

**COURSE DATA****DATA SUBJECT**

**Code:** 35342  
**Name:** American literature II: from the 19th to the 21st centuries  
**Cycle:** Undergraduate Studies  
**ECTS Credits:** 12  
**Academic year:** 2025-26

**STUDY (S)**

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1000 - Degree in English Studies	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	3	Annual

**SUBJECT-MATTER**

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1000 - Degree in English Studies	Literature of the United States	COMPULSORY

**COORDINATION**

BRIGIDO CORACHAN ANA MARIA

**SUMMARY**

This course is a survey of American literature from the late 19th century up to the 21st century. Using Donald E. Pease's words, it aims to study the narratives organized around the Virgin Land to Ground Zero American governing metaphors, that is to say, the shift in dominant fictions from "a secured innocent nation to wounded, insecure, emergency state". As such, it will demonstrate the continuity throughout the 20th century of all of the issues presented in the previous course (*US Literature: Origins through the 19<sup>th</sup> Century*) and will consider the various forms they have taken in fiction and non-fiction genres.

We will read and discuss key works (novels, short stories, plays, poems, essays) penned by some of the most important writers of the period under consideration. Among the aspects to be treated are: experimentation in narrative technique and storytelling, autobiography and the *Bildungsroman* in the 20th century, The Lost Generation and the death of the American Dream, the search for meaning in the dehumanized world of the twentieth-first century, the impact of civil protest and resistance in literature, and the divergent histories, experiences, and voices of multicultural America.

**PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE****RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE**



There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

## OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Students should have a C1 level of English. They should have taken *Literature of the United States I: Origins to the 19th Century*.

The ability to communicate at the C1 (CEFR level) is required to pass the course as a whole. Students whose communication (written and/or oral) displays errors that are not consistent with the above level will fail the module regardless of their performance related to the course contents.

## COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

### 1000 - Degree in English Studies

Demonstrate, within the field of English Studies, an ethical attitude that focuses on aspects such as gender equality, equal opportunities, the values of the culture of peace and democracy and a sensitiveness regarding environmental problems and sustainability while, at the same time, knowing about and being able to appreciate linguist diversity and multiculturalism.

Demonstrate communicative and social competence in the English language (oral and written comprehension and expression, communicative interaction and mediation that includes correct grammar and style).

Develop a critical ability to explain literary texts in English and to identify aesthetic conventions, movements, periods, genres, authors and works in English language and their modes of production.

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Students must have developed the learning skills needed to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

## DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

The subject will consider the following periods and movements in a chronological and/or thematic manner:



## **1. The Civil War: Realism and Naturalism**

After the Civil War literature shifted from romantic idealism to realism. We'll examine a selection of mid and late 19th century novels and short stories penned by some of the most well-known authors of the American Renaissance.

## **2. Early 20th Century Literature and the Avantgarde**

Post-WWI disillusionment sparked experimental literary techniques, fragmented narratives, and the "Lost Generation's" exploration of meaninglessness and alienation. Simultaneously, First Wave Feminist and Harlem Renaissance authors examined gender issues and celebrated African American culture and identity through jazz-influenced texts that challenged racial stereotypes.

## **3. Depression, Second World War and Post-War Literature**

Great Depression and Post-WWII writers explored economic hardship, suburban conformity, and existential anxiety through both realistic and experimental forms.

## **4. Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, Postmodernism and the 21st Century**

After WWII literature became increasingly diverse and political, challenging traditional narratives through marginalized voices, postmodern metafiction, and fragmented storytelling techniques that questioned absolute truths. 21st century literature has continued to focus on issues such as post 9/11 trauma, crisis, and surveillance culture, gender, sexuality, and environmentalism, among others.

## **5. Note**

This module engages topics that can be controversial and delicate for sensitive students. Some readings and other visual content (paintings, engravings, photographs, films, etc.) in this course consider issues that might be considered offensive from a racial, gender, or sexual perspective and/or shocking (death or suicide) but which are essential to understand key aspects of human lives throughout history and of contemporary American culture and society. They will be dealt with as respectfully as possible. Lecturers and students have the responsibility to build an open and safe



space for the critical exchange of ideas in the 21st century where conscious and collaborative learning can take place.

Having successfully completed this course, students will be able to:

1. apply concepts and knowledge related with the esthetic conventions, evolution, modes of production and the reception of works, genres and movements in North American literature to the following learning outcomes,
2. identify passages from literary works they have read during the course or seen in class,
3. evaluate the meaning and significance of these passages within their respective works,
4. write a stylistic commentary on a passage or a short text,
5. explicate, interpret or criticize a literary text from the United States using various methodological approaches.

## WORKLOAD

### PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	120,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>120,00</b>

### NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	4,00
Individual or group project	56,00
Independent study and work	100,00
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	20,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
<b>Total hours</b>	<b>180,00</b>

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

**Theory-based classes:** This subject will be structured around participative lecture classes that aim to provide the necessary historical and cultural context for each movement or period under consideration, and commentary and group discussion of representative texts included in the reading list.

**Practical classes:** Group discussion of all representative texts of each unit.



This module will be part of the teaching innovation projects of the Consolidated Teaching Innovation Group NAPCED: Nuevas Aplicaciones de la Pedagogía Crítica a la Educación Digital en la Literatura y la Cultura Audiovisual (Ref. GCID23\_2580121).

It seeks to raise awareness over several ODS such as ODS 1, ODS 4, ODS 5, ODS 10, ODS 11, ODS 16 and ODS 17.

## EVALUATION

### FIRST CALL

#### Option A

- JANUARY: written exam on first term contents 40%
- MAY/JUNE: written exam on second term contents 40%
- Continuous assessment: group projects, essays or/and participation 20%

**Students who take the January examination must follow Option A in May/June as well.**

#### Option B

- MAY/JUNE: written exam or/and written work on first term and second term contents 80%
- Continuous assessment: group projects, essays or/and participation 20%

### SECOND CALL



Written exam or/and written work on first term and second term contents 80%

Continuous Assessment marks will be carried over to the retake 20%

Those students who have been assessed during the semester for their individual work and/or group work, including activities and projects, in-class participation, etc., will keep their grade in the second call. **These activities and projects can only be done during the semester and cannot be handed in for the second call.**

**The ability to communicate at the C1 English language level is required to pass the course as a whole. Students whose communication (written and/or oral) displays errors that are not consistent with the above level will fail the module regardless of their performance related to the course contents.**

**Students should be aware that any form of plagiarism in their written work will result in a failing grade for the module. If you use external sources, you need to acknowledge them using in-text parenthetical citations and a final bibliography, and follow a standard citation style format such as MLA or APA.**

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community and for the fair evaluation of the student's work. All work submitted in this course must be originally authored by every student. No student shall engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software.

The general grading system will follow the regulations of the University of Valencia approved by the Consell de Govern on May 30, 2017 (ACG ValenciaUV 108/2017).

## REFERENCES

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- Bigsby, C.W.E. *A Critical Introduction to Twentieth-Century American Drama*. Cambridge Univ. Press, 1982.
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- Bradbury & Richard Ruland. London, 1991.
- --- *The Modern American Novel*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1992.
  - Connor, Steven, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005.
  - Davis, Allen & Lee M. Jenkins (eds) *The Cambridge Companion to Modernist Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2007.
  - Elliott, Emory, ed. et al. *The Columbia Literary History of the United States*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988. Ed. española, *Historia de la Literatura Norteamericana*, trad. María Coy, Madrid: Cátedra, 1991.
  - Elliott, Emory, ed. et al. *The Columbia History of the American Novel*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1991.
  - Hayes, Kevin A *Journey through American Literature*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.
  - Heath Justice, Daniel *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 2018.
  - Kalaidjian, Walter (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press: 2005.
  - Manuel Cuenca, Carmen *La literatura de los Estados Unidos desde sus orígenes a la Primera Guerra Mundial*. Madrid: Síntesis, 2006.
  - McHale, Brian *Postmodernist Fiction*. London: Routledge, 1991.
  - Parini, Jay & Brett C. Millier, eds. *The Columbia History of American Poetry*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993.
  - Morrison, Toni *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. New York, Vintage, 1992.
  - Vargas, Deborah et. al. *Keywords for Latina/o Studies*. New York Univ. Press, 2017.