

# ENGL 45A: SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE I: BEGINNINGS TO 1865

## Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
<b>Effective Term:</b>	Summer 2025
<b>Units:</b>	5
<b>Hours:</b>	5 lecture per week (60 total per quarter)
<b>Prerequisite:</b>	Eligibility for college-level composition (ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26), as determined by college assessment or other appropriate method.
<b>Advisory:</b>	Successful completion of college-level composition (ENGL 1A or 1AH or ESLL 26) or equivalent; not open to students with credit in ENGL 45AH, 48A or 48B.
<b>Degree &amp; Credit Status:</b>	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
<b>Foothill GE:</b>	Area 3: Arts & Humanities
<b>Transferable:</b>	CSU/UC
<b>Grade Type:</b>	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
<b>Repeatability:</b>	Not Repeatable

## Description

The first in a two-course sequence that surveys the history of American literature from its beginnings to the present. Introduces students to works of American literature from its beginnings through the Civil War, focusing on the evolution of literary traditions, genres, cultural voices, and ecological landscapes within historical, philosophical, social, political, and aesthetic contexts. Special emphasis on the contributions of diverse cultures in forging a distinctively American literature, landscape, and identity.

## Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of major writers, key texts, documents, and debates of American literature from 1492-1865 by analyzing the development of a distinctive national political and aesthetic culture as reflected in the major writers and texts of this period
2. Identify major literary genres, and trace the emergence and development of literary forms during this period
3. Apply relevant critical and theoretical frameworks to evaluate the literature within historical, multicultural, and philosophical contexts
4. Demonstrate orally and in college-level writing an analytical understanding of the literary texts
5. Demonstrate appropriate formatting and documentation

## Course Content

1. Major writers and canonical texts
  - a. Pre-contact Native American literatures
  - b. Early colonial narratives from explorers, such as Columbus, Cabeza De Vaca, Captain John Smith
  - c. Puritan texts (e.g., William Bradford, George Winthrop, Anne Bradstreet)
  - d. Revolutionary War era literature by writers such as Tom Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Phillis Wheatley Peters
  - e. African American literature by authors such as Olaudah Equiano, Phillis Wheatley, Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs
  - f. Transcendentalism (writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, Fuller)
  - g. Gothic literature (writers such as Hawthorne, Poe)
  - h. American Folk literature (e.g., Irving, Boone)
2. Literary genres and forms
  - a. Native American oral literatures, such as myths, songs, and legends
  - b. Puritan forms (e.g., religious histories, diaries, letters, poems, spiritual meditations)
  - c. Revolutionary War political documents
  - d. Slave narratives and speeches
  - e. Autobiography
  - f. Nature writing
  - g. Frontier fiction, tall tales
  - h. Poetic forms
    - i. Short fiction
    - j. Essays
3. Relevant critical and theoretical frameworks
  - a. Historical perspectives, including dominant ethical, philosophical, political, religious, social, and aesthetic perspectives in the literature of this period
    - i. Identify the role of literary representations in creating (and subverting) significant American political ideologies, including slavery and abolition, Manifest Destiny, the concept of inalienable rights
  - b. Gender studies
  - c. Queer theories; sexuality studies
  - d. Psychological theories (Freudian or Jungian)
  - e. Marxian or other socioeconomic frameworks
  - f. Theories of race and ethnicity
  - g. Postcolonial and neocolonial studies
4. Analytical understanding of the literary texts
  - a. Class discussion regarding analytical reading of literary texts
  - b. Composition of literary analysis essays on literary texts
  - c. Research to supplement understanding of the literary texts
5. Formatting and documentation
  - a. Modern Language Association (MLA)
  - b. American Psychological Association (APA)

## Lab Content

Not applicable.

## Special Facilities and/or Equipment

1. When taught on campus, no special facility or equipment needed.

2. When taught virtually, ongoing access to a computer with LMS-compatible software and internet browser.

## Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Discussion participation  
Journal entries  
Literary analysis and critical thinking demonstrated in writing and/or other media  
Presentations that employ literary, critical, and/or theoretical terminology

Individual and collaborative projects based on assigned texts or independent research  
Quizzes  
Exams  
"Unessay" projects

## Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Independent and collaborative reading/viewing/listening of assigned texts  
Lecture presentations on the history and interpretation of the assigned texts  
Instructor-guided and collaborative interpretation and analysis  
Presentations on inquiry projects focusing on key tools and skill sets in literary interpretation  
Student-led discussions and presentations

## Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Kurant, Wendy, editor. Becoming America: An Exploration of American Literature from Precolonial to Post-Revolution. 2019.

Levine, Robert S., and Sandra M. Gustafson, editors. The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter 10th ed.. 2022.

Spires, Derrick R., et al., editors. The Broadview Anthology of American Literature: Volumes A & B, Beginnings to Reconstruction. 2022.

Online resources:

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library. African American Woman Writers of the 19th Century. <https://libguides.nypl.org/african-american-women-writers-of-the-19th-century/home>.

University of Michigan Humanities Text Initiative. American Verse Project. <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/a/amverse/>.

Collections & Research, National Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian. <https://americanindian.si.edu/explore/collections/search>.

Colored Conventions Project. <https://coloredconventions.org/>.

Documenting the American South: Primary Sources for the Study of Southern History, Literature, and Culture. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/>.

North American Slave Narratives. <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/index.html>.

University of Maryland, Digital Programs and Initiatives. Early Americas Digital Archive. <http://eada.lib.umd.edu/>.

Early American Literature Podcast. 2019-2022. <https://eal.uky.edu/podcast>.

Cornell University, HathiTrust Digital Library. Making of America. <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/mb?a=listis&c=1930843488>.

## Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading selections from assigned anthology or primary sources of American literature
2. Supplemental readings from secondary sources, such as journal articles, monographs, biographies, podcasts, and/or videos, meant to familiarize students with ongoing debates and perspectives in the study of American literature
3. Close reading passages from an author's work that also address historical and literary contexts. Analysis of how a text reflects a particular literary movement, style, or period, or an author's literary and/or cultural contributions to American literature
4. Writing and research assignments may include journal entries, reading responses, annotated bibliographies, essays, and "unessay" projects that require summary, interpretation, analysis, and synthesis of original texts

## Discipline(s)

English