



Universität Hamburg

Fakultät für Geisteswissenschaften
Department II – Sprache, Literatur und Medien
Fachbereich Fremdsprachliche Philologien
Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Prof. Dr. Susanne Rohr



Lecture course 53-529

Summer Term 2018

History of American Literature [AA3, LAA3, LAA16, SLM-WB, SG]

Lecturer: Prof. Dr. Susanne Rohr
Office hours: Monday, 5 – 8 pm, room 07064

Lecture course: Tuesday 2 – 4 pm **lecture hall** Ü35-00129-02

This lecture course will provide you with an overview of the history of American literature from the orally transmitted myths and legends of Indian cultures to the latest developments. The individual lectures will describe the major concerns of a particular literary period, outline the cultural context of the most important writers and their works and talk about significant historical events. Our discussions will thus lead us from the Puritan world view to Enlightenment and the cultural scene of the Early Republic. We will then trace what has come to be seen as the beginning of American literature in the first half of the 19th century, the era of Romanticism, and then move on to the late 19th century, a literary period that was dominated by the conventions of realism. After crossing the threshold to the 20th century we will examine modernist and post-modernist forms of expression and will then end with a survey of contemporary literary developments in the US.

All necessary texts for the course can be accessed as pdf-files in the course's Agora-room. You may also buy a printed copy at Cobra-Copy, Von-Melle-Park 5 (located in WiWi-Bunker's passageway to Grindelallee).

Attention: In order to receive credit for this lecture course, all students must pass three multiple-choice quizzes. If you fail in one of the quizzes, no credit can be gained for the course.

In the following syllabus, the sources mentioned as *Heath I* or *Heath II* refer to: Paul Lauter et al., eds. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. 2nd ed. 2 vols. Lexington: Heath, 1994.

I. 04/03/18 Introduction and Course Concept
America as fact und fiction. The American Dream, the myth of America and its interpretation/s.

II. 04/10/18 Puritanism

John Winthrop. From: "A Model of Christian Charity."
1630/1838.
[*The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Nina Baym et al. 6. Ed. Vol. 1. New York: Norton, 2003. 206-217.]

Mary Rowlandson. *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*. 1682.
[*Heath I*. 343-366.]

III. 04/17/18 Enlightenment, Independence and Early Republic

Thomas Jefferson. From: *Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson*.
"A Declaration by the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress Assembled"
[*The Declaration of Independence*]. 1776.
[*Heath I*. 890-894.]

Benjamin Franklin. From: *The Autobiography*. Part Two.
1784/1791. [*Heath I*. 801-810.]

Philip Freneau. "To an Author." 1788. [*Heath I*. 1032-1033.]

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. From: *Letters from an American Farmer*. 1782. Letter III. [*Heath I*. 823-828.]

**IV. 04/24/18 The American Renaissance I:
Transcendentalism / Light Romanticism**

Walt Whitman. From: *Song of Myself*. 1855
[*Heath I*. 2758-2771.]

V. 05/01/18 NATIONAL HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

VI. 05/08/18 The American Renaissance II: Dark Romanticism

Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Minister's Black Veil. A Parable." 1836. [Heath I. 2138-2146.]

Herman Melville. "Bartleby, the Scrivener. A Story of Wall-Street." 1853. [Heath I. 2445-2470.]

➔ Quiz # 1!

VII. 05/15/18 Slavery, Civil War and Abolitionism

Frederick Douglass. From: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*. 1845 [Heath I. 1676-1691, 1701-1719, 1727-1732.]

Harriet Ann Jacobs. From: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. 1861. [Heath I. 1753-1777.]

VIII. 05/22/18 SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

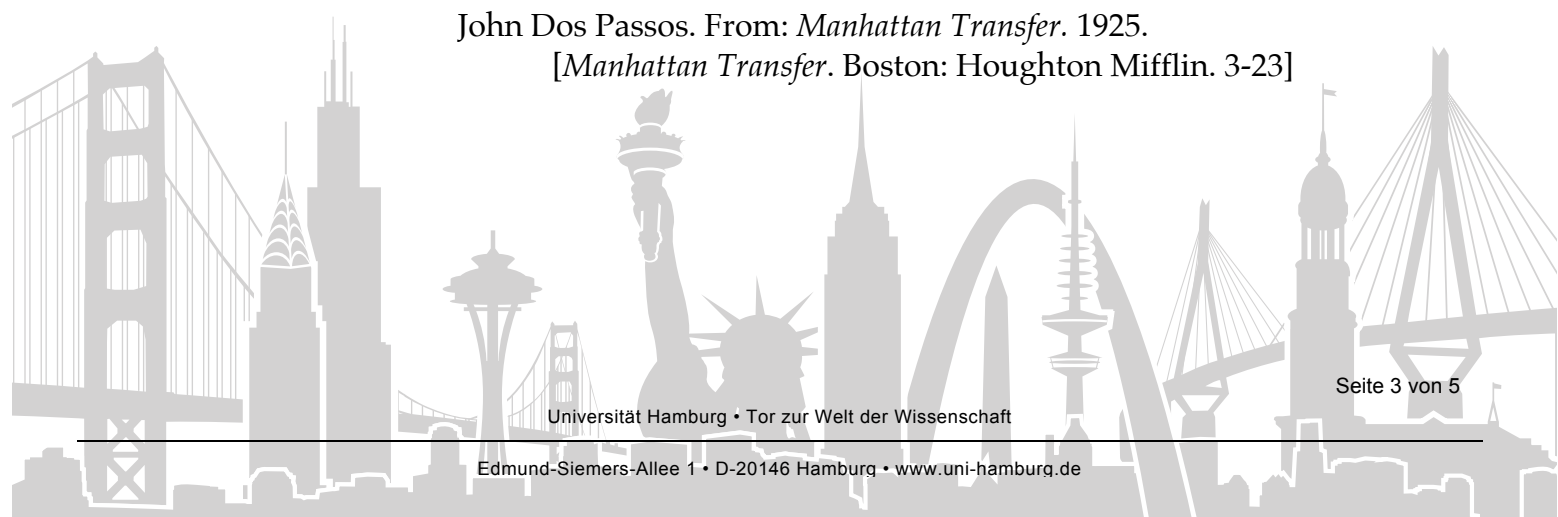
IX. 05/29/18 Realism, Naturalism and Local Color

Samuel Langhorne Clemens [Mark Twain]. From: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (Tom Sawyer's Comrade)*. 1884. [Heath II. 236-238, 284-301, 331-334.]

Stephen Crane. "An Experiment in Misery." 1894. [Stories and Tales. New York: Random-Vintage, 1952. 27-38]

X. 06/05/18 Modernism

John Dos Passos. From: *Manhattan Transfer*. 1925. [Manhattan Transfer. Boston: Houghton Mifflin. 3-23]



XI. 06/12/18 Harlem Renaissance

Alain Locke. "The New Negro." 1925. [*Heath II*. 1585-1593.]

Zora Neale Hurston. "How It Feels to Be Colored Me." 1928
The Norton Anthology of American Literature.
Ed. Nina Baym et al. 5. Ed. Vol 2. New York: Norton, 1998.
1436-1438.]

➔ Quiz # 2

XII. 06/19/18 Postmodernism I – The “Red Decade” of the 1930s and the Postwar Situation

Allen Ginsberg, "America." 1956.

Martin Luther King, Jr. "I Have a Dream." 1963.

XIII. 06/26/18 Postmodernism II – The Classical Period of the 1970s

Thomas Pynchon. From: *Gravity's Rainbow*. 1973.
[*Gravity's Rainbow*. New York: Viking, 1973. 3-29.]

Donald Barthelme. „Views of My Father Weeping.“ 1970.
[From: *Sixty Stories*. London: Penguin, 2003. 109-120.]

XIV. 07/03/18 Postmodernism III – The 1980s and 1990s: Neorealism and Multiculturalism

Theresa Hak Kyung Cha. From: *Dictee*. 1982.
[*Dictee*. New York: Tanam Press, 1982. 3-11.]

Raymond Carver. "Why Don't You Dance?" 1974.
[*The Stories of Raymond Carver*.
London: Picador, 1985. 187-191.]

Tim O'Brien. "How to Tell a True War Story." 1990.
[*The Things They Carried*. New York: Mariner, 2009. 64-81.]

XV. 07/10/18 The New Millennium, Most Recent Developments

Jonathan Franzen. From: *The Corrections*. 2001
[London: Fourth Estate, 2002. 3-13.]

Adrian Tomine, "A Brief History of the Art Form Known as
'Hortisculpture'." 2015
[*Killing and Dying*. London: Faber and Faber, 2015. 9-29.]

John McManus, „Betsy from Pike.“ 2015
[*Fox Tooth Heart*. Louisville: Sarabande Books, 2015. 31-54.]

➔ Quiz # 3

Please note:

- **The quiz will be written at the END of the session.**
- **Latecomers will NOT be admitted to take the quiz.**
- **The material covered in the last session will NOT be part of the quiz.**

