. London: Longman, 1992.
- Hoffman, Daniel, ed. *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1979.
- Kamp, Jim, ed. *Reference Guide to American Literature*. 3rd ed. Detroit: St. James Press, 1994.
- Logsdon, Loren, and Charles W. Mayer, eds. *Since Flannery O'Connor: Essays on the Contemporary American Short Story*. Macomb, ILL: Western Illinois U, 1987.
- Országh László, and Virágos Zsolt. *Az amerikai irodalom története*. Budapest: Eötvös József, 1997.
- Parini, Jay. *The Columbia History of American Poetry: From the Puritans to Our Time*. New York: Columbia, 1993.
- Rainwater, Catherine, and William J. Sheick, eds. *Contemporary American Women Writers*. Lexington: U of Kentucky P, 1985.
- Reynolds, Guy. *Twentieth-Century American Women's Fiction: A Critical Introduction*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999.

