

Christian Brothers College High School

/Saint Louis University

1818 Advanced College Credit Program

American Studies:

Course Syllabus 2008-9

1. Instructor : Dr. James P. Dohle, Jr. and Mr. Gary Ryan
2. Textbook: The American Tradition in Literature, 11th Edition, Perkins and Perkins, McGraw Hill. and The Americans, authors Danzer, Klor de Alva, Krieger, Wilson, Woloch, Online edition, 2003 (All page references here refer to the print edition 2003).
Outside readings on topics pertinent to the subject matter will be assigned from articles, books and periodicals available on the student's laptops and in the library.
3. General Course Description: This two-semester course is the perfect meld of U.S. history and U.S. literature. The American Studies course is designed to examine various components of American culture and interdisciplinary ways by which those components may be approached, e.g., historical, literary, political, sociological, etc. It explores the American experience from the Puritans to the 90's, focusing on specific formational ideas, concerns, and problem areas that have evolved in successive historical periods.. This interdisciplinary exploration of themes will be set in a chronological framework.
4. Prerequisites: Junior Standing
5. General Course Objectives:
 - A. To provide an interdisciplinary framework for the study of history and culture of the United States
 - B. To promote individual inquiry and small and large group interaction in meeting the course objectives
 - C. To nurture critical thinking skills
 - D. To approach the The American Tradition in Literature thematically
 - E. To focus on the analysis of events, movements, groups, and individuals who have shaped and continue to shape American culture and history
6. Student Objectives:
Students in the American Studies course will be able:
 - A. To interpret historical data
 - B. To use maps, charts and data tables as an aid to historical study.
 - C. To evaluate the "cause and effect" relationship between historical events.
 - D. To defend a personal interpretation of historical data in classroom discussion.
 - E. To identify the major periods and associated persons in the development of United States culture and history
 - F. To demonstrate a mastery of effective oral, written and visual communication of ideas related to American culture
 - G. To explore through inquiry and research, the interdisciplinary nature of a topic, as well as make a critical response to that inquiry

7. Significant Course Content and Approximate Dates

FIRST QUARTER

A. **The New England Colony**

- B. William Bradford from: *Of Plymouth Plantation*
Read pages 42-54 in *The American Tradition in Literature* and answer homework questions 1-8.
Concept: History, Providence, Predestination, Allusions

- C. Anne Bradstreet
“To My Dear and Loving Husband”
Read pages 69-78 in *The American Tradition in Literature*; answer homework questions.

Concept: lyric poetry, couplet, providence, the explication of poetry

- D. Edward Taylor
“Huswifery”
Read pages 105-110, answer homework questions
Handout “The Golden Day”
Concept: Conceit, The Puritan View of Predestination

- E. Jonathan Edwards
From “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God”
Read pages 160-168; answer homework questions
Concept: Persuasive Speeches-- Speaker’s qualification, audience, occasion, technique-- metaphors

- F. Cotton Mather
From *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (Salem Witchcraft Trials)
Read pages 113-125; answer homework questions
Concepts: Journal Entry, bias

Long-term assignments for the quarter:

- G. Read *The Crucible* –
H. A joint research project on Puritanism vs. McCarthyism with a group PowerPoint presentation. Students will be asked to contrast and compare these two witch hunts in American History.
[Group Project—A Comparison of *The Crucible* and *The Majestic*]
I. Individual Research Paper – First Rough Draft Due

[Addition: Jim will add something here.]

J. 1800-1840 A GROWING NATION: FROM REASON TO ROMANCE/ FROM JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY TO JACKSONIAN DEMOCRACY

Read pages 210-236 in Chapter Seven, *The Americans*. Students should answer questions 2-5 on pages 218, 223, 229, and 235.

- K. James Fenimore Cooper
“The Prairie”
Read pages 333-339; answer homework questions

Concepts: Setting, heroic figures--Natty Bumppo as “Adam in the fiction of the New World.”

- L. Webquest: Edgar Allen Poe
“The Fall of the House of Usher”
Read pages 563-575; answer homework questions
Concepts: Short Story--Romanticism in Poe, Elements of the Short Story--setting, single effect and theme

SECOND QUARTER—THE UTOPIAN ERA

A. 1840-1855 THE NEW ENGLAND RENAISSANCE: TRANSCENDENTALISM AND UTOPIAN COMMUNITIES

- B. Internet investigation of Utopian Communities (The Farm, Brooks Farm, Shakers, Robert Owens, Shakers, etc.)
Students should read pages 238-268 in Chapter Eight, The Americans. Students should answer questions 2-5 on pages 245, 253, 258 and 265. Students should also answer questions 1-2 on page 247.

- C. Ralph Waldo Emerson
From Nature; from Self-Reliance
Read handout; answer homework questions
Answer homework questions

Concepts: Transcendentalism, analogies, conformity

- D. “The American Scholar”
Read handout; answer homework questions

- E. “Concord Hymn”
Read pages 446; answer homework questions

- F. Henry David Thoreau
From Walden
Read handout; answer homework questions
Concepts: essay, Historical Context

- G. Comparison between Henry David Thoreau and Dr. Martin Luther King’s interpretations of Civil Disobedience
Read handout; answer homework questions

H. The Utopian Communities Project—100 points; research project that compares 19th century Utopian communities with contemporary utopian communities.

Long-term assignments for the second quarter:

- I. A joint internet project on Utopian Communities of the 1840s and 1850s.
- J. Introduction to a joint project on Civil War Diaries by producing 10 accounts prior to the Civil War.
- K. Individual Research Paper – completion

SECOND SEMESTER

A. The Civil War

Students should read pages 338-373 in *The Americans*. Students should answer questions 2-5 on pages 345, 350, 356, 365 and 371.

B. Frederick Douglas

“Learning to Read and Write”

Read 877-; answer homework questions

Concept: Autobiography

C. Manifest Destiny: Students should read pages 280-300 in *The Americans* and answer class handouts on the Texican Revolution and the Mexican-American War.

Students should read pages 302-335 in *The Americans*. Students should answer questions 2-5 on pages 309, 317, 321, 331 and questions 1-2 on pages 323 and 333

Answer homework questions

D. Mary Chestnut

From her Civil War Journal from the Online Syllabus; answer homework questions

E. Abraham Lincoln

Reply to Horace Greeley 846

Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery 847

Concept: Diction

F. Robert E. Lee

“Letter to his Son”

G. Walt Whitman and the Civil War

“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”

Read: Preface to the 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass* 902

For You O Democracy 956

answer homework questions

Concepts: Elegy, Free verse, symbols, America as the subject of poetry

H. Completion of Civil War Journals/ Hypermedia Composition

I. The REAL WEST

Students should read pages 406-432. Students should answer questions 2-5 on pages 417,424 and 429.

Students should also answer questions 1-2 on page 431.

J. Mark Twain 1021

Life on the Mississippi

The Boy's Ambition 1039

The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County 1024

Tom Quartz

Answer homework questions

Concepts: Point of View, Exaggeration, Dialect, Narration, Regional Dialects, and Tone

Huckleberry Finn--Novel

- K. Brete Harte
The Outcasts of Poker Flat 1179 –answer homework questions
Concept: Regionalism

- L. Ambrose Bierce
“An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” Film
Answer homework questions
Concepts: Point of View, Sequence of Events, Irony

Students should read pages 434-506 and answer questions 2-5 on pages 439, 446, 455, 465, 472, 477, 487, 491, 495 and 503

- M. “The Real American West” a film narrated by Gary Cooper

Long-term assignments for the third quarter:

- N. A joint internet project on Jacob Reis How the Other Half Lives - Social Reform in the late 19th Century
O. Completion of the joint project on Civil War Diaries
P. Individual Research Paper – introduction and completion of a rough draft
Q. Images of the American West—A collaborative multi-media research project and webquest that challenges students to create a historical timeline of the American frontier in the era of 1850 to 1890 as seen through the images created by American artists.

[Additions: We need something more here for the American West.]

THIRD QUARTER

The Twentieth Century: Hope, Dissolution, Despair, an American Phoenix

- A. Read pages 510-666 in *The Americans*. Answer questions 2-5 in the sections included. Students will be dealing with Progressivism, World War I, and the Roaring 20s.
- B. THE GREAT GATSBY WEB-BASED MAGAZINE PROJECT: Students are expected as a class to produce a Time/ Newsweek style web-magazine on one year of the 1920s which reflects accurately The Great Gatsby. Students take on the role of writers, editors, graphic artists, and advertisers. Students submit their drafts to an online discussion board for review by teachers and peers. Finally, the students assemble and help to create a website for the magazine.**
- C. Read The Great Gatsby.
- D. Modernism in American Short Stories, Poetry, and Art:
- E. Ernest Hemingway
“In Another Country”
Answer homework questions
Concepts: Modernism, style, symbolism, theme
- F. JOHN DOS PASSOS 1701
From The 42nd Parallel
Big Bill 1703
From 1919

The House of Morgan 1707
From The Big Money
Newsreel LXVI 1714
The Camera Eye (50) 1715
Answer homework questions
Concepts: experimental modern narratives; documentary style

G. The Grapes of Wrath—We will be reading part of this novel in conjunction with a major collaborative research project that concludes with the create of a class website.

H. Read pages 668-804 in *The Americans* and answer questions 2-5 on The Great Depression, The New Deal and World War II.

Read pages 934-970 in *the Americans* and answer questions 2-5 on pages 941, 947, 953, 959 and 967.

I. MODERN POETRY

J. Carl Sandburg
Grass 1478
Chicago—online syllabus
Answer homework questions
Concepts: Free Verse

K. The Harlem Renaissance
Concepts: Writing a poem about a special place

L. **CLAUDE MCKAY 1652**
The Harlem Dancer 1653
Harlem Shadows 1653
America 1654
Outcast 1654

M. **LANGSTON HUGHES**
The Negro Speaks of Rivers 1680
The Weary Blues 1681
Harlem 1683
Feet Live Their Own Life 1684
Concepts: a comparison between rivers and black people

Long-term assignments for the third quarter:

- N. Multimedia, collaborative research project on *The Great Gatsby*
- O. Multimedia, collaborative research project on *The Grapes of Wrath*
- P. Multimedia, collaborative research project on the Harlem Renaissance

FOURTH QUARTER

- A. World War II to the Present
- B. New York Road Trip: A collaborative, multi-media research project on the development of New York from 1880-present.
- C. American Short Stories—Post-Modernism
- D. **RICHARD WRIGHT 1765**
From Black Boy
[A Five Dollar Fight] 1766
- E. **LANGSTON HUGHES**
Feet Live Their Own Life 1684
Other Selections from *The Best of Simple*
- F. John Cheever
The Swimmer
- G. Collaborative research and multimedia project on the Beats, poetry, art and jazz.
- H. Read Kurt Vonnegut's Slaughter-House Five
- I. The Dresden Multimedia Research Project

[Additions: Something for the Post-Modern World.]

- J. Read Tim O'Brian's Vietnam: The Things They Carried
- K. **CROSSCURRENTS: THE AGE OF ANXIETY: VIETNAM, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT 2039**
- L. **BOB DYLAN 2040**
 - * Masters of War 2040
 - * Blowing in the Wind (Handout)
 - * Mister Tambourine Man (Handout)
 - * Tangled Up In Blue (Handout)
- M. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. 2041
I Have Dream 2042
- N. BETTY FRIEDAN 2042
The Problem that Has No Name 2045
- O. Multimedia, collaborative research project on the Vietnam War and the Protest Movement

Long-term assignments for the fourth quarter:

- A. Individual Research Paper –completion of a 10 page paper
- B. Multimedia, collaborative research project on New York and the rise of the modern city.
- C. Multimedia, collaborative research project on the bombing of Dresden..
- D. Multimedia, collaborative research project on the Vietnam War and the Protest Movement

MAJOR ASSESSMENT/ EVALUATION STRATEGIES:

Unit Tests

Research Papers

Webquests

Multimedia Collaborative Research Projects: using PowerPoint, Flash, Movie Maker, and Website design tools.

Internet Research

Four major novels read along with appropriate primary sources.

METHODS FOR DETERMING FINAL GRADE

Total Points

GRADING SCALE:

A+	99-100%
A	95-98%
A-	93-94%
B+	91-92%
B	87-90%
B	85-86%
B-	85-86%
C+	83-84%
C	77-82%
C-	75-76%
D+	74%
D	72-73%
D	70-71%

KEY INFORMATION ESSENTIAL TO STUDENT SUCCESS IN COURSE: