

AMERICAN LITERATURE

Grades: 9-12

Course Description:

This course will provide students with a chronological survey of the development of American literature, with emphasis on the major writers; it will also pay attention to the parallel developments in history, language, religion, and culture. We will begin 150 years before the American Revolution, looking at early American writers and thinkers such as John Winthrop, William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet, Edward Taylor, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. From there, we'll travel through the twists and turns of the unique American historical landscape through the eyes of writers such as Ben Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Paine, Washington Irving, James Fennimore Cooper, William Cullen Bryant, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Edgar Allan Poe, Abraham Lincoln, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglas, Walt Whitman, Herman Melville, Emily Dickinson, Jack London, and Mark Twain. Finally, we'll conclude with 20th Century American writers, including Stephen Crane, Robert Frost, Willa Cather, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, E.E. Cummings, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, John Steinbeck, Ernest Hemingway, Chaim Potok, Ray Bradbury, Harper Lee, and others.

A major component of the course will be to track the spiritual development (or, degeneration) of our nation – from its Christian moorings found in the Puritans to its subsequent collapse into postmodern thought as it is illustrated in literature.

Students from all grade levels (9-12) are welcome, provided they are capable readers, listeners, note-takers, and participators. **Writing instruction will be a natural byproduct of the course, so perfection (or expertise) in this area is in no way a prerequisite** (learning to think deeply and then write effectively about literature **is a process** that unfolds gradually). We will be reading some of the best essays, poetry, short stories, plays, and novels literature has to offer. Actually, we'll do much more than discuss it. We will dig into it, engage it, and (Lord willing) emerge with a greater sense of how truly enjoyable and enlightening a good read can be!

There will be plenty of reading, some essay writing, regular quizzes, and even a little acting ... come to class prepared to do more than listen!

Course Objectives

The course is designed to help students:

- Enjoy the act of discovery that awaits all astute readers of excellent literature in all its forms.
- Know the timeline of major American (U.S.) historical events, ranging from the Pre-colonial period to the late 20th Century.
- In a similar vein, be familiar with the social, historical, and religious influences that shaped each period of American Literature.
- Be able to critically analyze works of literature while discerning its relevance to the Christian walk.
- Know the distinguishing characteristics of different literary genres and forms (i.e. poetry, prose, plays, etc).
- Read poetry with a greater sense of how to understand and appreciate it.
- Know the major artists of each time period and be familiar with the relevance of their major works.
- Write a competent essay that demonstrates an appropriate level of scholarship and critical thinking for the grade level.

Cost per semester: \$100

Material/Admin fee per semester: \$15

Min. number of students: 12 (we need a good-sized group for lively discussion)

Max. number of students: 24 (flexible)

Texts: American Literature for Christian Schools (Bob Jones 2nd edition)

Mark Twain, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (any version will do)

Chaim Potok, The Chosen (any version will do)

Additional hand-outs will be provided throughout the year.

This is a two semester course and is worth ten units. A grade will be issued by the instructor at the end of each semester.

Instructor: Mr. Bob Dickson

Bob Dickson has been a professional writer since 1997 and an Adjunct/Associate Professor at The Master's College since 2002. At Master's, he teaches English Composition, Article Writing, Copywriting, and Language Acquisition in the traditional (day) school. At night, he teaches the following classes in the college's Center for Professional Studies program: British Literature, Introduction to Literature, English Comp, Advanced Comp, Advanced Writing Development, Spoken Communication, Short Story, and Organizational Communication. In 2009-2010, Bob taught high school British Literature at APS. For six years, he was a senior writer at *Grace to You*. He also spent five years as a sports writer for The Santa Clarita Signal. He now runs a freelance copywriting company (Bob's Word Factory).

Educational background:

MS, College Teaching of Language Arts, Northeastern Oklahoma State University - 1996.

BA, English, University of California, Santa Barbara - 1990.

And now for the important stuff. In 1993, Bob was saved by the glorious grace of God. A year later, he married Debbie, the wonderful and godly woman who shared the gospel with him in the first place. God has given them two beautiful daughters, Darragh (born 1996) and Melissa (2000). The Dicksons have served and worshipped at Grace Community Church since 1997.

(See next page for Registration Form)

American Literature Registration Form

The cost of this course involves a COURSE Fee and a CO-OP Fee for each semester. Checks for both Fees must be submitted with this registration form. Fees may be paid in installments, but **ALL installment payment checks MUST BE INCLUDED with this form and dated as shown below.**

1. **Payment of COURSE Fee: MAKE CHECK(S) PAYABLE TO BOB DICKSON. ALL CHECKS DUE AT TIME OF REGISTRATION.**
1 check in the amount of \$200 due at time of registration, OR
2 checks in the amount of \$100 (1st check with registration date and 2nd check dated 1/1/11), OR
4 checks in the amount of \$50 (1st check with registration date, 2nd check dated 11/1/10, 3rd check dated 1/1/11, and 4th check 3/1/11).

2. **Payment of MATERIAL/ADMIN Fees: MAKE CHECK(S) PAYABLE TO CASH.**
1 check in the amount of \$30 due at time of registration, OR
2 checks in the amount of \$15 (1st check with registration date and 2nd check dated 1/1/11).

3. **Payment of CO-OP Fees: MAKE CHECK(S) PAYABLE TO CASH.**
1 check in the amount of \$16 due at time of registration, OR
2 checks in the amount of \$8 (1st check with registration date and 2nd check dated 1/1/11).

Tear off and return bottom form with ALL PAYMENT CHECKS mentioned above, plus SASE to:

Susan Todd, 28330 Gibraltar Lane, Castaic, CA 91384
Questions? Email Susan at SusanTodd@mail.com

REGISTRATION DATES: 6/1/10 – 6/15/10 AND 8/27/10 – 8/31/10

AMERICAN LITERATURE REGISTRATION

Parent Name _____ Phone No. _____

Email: _____@_____

Student Name(s): _____ Grade: _____

NEW TO APS? PLEASE CHECK HERE _____