**American Literature Syllabus**  
**Ms. Duncan**  
**2016/17**

**Note:** This syllabus is designed to assist you in understanding the direction of our classroom discussions, as well as to assist you in understanding the development of what is known as the “American literary canon.” Some of the literature will be read in class, some will be read independently, some will be read as group projects, and some will be gleaned via film. Our discussions will focus on our unit themes, the historical periods, as well as the philosophical and literary trends. We will not have time to cover all the material listed, but I will choose from this list. Sometimes I may add something not listed. Note that some works are listed by unit theme and not by literary trend. In addition to the readings, we will also complete various writing assignments and projects. These will include argumentative essays, interpretive essays, narrative essays, journal writes, a research essay, small group presentations, a formal speech, and creative projects.

### Historical Period: The Puritan/Colonial, Approximately 1650-1850

**Literary Trend:** Religious & Political Nonfiction  
**Unit Theme:** The Nature of Evil

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<tr>
<th>Fiction/Novel:</th>
<th>The Scarlet Letter ~ Nathaniel Hawthorne</th>
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| Non-fiction/Essay: | “The Trial of Martha Carrier” ~ Cotton Mather  
“A Witch Hanging at Mount Holly” ~ Benjamin Franklin  
“American Literature Beginnings to 1750” ~ Kate Kinsella et al. |
| Poetry: | “The Author to Her Book” ~ Anne Bradstreet |
| Drama/Film: | The Crucible ~ Arthur Miller |
| Non-fiction/Documentary: | In Search of History: Salem Witch Trials ~ A & E Television Networks The History Channel (Film) |

### Historical Period: Approximately 40,000 B.C. to Present

**Literary Trend:** Native American Tradition  
**Unit Theme:** Colonialism

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<th>Fiction/Novel:</th>
<th>When the Legends Die ~ Hal Borland</th>
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“The Impact of Reservations” ~ Jon Mandhip White  
“Indian Boarding Schools” ~ Oliver La Farge  
“Benjamin Franklin on the Iroquois Constitution” ~ Albert Henry Smyth  
“Indian” ~ Robert Warrior  
“Ghost Dance” ~ J.D. Challenger |
| Mythology: | “The Maidu Creation Myth” from River of Sorrows ~ Richard Burrill |
| Non-fiction/Film: | The Last of His Tribe ~ Stephen Harrigan |
Historical Period: Revolutionary/Age of Reason, Approximately 1750-1800
Literary Trend: Rationalism
Unit Theme: Truth and Logic
Non-fiction/Essay:
“On the Transportation of Felons to the Colonies” ~Benjamin Franklin
“Rules for Making Oneself a Disagreeable Companion” ~Benjamin Franklin

Historical Period: Industrial Revolution, Approximately 1800-1860
Literary Trend: Romanticism (Including Transcendentalism & Anti-Transcendentalism)
Theme: Truth and Nature
Note: *The Scarlet Letter* is an anti-transcendentalist work that is taught with Puritanism because of its themes.
Non-fiction Essay: excerpt from *Walden* ~Henry David Thoreau
Poetry:
“The Rhodora”~Ralph Waldo Emerson
“On Imagination” ~Phillis Wheatley
“Hope is the Thing with Feathers” ~Emily Dickinson
“To Helen” ~Edgar Allen Poe
Fiction/Film: *Moby Dick* ~Herman Melville

Historical Period: American Civil War & Post Civil War, Approximately 1845-1900
Literary Trend: Realism
Theme: Social Barriers
Fiction/Novel: *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* ~Mark Twain
Non-fiction/Autobiography: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass an American Slave* ~Frederick Douglass
Fiction/Short Stories:
excerpt from “The White Heron” ~Sarah Orne Jewett
excerpt from *Washington Square* ~Henry James

Historical Period: World Wars I & II 1870-1920
Literary Trends: Naturalism
Theme: Social Barriers
Fiction/Novel: *The Jungle* ~ Upton Sinclair
Fiction/Short Story: excerpt from “A Pair of Silk Stockings” ~Kate Chopin
Poetry:
“Fable” ~Stephen Crane
“Ode to Ethiopia” ~Paul Laurence Dunbar
Fiction/Film: *Ethan Fromme* ~ Edith Wharton
Historical Period: World Wars I & II 1900–1960
Literary Trends: Modernism (including Harlem Renaissance)
Theme: Limitations

Note: The Crucible is a modern work that is taught with colonialism because of its themes.

Fiction/Novel: The Great Gatsby ~ F. Scott Fitzgerald
One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest ~ Ken Kesey
excerpt from As I Lay Dying ~ William Faulkner


Poetry: “George Gray” ~ Edgar Lee Masters
“Brass Spittoons” ~ Langston Hughes
“The Boarder” ~ Louis Simpson

Drama/Film: Street Car Named Desire ~ Tennessee Williams

Historical Period: Post-colonialism, Various Wars 1950–Present
Literary Trends: Postmodernism/Contemporary
Theme: Questioning Cultural Norms

Fiction/Novel: Bless Me Ultima ~ Rudolfo Anaya
Snow Falling on Cedars ~ David Guterson

Non-fiction/Essay: excerpt from “In Search of Anaya’s Carp: Mapping Ecological Consciousness and Chicano Myth” ~ Alex Hunt

Poetry: “Waiting” ~ Ha Jin

Drama: excerpt from Fences ~ August Wilson

Fiction/Film: The Color Purple ~ Alice Walker