

## COURSE INFORMATION SHEET

<b>University:</b> Catholic University in Ružomberok	
<b>Faculty:</b> Faculty of Arts and Letters	
<b>Course code:</b> KA/Aj-B026A/22	<b>Course title:</b> American Literature
<b>Type and range of planned learning activities and teaching methods:</b> <b>Form of instruction:</b> Lecture / Seminar <b>Recommended study range:</b> <b>hours weekly:</b> 1 / 1 <b>hours per semester:</b> 13 / 13 <b>Teaching method:</b> on-site	
<b>Credits:</b> 4	<b>Working load:</b> 100 hours
<b>Recommended semester/trimester:</b> 5.	
<b>Level of study:</b> I.	
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	
<b>Requirements for passing the course:</b> Participation in group discussion: 20 course points (20%); Two short assignments (1.5-2 A4 pages each): 30 course points (30%) Oral or Written Examination: 50 course points (50%)	
<b>Learning outcomes of the course:</b> <b>Knowledge outcomes:</b> The course offers a general overview of the history of American literature, cultural trends and phenomena that are examined, discussed and critiqued via a systematic analysis of textual realia. The course offers a systematic overview of the pertaining concepts and theoretical frameworks of literary history, genres, canon formation, intertextual and transcultural influences, and the impact of cultural legacy on contemporary cultural identity <b>Skills outcomes:</b> Students will develop skills to critically assess literary and cultural phenomena; to construct and present arguments in an engaging and persuasive manner; students will develop analytical, writing, and presentation skills. <b>Competences:</b> By the end of the course, students will have gained competence in working with concepts, identifying and analyzing trends and central issues that shape the American cultural identity; students will develop a mastery of critical terminology via a historical overview with a strong emphasis on synthesis across periods, genres, trends as well as cultural, historical, political and economic phenomena of American literature. These competences translate into a range of future applications across the creative industries, education, cultural policy, politics and diplomacy, with special emphasis on cultural legacy and exchange. <b>Assessment:</b> A total of 100 course points Participation in group discussion: 20 course points (20%); Two short assignments (1.5-2 A4 pages each): 30 course points (30%) Oral Examination: 50 course points (50%) Pass mark: 60 %	

**Course contents:**

Course outline: The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the basic concepts, movements, genres, authors and cultural contexts of what is commonly referred to as “American Literature.” By looking at core texts from historical, geographical, ethnic, gender and thematic perspectives, we seek to explore the underlying heterogeneity and diversity that characterized the production of literatures and eventually brought about a multiplicity of American literary canons.

Topics:

- 1 Introduction, the problem of the “American Literary Canon;” Puritans and Colonial Times
- 2 Birth of a Nation; from the War of Independence to the Civil War (Political Writing, Slave Narratives)
- 3 Romanticism, Transcendentalism
- 4 Realism
- 5 Modernism I (Transatlantic Modernism, the 20s; American Dream, Harlem Renaissance)
- 6 Modernism II (Decline of the American Dream, hard-boiled fiction, cinema, Noir, Modern American Drama, poetic movements)
- 7 Postmodernism (language, decentralization, the literature of exhaustion, irony)
- 8 Postmodern futures? (SF, Cold War Fiction, Spy Fiction)
- 9 Multiple Voices (African-American Lit, Native American Lit, Jewish American Lit)
- 10 READING WEEK
- 11 Bestseller / Blockbuster
- 12 Summary and Conclusions

**Recommended or required literature:**

Captain John Smith: from *The General History of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles*;  
William Bradford: from *Of Plymouth Plantation*; from the poetry of Anne Bradstreet;  
Edward Taylor: *Huswifery*, *Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold*;  
Jonathan Edwards: *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*;  
Benjamin Franklin: from *The Autobiography*;  
Thomas Paine: from *Common Sense* (any selection from the anthology), from *The American Crisis*; *The Declaration of Independence*; *The Constitution of the United States*;  
Washington Irving: *Rip van Winkle* OR *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*;  
Edgar Allan Poe: *Lenore*; *The Raven*; *The Fall of the House of Usher* OR *The Purloined Letter*;  
*Murders in the Rue Morgue*;  
Ralph Waldo Emerson: *Self-Reliance* OR *The American Scholar* OR *The Poet* OR  
Henry David Thoreau: *Walden*;  
Nathaniel Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*;  
Herman Melville: *Bartleby the Scrivener*, *Moby Dick*;  
from the poetry of Emily Dickinson;  
Walt Whitman: from *Leaves of Grass*;  
Mark Twain: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* OR *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*;  
Henry James: *The Figure in the Carpet* OR *The Turn of the Screw* OR *A Portrait of a Lady*;  
Ernst Hemingway: *Snows of Kilimanjaro*;  
Francis Scott Fitzgerald: *Winter Dreams*; *The Great Gatsby*;  
William Faulkner: *A Rose for Emily*; *The Sound and the Fury*;  
Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*;  
Kurt Vonnegut: *Slaughterhouse 5* OR *Breakfast of Champions* OR Joseph Heller: *Catch XXII* OR  
John Barth: *Lost in the Funhouse*;  
Modern and postmodern poetry: 3-5 poems by Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Charles Olson, Robert Frost, Gertrude Stein, Amy Lowell, H.D., E.E. Cummings, Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg;  
three poets of the Harlem Renaissance; Frank O'Hara, Gary Snyder, John Ashbery;  
Thornton Wilder: *Our Town*; OR Arthur Miller: *Death of a Salesman*; OR Tennessee Williams: *A Streetcar Named Desire*; William S. Burroughs: *Naked Lunch* OR Nabokov: *Lolita* OR *Pale Fire*;  
Thomas Pynchon: *The Crying of Lot 49* OR Philip Roth: *The Human Stain*; William Gibson: *Neuromancer* OR Leslie Marmon Silko: *Ceremony* OR Sherman Alexie: *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*; Maya Angelou: *I know why the Caged Bird Sings* OR Toni Morrison: *The Song of Solomon* OR Bernard Malamud *The Magic Barrel*; Paul Auster: one book from *The New York Trilogy* OR Chuck Palahniuk: *Fight Club*

Secondary Literature:  
Richard Gray: *A History of American Literature*. Wiley-Blackwell. 2012;  
John Carlos Rowe (ed): *A Concise Companion to American Studies*. Wiley-Blackwell. 2010;  
Paul Lauter (ed): *A Companion to American Literature and Culture*. Wiley-Blackwell, 2010;  
Walter Kalaidjian: *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*. CUP, 2006; Bran Nicol: *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*. CUP, 2009. Scavan Bercovitch (ed): *The Cambridge History of American Literature Vol. 7*. CUP 1999 [Cambridge Histories Online, CUP, 2008].

**Language of instruction:**

English

**Notes:**

<b>Course evaluation:</b> Assessed students in total: 20					
A	B	C	D	E	FX
30.0	35.0	20.0	5.0	0.0	10.0
<b>Name of lecturer(s):</b> doc. Mgr. Janka Kaščáková, PhD., PaedDr. Katarína Labudová, PhD.					
<b>Last modification:</b> 15.11.2022					
<b>Supervisor(s):</b> Person responsible for the delivery, development and quality of the study programme: prof. Nóra Séllei, PhD., DrSc.					