



American Literature

Summer 2019



Eligible Students:

Advanced rising 8th Graders and 9-12th Grade Students.

Instructor: Emily Gerard

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Course Dates:

June 4 - August 20, 2019

Classes will be held on **Tuesdays from 11:00-12:00 EST** for the duration of the summer term (12 weeks).

Zoom Meeting ID:

478811767

Course Texts and Reading Schedule:

Parents Please Note:

In examining the rich tapestry of American experiences, some of the novels will contain mature themes such as slavery, racism, and abuse. These topics will be covered with sensitivity. Human sinfulness is pervasive and affects every aspect of American life - I believe that to pretend it does not exist and sanitize the canon of great American literature does a disservice to our students in their growth and development as young adults. As Christians, I believe it is our call to interact with culture and examine ways in which we can work to redeem this broken creation. I have attempted to note any potentially objectionable content in the Further Description/ Notes segment below so that parents and students can discuss and engage with these topics together, and so that it does not come as a surprise to anyone during the course.

Students will be expected to read between 100-150 pages of novels/ short stories per week - students will read a total of 5 novels and several short stories over the course of 12 weeks. There will be no writing requirements in this course.

Week/ Dates	Author/ Title	Selection Type & Number of Pages*	Further Description/ Notes
Week 1: June 4 Orientation to the texts and to the class *No reading prior to class necessary this week: See Further Description/ Notes	<i>America, I Sing You Back</i> - Allison Adelle Hedge Coke <i>I, Too</i> - Langston Hughes <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i> - Maya Angelou	Poetry	Discussion: What is American Literature & what makes it unique? Brief introduction to each of the texts we will be reading this summer, including author biographies. Reading & discussion of selected poems
Week 2: June 11	Harriet Beecher Stowe - <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i>	Novel: 200 pages total We will read and discuss the first half of the novel.	This novel, written by an abolitionist in 1852, had a profound impact on the social perception of slavery in America. It discusses the horrors of American slavery and provides relevant details.
Week 3: June 18	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin, continued</i>	We will read and discuss the second half of the novel.	

Week 4: June 25	Willa Cather - <i>My Antonia</i>	Novel: 192 pages total We will read and discuss the first half of the novel.	Details the life of pioneer women in the American West. Antonia becomes pregnant out of wedlock and faces a great deal of difficulty because of this.
Week 5: July 2	<i>My Antonia, continued</i>	We will read and discuss the second half of the novel.	
Week 6: July 9	John Steinbeck - <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i>	Novel: 283 pages total We will read and discuss the first half of the novel.	The life of migrant workers during the depression is a rough one, and there is some rough language in this novel. There are also a few instances in which sex is discussed.
Week 7: July 16	<i>The Grapes of Wrath, Continued</i>	We will read and discuss the second half of the novel.	
Week 8: July 23	Langston Hughes <i>Not Without Laughter</i>	Novel: 224 pages total We will read and discuss the first half of the novel.	
Week 9: July 30	Langston Hughes <i>Not Without Laughter</i>	We will read and discuss the second half of the novel.	
Week 10: August 6	Zora Neale Hurston - <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i>	Novel: 256 pages total We will read and discuss the first half of the novel.	Written in southern vernacular, there is some profanity, and discussion of sexuality.

Week 11: August 13	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God, Continued</i>	We will read and discuss the second half of the novel.	
Week 12: August 20	<i>The Complete Stories</i> Flannery O'Connor 978-0374515362	Short Stories (approximately 100 pages of reading from this text)	Some of the selections discuss murder.

**Page numbers are based on my copies of the books -the copies you purchase may vary slightly.*

Summer American Literature Course Description:

Does your high school student love to read and discuss books? This course is designed to serve as a supplemental course to allow students the opportunity to read and discuss a curated list of great American literature over the summer.

The United States is a diverse nation, and the literature produced in our country reflects this rich history. Including authors such as Harriet Beecher Stowe, Zora Neale Hurston, and Flannery O'Connor, we will sample the writings of authors from a diverse set of backgrounds and time periods in order to more deeply understand and appreciate the tapestry of experiences that define what it means to be an American.

There are many books that one could choose to study when examining American literature. Seminal works such as *The Jungle*, *Moby Dick*, or *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, could be included in such a list. However, the focus of this course in American literature is to highlight important works of literature by authors from diverse backgrounds that chronicle the experiences of different types of Americans. Our first selection, *Uncle Tom's Cabin (1852)*, chronicles the experience of slaves in the United States, and was deeply influential in the 19th century abolitionist movement prior to the Civil War. Our second selection, *My Antonia (1918)*, chronicles the life of a Western pioneer woman who is an immigrant from (what was then) Bohemia. The third selection, *Their Eyes Were Watching God (1937)*, is written in Southern vernacular and chronicles the life of a black southern woman in the early 1900s. The fourth selection *Not Without Laughter* chronicles the life of an African American boy in Kansas and provides an account of life in the midwest in the early 20th century. Our fifth selection, *The Grapes of Wrath (1962)*, chronicles the lives of migrant workers during The Great Depression. Our final selection, *The Complete Short Stories (1971)* Flannery O'Connor provides a unique perspective on Americanism through a series of short stories that serve as vignettes of the American experience. In reading these works, the ultimate purpose of this course is to examine the American experience from different lenses.

Student Expectations

Students will be expected to attend class sessions as they are able and have the materials read in preparation for class in order to have rich class discussions. **The reading load will be approximately 100 - 150 pages per week of novels/ short stories.** Students may turn in an **optional** reflection essay at the end of the term.

As students' ability to participate in person will vary from week to week, Students will also be able to participate in class discussion boards in between class sessions. These discussion boards will serve to both supplement and complement our in-class discussions on the texts. Discussion questions on the week's selection will be posted by Thursday of every week.

Please note: due to the flexibility of the summer term, there is no attendance requirement.

Student Evaluation

Please note, *students do not receive credit for taking this course!* As this is a summer course, students will not be expected to complete rigorous homework assignments, essays, etc. I will provide students with narrative feedback throughout the course, challenging them to think more deeply about the texts. I will provide a narrative at the end of each course for the student - *no grades will be assigned.*

The Virtual Classroom:

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as .pdfs. They will submit their work to the *American Literature* Schoology assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

About the Instructor:

Emily Gerard was first immersed in the world of classical education as a young student, and this early exposure sparked a passion for the classics and for classical learning that has carried her through her undergraduate education, graduate education, and through her teaching career. She holds a BA in Political Science and Philosophy from Gordon College and an MA in Government from The Johns Hopkins University. Both of these degrees were attained summa cum laude. She has taught Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Latin for the past five years, most recently at Logos Academy, a classical school in downtown York, Pennsylvania. Mrs. Gerard currently lives in York with her husband, their two young daughters, and a border collie.