Universidad Zaragoza

Year : 2019/20

27831 - American Literature II

Syllabus Information

Academic Year: 2019/20
Subject: 27831 - American Literature II
Faculty / School: 103 - Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
Degree: 416 - Degree in English
ECTS: 6.0
Year: 3
Semester: First semester
Subject Type: Compulsory
Module: ---

1.General information

1.1.Aims of the course

1.2.Context and importance of this course in the degree

1.3.Recommendations to take this course

2.Learning goals

2.1.Competences

2.2.Learning goals

2.3.Importance of learning goals

3.Assessment (1st and 2nd call)

3.1.Assessment tasks (description of tasks, marking system and assessment criteria)

4.Methodology, learning tasks, syllabus and resources

4.1.Methodological overview

The methodology followed in this course is oriented towards achievement of the learning objectives. All class activities will be complemented by group or individual tutorials that form part of the face-to-face teaching and that can also be carried out by e-mail or via Moodle. The learning process is based on the student's active participation and encourages the accurate planning of their autonomous work, which includes the writing of an optional individual essay. The learning process fosters the development of the student's analytical skills and critical thinking, reasoning and argumentation, and involves the reading of the compulsory texts in the light of the recommended bibliography and the in-class teaching.

English will be the language used in all class activities, tutorials, essays and exams, and the literary texts shall be read in their original version.

4.2.Learning tasks

This is a 6 ECTS course organized as follows:

- **Theory sessions** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). Theory sessions (which include, for each topic, the study of the historical and cultural context, the main features of the period's literary production, the introduction to authors and texts, and the explanation of relevant critical and methodological approaches) consist of the teacher's presentation of such contents, and will be based on PowerPoint presentations and other materials available in Moodle. Student participation will be encouraged in these sessions by means of relevant questioning and prior knowledge-activating strategies.
- **Practice sessions and group seminars** (1.2 ECTS: 30 hours). Practice sessions consist of the critical analysis of

the compulsory literary texts. Previous reading on the part of students is essential for the development of these sessions, which will include guided commentaries with the whole class, small group discussion, or the writing of brief individual or group analyses to be presented orally. Debates, questions, brainstorming or role play for character analysis will also be used in order to activate theoretical and practical knowledge, reinforce basic concepts and develop synthesizing, analyzing, interpreting, relating, and expressing skills as well as attitudes such as cooperation and valuation of the work of others.

- **Individual and group tutorials** (0.1 ECTS: 2.5 hours). Tutorial attendance (alternatively, e-mail consultations or participation on the Moodle platform) is compulsory for the guided writing of essays, and optional for the rest of issues concerning the course.
- **Autonomous activities:**
    a. Compulsory readings, use of secondary sources and Moodle materials (2.8 ECTS: 70 hours; or 3.4 ECTS: 85 hours for the students who do not write up the optional essay). The students' autonomous activities include revising the concepts studied in class, as well as reading and analyzing the compulsory texts, reading secondary sources, and visiting the Moodle page.
    b. Elaboration of the optional essay (0.6 ECTS: 15 hours), optional. By the 8th week of the semester, students will decide on a topic that will be agreed upon with the teacher. They will work on the development of a working hypothesis that will be presented to the teacher by the 13th week, together with the essay outline and the selected bibliography. The completed essay will be handed in by the day of the exam.
- **Assessment tasks** (0.1 ECTS: 2.5 hours). A global exam will take place on the day assigned by the Faculty. Students will have 2.5 hours at the most. The type of exam is described in the Assessment section of this guide.

4.3.Syllabus

The course will address the following topics:

Section I. AMERICAN ROMANTICISM (1829-1865)

1. Historical and cultural introduction to the period (1829-1865).
2. Edgar Allan Poe: his theory of writing and the notion of "unity of effect". Revision of Gothic devices, psychoanalytic procedures, and the origins of detective fiction.
3. Nathaniel Hawthorne: Romance vs. novel. Puritan roots and psychological insight.
4. Herman Melville: exoticism and metaphysical speculation. Symbolic writing and the pervasiveness of evil.
5. The poetry of Walt Whitman: originality; formal and thematic freedom. The poet as *kosmos* and prophet.

- **Compulsory readings:**
    - E. A. Poe's "The Philosophy of Composition", "The Fall of the House of Usher", "The Black Cat".
    - N. Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter.*
    - H. Melville's "Loomings", "Moby Dick", "The Whiteness of the Whale" (Chapters 1, 41 and 42 from *Moby Dick*).
    - W. Whitman's "Song of Myself".
- **Films:**
    - *The Fall of the House of Usher* (Jean Epstein & Luis Buñuel, 1928).
    - *Moby Dick* (John Huston, 1956)

Section II. THE RISE OF AMERICAN REALISM AND NATURALISM (1865-1914)

1. Historical and cultural introduction to the period (1865-1914).
2. The poetry of Emily Dickinson: modernity, introspection, and stylistic compression.
3. Mark Twain: vernacular language and frontier humor; the South and the controversy over race.
4. Women's Writing and First-Wave Feminism: Kate Chopin, Charlotte Perkins-Gilman and Edith Wharton.

- **Compulsory readings:**
    - E. Dickinson's "Because I could not stop for Death", "Further in Summer than the Birds", "I felt a Funeral in my Brain", "Wild Nights".
    - M. Twain's *Huckleberry Finn.*
    - C. P. Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper".
    - K. Chopin's "The Story of an Hour".
- **Films:**
    - *The Age of Innocence* (Martin Scorsese, 1993)

4.4.Course planning and calendar

Theory and practice sessions (critical analysis of the compulsory literary texts) will take place in two weekly sessions, following the official schedule. Three to four weeks will be necessary for the presentation and discussion of each topic.

Group and individual tutorials will follow the schedule provided by the teacher, taking into account the students' class hours.

Students can write up an optional individual essay guided by the teacher taking into account the following key dates:

- Deadline for notifying the choice of subject: week 8.
- Deadline for submitting the detailed draft and the bibliography: week 13.
- Deadline for submitting the essays: during the first final exam.

The first final exam includes the submission of the optional essay and will take place on the official date assigned by the University.

4.5.Bibliography and recommended resources