**EN 127 A1: Reading American Literature**

**Spring 2019 MWF 12:20-1:10 PM, CAS 316**

Instructor: Kristin Lacey

Office: 236 Bay State Road, Room 122

Student Hours: Monday 2PM-3PM; Wednesday 11:00AM-12:00PM; and by appointment

Email: [klacey@bu.edu](mailto:klacey@bu.edu)

Email Policy: I welcome email correspondence, and appreciate your clear, formal, and grammatically correct messages. Please allow 48 hours for a response.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course traces the development of American literature from the 1830s through the First World War by examining four major literary movements: transcendentalism, romanticism, naturalism, and realism. We begin by thinking about authors’ relationship to authority and the self, looking at transcendental authors Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller before turning to Frederick Douglass’s memoir. We will then look at short fiction and poetry by Whitman, Melville, Hawthorne, Dickinson, and Alcott. Our survey will end with turn-of-the-century authors Kate Chopin, Henry James, Frank Norris, and Edith Wharton—we will discuss these authors’ texts in the context of naturalism and realism, as well as their interest in capitalism’s increasing impact on class and society.  Carries humanities divisional credit in CAS. This course fulfills a single unit in each of the following BU Hub areas: Aesthetic Exploration, Writing-intensive Course.

Throughout the course, we will return to questions about the American self. How does each author conceive of what an “American” looks like, acts like, sounds like? How does this conception differ among genres—novels, non-fiction, poetry, short stories, essays? How do authors from marginalized groups—Black Americans, women, Native Americans, etc.—represent Americanness? How can these differences enrich our understanding of American literature?

**COURSE GOALS**

In EN 127, you will develop your ability to:

• recognize 19th-century American literary movements

* craft substantive, motivated, balanced academic arguments

• write clear, correct, coherent prose

* read with understanding and engagement

• plan, draft, and revise efficiently

• evaluate and improve your own reading and writing processes

• respond productively to the writing of others

• express yourself verbally and converse thoughtfully about complex ideas.

**COURSE MATERIALS**

The following texts will be available at the Barnes & Noble in Kenmore Square. You may also buy them in other bookstores or online.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Dover Thrift Editions)

**ISBN:**   9780486284996

Lydia Maria Child, *A Romance of the Republic* (Ingram)

**ISBN:** 9781604246070

Frank Norris, *McTeague* (Signet Classics)

**ISBN:**   9780451531971

Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (Penguin Classics)

**ISBN:**   9780143039709

**A notebook dedicated to this course.**

All other materials will be handed out in class and/or posted on the Blackboard site. You

can log in to our Blackboard page at: <https://learn.bu.edu>. You will need to print any class materials

posted on Blackboard and bring them to class.

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Self-Assessment:** At the beginning of the semester, you will submit a written self-assessment in which you take stock of your reading and writing abilities and establish some personal goals you wish to pursue over the course of the semester.

**Exercises (10%):** We will use the term *exercises* to refer to various low-stakes assignments and activities that you will be asked to complete over the course of the semester. You will do some of these exercises in class; others will be given as homework.Your exercises will not receive explicit grades, although you will receive credit for completing them on time. **You must purchase a notebook to contain your in-class writing and you must bring this notebook with you to class each day.**

**Major Papers (drafts and final versions):** We will use the term *draft* to refer to unfinished or preliminary versions of your two major papers. You will be required to write at least one draft before the final for Papers 1 and 2. Your first draft will receive feedback from your peers and from me. **For Paper 1, you are required to attend an in-person conference with me.** Drafts will not receive letter grades, although you will receive credit for completing them on time. Remember that you are more likely to write a good final paper if you write substantive drafts. Your course grade will be determined primarily by the quality of the final versions of your major papers. All drafts and final papers must be double-spaced with one-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point-font and must be documented in MLA style. Please include a *word count* at the end of all written work.

**Blackboard Responses (10%):** Each student will be required to make a weekly post on the class Blackboard forum. The day you will post depends on the first letter of your last name:

* **A-K –** Post for Monday (by 11:59pm Sunday);
* **L-Q –** Post for Wednesday (by 11:59pm Tuesday);
* **R-Z** – Post for Friday (by 11:59pm Thursday).

Requirements for each post:

* Your posts must be between 200 and 300 words, and have a word count posted at the end;
* They must be posted as text in the Blackboard forum, not posted as an attachment;
* Your posts should be focused directly on the course material we’ll be discussing in class the next day;
* They must be analytical posts. Your posts do not need to be perfect, but I expect them to be proofread, to contain at least one strong point, and to have that point bolstered by cited evidence from your text. You can pose a question rather than make an argument, but questions should be accompanied by preliminary answers that are supported by the text.;
* Your post can be a response to another student’s post, but it must add something new to the conversation and must use new evidence from the text;
* You can choose two (2) weeks to skip without affecting your grade. ﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿﻿

Your posts will be graded out of ten points based on how successfully you meet the above requirements.

Pop-Up Presentation (10%): Early in the class, I will have you decide which text you’re interested in doing a pop-up presentation on, so that our class presentations are spread across the semester evenly. At some point, you will come across a reading that sparks an idea that seems packed with potential, in which you uncover what you feel is a revelatory insight about the text we’re reading for that day. This may be inspired by our discussions, my questions, or something that strikes you as you read.

When that happens, it’s time to do your pop-up presentation. Please email me by 9pm the night before class to let me know that you will be presenting. Remind me at the start of that class, and we will figure out together when the presentation should be. You will pop up and announce that you’re ready to communicate an insight about the reading(s) to the class.

Please turn in your notes on your presentation to me after class.

All presentations should follow the same format (the 1-3-1-1). Aim for up to 5 minutes of talking:

* First, sum up in ONE sentence your insight or argument about the text.
* Then, point to THREE pieces of evidence that support your claim about the text, with page numbers so that fellow students can follow along. Explain why and how each piece of evidence supports your reading of the text.
* Next, identify ONE aspect of the text that seems to undermine or contradict your claim about the text, and discuss whether it does or not.
* Finally, end by posing ONE question about the text for the class to discuss.

Your pop-up presentation might end up morphing into a paper topic--or it might not. I recommend that you do yours as soon as you can, though, because I am excited to hear your insights!

(Pop-up presentation assignment thanks to Marah Gubar and Anna Henchman)

**Midterm Exam (15%):** The exam will consist of short answer questions, passage identification, and short essays. Passages discussed in class are likely to show up on the test.

**Sharing of Student Writing:** In this class, you will learn how to respond productively to the writing of others and how to use feedback from others to improve your own work. All students in the class will be required to share at least one draft of each paper. If you are concerned about sharing your writing, please talk with me about your concerns.

**GRADING AND EVALUATION**

Grading Scale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Grade | Percent |
| A  A-  B+  B  B-  C+  C  C-  D-F | 93-100  90-92  87-89  83-86  80-82  77-79  73-76  70-72  <70 |

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Exercises and Drafts: 10%

Oral Presentation: 10%

Blackboard Responses: 10%

Participation: 10%

Midterm: 15%

Paper 1: 20%

Paper 2: 25%

**Late and Missed Assignments:** Unless you make other arrangements with me in advance, graded assignments will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade for each day they are late. If you submit a draft late, I cannot promise to read it in time for my comments to be useful to you. Please note that we will regularly work with our exercises and drafts in class. If you are habitually late with your assignments, you will be unable to participate fully in the class.

**Participation and Attendance:**  Since this course is a seminar, your regular attendance and participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates’ learning. Consequently, your final grade will reflect the quality of your participation and ungraded work over the course of the semester. Because this is a literature course, we have a lot of reading each class; please ensure that you keep up with the readings so that you can participate in seminar discussions. Because laptops and mobile devices must be put away and silenced during class, you must print any texts posted on Blackboard and bring them to class. **Making a habit of not having your readings in class (including those that need to be printed from Blackboard) will lower your participation grade.**

**Three late arrivals to class (5 minutes or more after class begins) will count as one class absence.**

You may miss FOUR classes without penalty. I ordinarily do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so please save your absences for when you need them. On the fifth and sixth absences, your participation grade will be lowered by 5 points (out of 100) each day. If you miss SEVEN or more classes, you will be at risk of failing the course.

If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes (e.g., varsity athletics, religious observances), please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. **Missed conference appointments will be counted as absences.** While my attendance policy is fairly firm, **please do not hesitate to speak to me about circumstances that may be affecting your performance or attendance.** **Exceptions may be made under unusual circumstances.**

**POLICIES**

**Pronouns and Names:** If your name or pronouns do not match the university’s records, please let me know. If your pronouns or name change during the semester, I am happy to adjust my records.

**Name Tests:** It is important that we create a classroom community in which discussion is comfortable and open, and knowing your classmates’ names is crucial to that endeavor. I will give written name tests at the beginning of three classes at the start of the semester; I expect that you will get at least 75% of your classmates’ names correct by the third name test.

**How to Address Me:** Please call me Ms. Lacey or Kristin.

**Emails:** Please compose each email with a salutation (“Dear Kristin,” “Hello Kristin”), say what you need to say in a succinct manner, and conclude by signing your name with an appropriate salutation (“Sincerely,” “Best,” etc.). I advise you to use this format when communicating with all of your instructors.

**Technology Policy:** All phones and electronic devices must be put away and silenced before class begins. A first offense during the semester will merit an in-class calling-out, and the second will count as an absence for that class period. I take this policy seriously and expect that you will, too. Because of the discussion-based nature of this seminar, I do not allow laptops or tablets in the classroom. **You will need to print ALL texts from Blackboard and bring them to class annotated.** Go to  [https://myprintweb.bu.edu](https://myprintweb.bu.edu/) for printing information. Please bring your notebook and pen to each class. I may include Laptop Days for working on drafts; any Laptop Days will be announced in advance.

**Student Hours:** During Student Hours, I will be available in my office to help you with any questions or difficulties you’re having. I encourage you to make use of this time to come talk to me about paper ideas, questions, or difficulties you’re having in class.

**Student Well-Being:** The well-being of students is of primary importance. If you are facing any obstacles related to your physical or mental health, or obstacles like food or housing insecurity, please do not hesitate to get in touch to discuss ways we can put you in the best possible position to succeed.

**PLAGIARISM**

Plagiarism is the passing off of another’s words or ideas as your own, and it is a serious academic offense. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in the College of Arts and Sciences Academic Conduct Code. All EN students are subject to the CAS code, which can be read online:

http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/

Penalties for plagiarism can range from failing an assignment or course to suspension or expulsion from the university. In this class, we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources in academic papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism or citation, I invite you to speak with me.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**BB:** Blackboard

**FD:** *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

**RR:** *A Romance of the Republic*

**M:** *McTeague*

**CC:** *The Custom of the Country*

I may decide to modify this schedule as we proceed.

Week 1

Monday, Sept. 3 [NO CLASS, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day]

Wednesday, Jan. 23

* Course introduction and syllabus review
* Self-Assessment and Questionnaire Assigned
* Mind-mapping American literature

**Transcendentalism**

Friday, Jan. 25

* Introduction to transcendentalism
* Reading Due: *Nature*, Ralph Waldo Emerson (1836) p. 31-67 [BB]
* Writing Due: Self-assessment (BB) and Questionnaire (physical copy)

Week 2

Monday, Jan. 28

* Reading Due: “The Transcendentalist,” Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841) p. 107-122 [BB]

“Self-Reliance,” Ralph Waldo Emerson (1841) p. 1-15 [BB]

* Writing Due: Blackboard Response A-K

Wednesday, Jan. 30

* Reading Due: “American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for

the Future,”Margaret Fuller (1843) [BB]

“The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men. Woman versus Women," Margaret

Fuller (1843) [BB]

* Writing Due: Blackboard Response L-Q
* Name Test 1

Friday, Feb. 1

* Reading Due: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass,* Frederick

Douglass (1845) Preface-Ch. VIII [FD]

* Writing Due: Blackboard Response R-Z
* Name Test 2

Week 3

Monday, Feb. 4

* Reading Due: FD Ch. IX-Ch. XI

“On *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass,”* Margaret Fuller (1845) [BB]

* Writing Due: BB Response A-K
* Paper 1 Assigned
* Final Name Test

Wednesday, Feb. 6

* Reading Due: “Frederick Douglass's self-fashioning and the making of a Representative

American man,” John Stauffer (2007) [BB]

* Writing Due: BB Response L-Q

Friday, Feb. 8

* Reading Due:“Civil Disobedience,” Thoreau (1849) [BB]
* Writing Due: BB Response R-Z

**Romanticism**

Week 4

Monday, Feb. 11

* Introduction to American Romanticism
* Reading Due: “Romanticism and the American Gothic,” Alfred Bendixen (2017) [BB]
* Writing Due: BB Response A-K

Wednesday, Feb. 13

* Reading Due: “The Birthmark,” Nathaniel Hawthorne (1843) [BB]

“Young Goodman Brown,” Nathaniel Hawthorne (1835) [BB]

* Writing Due: BB Response L-Q

Friday, Feb. 15

* Reading Due: “The Tell-Tale Heart,” Edgar Allan Poe (1843) [BB]

“The Raven,” Edgar Allan Poe (1845) [BB]

“The Fall of the House of Usher,” Edgar Allan Poe (1839) [BB]

* Writing Due: BB Response R-Z

Week 5

Monday, Feb. 18 [NO CLASSES: Presidents’ Day]

Tuesday, Feb. 19 **[Monday Schedule]**

**Meet at Museum of African American History for guided tour of Frederick Douglass exhibit 12:20-1:20—46 Joy St., Boston, MA [Details given in class]**

Wednesday, Feb. 20

* Peer Review Workshop
* Paper Conferences Begin [REQUIRED]
* Writing Due: **Paper 1 Draft 1 (BB and hard copy to class)**

Up to 3% Extra Credit for Museum Write-up (BB)

Friday, Feb. 22

* Paper Conferences End [REQUIRED]
* Reading Due: “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” Herman Melville (1856) [BB]
* Writing Due: Write a one-paragraph summary of “Bartleby” and bring to class.

Week 6

Monday, Feb. 25

* Reading Due: “Song of Myself,” “O Captain! My Captain!”, “I Hear America Singing,”

Walt Whitman (1855-1867) [BB]

* Writing Due: Choose one poem and write one paragraph close reading the poem.

Wednesday, Feb. 27

* Reading Due: “I’m Nobody! Who are you?”, “My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun,” “Tell

all the Truth but tell it slant,” Emily Dickinson [BB]

Friday, March 1

* Writing Due: **Paper 1 Final Draft (BB and hard copy due in class)**

Week 7

Monday, March 4

* Reading Due: *Behind a Mask, or A Woman’s Power,* Louisa May Alcott (1866) [BB]

Wednesday, March 6

* Midterm Review

Friday, March 8

* **MIDTERM EXAM**

Week 8

SPRING BREAK: No classes

Week 9

Monday, March 18

* Reading Due: *A Romance of the Republic,* Lydia Maria Child (1871) p. 7-60

Wednesday, March 20

* Reading Due: RR p. 61-121

Friday, March 22

* **CLASS CANCELED**

Week 10

Monday, March 25

* Reading Due: RR p. 121-213
* Writing Due: BB Response A-K

Wednesday, March 27

* Reading Due: RR p. 214-273
* Writing Due: BB Response L-Q

Friday, March 29

* Reading Due: RR p. 274-330
* Writing Due: BB Response R-Z
* Paper 2 Assigned

**Naturalism and Realism**

Week 11

Monday, April 1

* Introduction to naturalism
* Reading Due: *McTeague,* Frank Norris Ch. 1-6 (1899) p. 1-85 [M]
* Writing Due: BB Response A-K

Wednesday, April 3

* Reading Due: M Ch. 7-10 p.86-165
* Writing Due: BB Response L-Q

Friday, April 5

* Reading Due: M Ch. 11-15 p.166-238
* Writing Due: BB Response R-Z

Week 12

Monday, April 8

* Reading Due: M Ch. 16-22 p.239-347

Wednesday, April 10

* Reading Due: “Two Friends,” Mary Wilkins Freeman [BB]

“The Story of an Hour,” Kate Chopin (1894) [BB]

Library Day

* Writing Due: Send a “bottom-up argument” email by 11:59pm

Friday, April 12

* Reading Due: *The Custom of the Country,* Edith Wharton (1913) Book I Ch. I-Ch. VIII

[CC]

Week 13

Monday, April 15

* NO CLASS [Marathon Monday]

Wednesday, April 17 [MONDAY SCHEDULE]

* Peer Review Workshop
* Writing Due: **Paper 2 Draft 1**
* Optional Conferences

Friday, April 19

* Reading Due: CC Book I Ch. IX-Book II Ch. XVI

Week 14

Monday, April 22

* Reading Due: CC Book II Ch. XVII-Book III Ch. XXII

Wednesday, April 24

* Reading Due: CC Book III Ch. XXIII-Book III Ch. XXX

Friday, April 26

* Reading Due: CC Book IV Ch. XXXI-Book IV Ch. XXXVI

Week 15

Monday, April 29

* Reading Due: CC Book V Ch. XXXVII-end of book
* Course Evaluations

Wednesday, May 2

* Last Day of Class
* **Paper 2 Final Draft Due**

**CAS Center for Writing**

At the CAS Center for Writing (100 Bay State Road, 3rd floor with a satellite location at Mugar Library) students enrolled in WR courses can receive one-on-one consultations about their writing with well-trained tutors familiar with WR assignments. When you visit the center, you should expect to be actively involved in your session. Tutors will work with you at any stage in your writing process, but they will not edit or correct your paper for you. Rather, they will work with you to help you do your own best work. The center is a resource for all WR students. Whether you consider yourself to be a strong writer or a weak one, you can benefit from consulting with a tutor.

The CAS Center for Writing is open Monday through Friday. Hours for the current semester are posted on the website below (common hours are between 9 a.m. and 5:15 p.m. or 7:30 p.m.). While the center accepts walk-in visits, you are strongly encouraged to make an appointment in advance. Because of the high demand for consultations, students are limited to one reservation per week. You may schedule a session online:

http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/the-writing-center/

You may also schedule a session in person at the CAS Center for Writing or by calling 617-358-1500. Cancellations must be made at least 9 hours in advance.

***WR***

The CAS Writing Program publishes an online journal of exemplary writing from WR courses. If you are interested in looking at samples of successful WR papers, or if you just want to read some good essays, I encourage you to visit the journal: http://www.bu.edu/writingprogram/journal/

CAS Writing Program: Administers all WR courses and the CAS Center for Writing. You may contact the Writing Program if you have any concerns about your WR class.

100 Bay State Rd., 3rd Floor

617-358-1500

<writing@bu.edu>

Boston University Libraries: Offer a wealth of online and print resources. Research Librarians will introduce you to the many resources the library offers in any field of research. They can work with you to develop a research plan and organize your sources. The Research Center welcomes you for walk-in consultations on the first floor of Mugar Memorial Library or at any other library on campus.

Research appointments can be made at http://www.bu.edu/common/request-an-appointment/.

Mugar Memorial Library

771 Commonwealth Avenue

Phone: 617-353-2700

http://www.bu.edu/library

Educational Resource Center: Offers tutorial assistance to all undergraduate students in a range of subjects, including writing. You should use the Writing Program’s Center for Writing for your WR classes, but you may wish to visit the ERC for tutorial assistance in other subjects.

100 Bay State Rd, 5th floor

Phone: 617-353-7077

http://www.bu.edu/erc

CAS Academic Advising: A central resource for all questions concerning academic policy and practice in the College of Arts and Sciences. The office is headed by the Associate Dean for Student Academic Life and has a staff of fifteen faculty advisors and five academic counselors. All students can receive academic advice about and assistance through this office. Students who have not yet declared concentrations can receive pre-registration advising through this office.

100 Bay State Rd. 4th Floor

Email: casadv@bu.edu

Phone: 617-353-2400

<http://www.bu.edu/casadvising/>

Here are links to the advising offices of other BU colleges:

CFA: <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/resources/advising/>

CGS: <http://www.bu.edu/cgs/academics/advising/>

COM: <http://www.bu.edu/com/resources/current-students/undergraduate>

ENG: <http://www.bu.edu/eng/current-students/ugrad/advising/>

QST: <http://questromworld.bu.edu/udc/essentials/advising/>

SAR: <http://www.bu.edu/sargent/current-students/academic-services-center/>

SED: <http://www.bu.edu/sedadmitted>

SHA: <http://www.bu.edu/hospitality/academics/advising/>

Office of Disability Services: Responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability, you are strongly encouraged to register with this office. You may be entitled to special accommodations in your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations to which you are entitled that you can share with your teachers. If you require accommodations, you must present me with an official letter from Disability Services.

19 Deerfield Street, 2nd floor  
 Phone: 617-353-3658

http://www.bu.edu/disability