

KINGSBOROUGH COMMUNITY COLLEGE
The City University of New York

CURRICULUM TRANSMITTAL COVER PAGE

Department: _____ Date: _____

Title Of Course/Degree/Concentration/Certificate: _____

Change(s) Initiated: (Please check)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closing of Degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Degree or Certificate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Closing of Certificate | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Degree: Adding Concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Certificate Proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Degree: Deleting Concentration |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Degree Proposal | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Prerequisite, Corequisite, and/or Pre/Co-requisite |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Course | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Designation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> New 82 Course (Pilot Course) | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Description |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deletion of Course(s) | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Course Title, Number, Credits and/or Hours |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in Academic Policy |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Pathways Submission: |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Life and Physical Science |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Math and Quantitative Reasoning |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> A. World Cultures and Global Issues |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> B. U.S. Experience in its Diversity |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> C. Creative Expression |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> D. Individual and Society |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> E. Scientific World |
- Change in Program Learning Outcomes
- Other (please describe): _____

PLEASE ATTACH MATERIAL TO ILLUSTRATE AND EXPLAIN ALL CHANGES

DEPARTMENTAL ACTION

Action by Department and/or Departmental Committee, if required:

Date Approved: 3/11/26 Signature, Committee Chairperson: 

If submitted Curriculum Action affects another Department, signature of the affected Department(s) is required:

Date Approved: _____ Signature, Department Chairperson: _____

Date Approved: _____ Signature, Department Chairperson: _____

I have reviewed the attached material/proposal

Signature, Department Chairperson: 



TO: Spring 2026 Curriculum Committee
FROM: Prof. Ann Del Principe, Chair, Department of English
DATE: March 5, 2026
RE: Change in Course Title and Course Description for ENG 7400

The Department of English is proposing a change in course title and course description for ENG 7400:

Course Title Change:

From: Themes in American Literature II: 1865 to Present

To: American Literature: Reconstruction to Present

Rationale: By dropping the Roman numeral and adding a historical descriptor, the new course title allows the course to appear as a stand-alone, rather than part of a two-course sequence and provides clarity for the date 1865 (also allowing for parallel construction with “Present”).

Course Description Change:

From: A survey of American literature and literary history from the late 19th century to the present, examining works that depict urbanization, immigration, class conflict, and social change.

To: The course focuses on movements and voices in American literature from the Reconstruction Era to the present day through diverse literary works, including novels, short stories, poetry, and essays. Themes such as the American Dream, social justice, immigration, race and ethnicity, gender roles, and the impact of technology will be examined within their historical and cultural contexts.

Rationale: The new description provides students with a more specific outline of the key historical movements the course will cover, along with the themes that emerged from them.

CUNY Common Core Course Submission Form

Instructions: All courses submitted for the Common Core must be liberal arts courses. Courses submitted to the Course Review Committee may be submitted for only one area of the Common Core and must be 3 credits. Colleges may submit courses to the Course Review Committee before or after they receive college approval. STEM waiver courses do not need to be approved by the Course Review Committee. This form should not be used for STEM waiver courses.

College	Kingsborough Community College
Course Prefix and Number (e.g., ANTH 101, if number not assigned, enter XXX)	English 7400
Course Title	American Literature: Reconstruction to the Present
Department(s)	English
Discipline	English
Credits	3
Contact Hours	3
Pre-requisites (if none, enter N/A)	English 1200
Co-requisites (if none, enter N/A)	
Catalogue Description	This course surveys American literature from the Reconstruction Era to the present. Students explore how writers respond to industrialization, war, migration, civil rights movements, gender roles, immigration, technology, and shifting ideas of the American Dream. Through novels, short stories, poetry, and essays, the course highlights diverse voices that shape and challenge American identity.
Special Features (e.g., linked courses)	
Sample Syllabus	Syllabus must be included with submission, 5 pages max recommended

Indicate the status of this course being nominated:

current course revision of current course a new course being proposed

CUNY COMMON CORE Location

Please check below the area of the Common Core for which the course is being submitted. (Select only one.)

<p>Required Core</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> English Composition</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Life and Physical Sciences</p>	<p>Flexible Core</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> World Cultures and Global Issues (A)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> US Experience in its Diversity (B)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Creative Expression (C)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Individual and Society (D)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Scientific World (E)</p>
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Learning Outcomes

In the left column explain the course assignments and activities that will address the learning outcomes in the right column.

I. Required Core (12 credits)

A. English Composition: Six credits

A course in this area must meet all the learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation. |

B. Mathematical and Quantitative Reasoning: Three credits

A course in this area must meet all the learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interpret and draw appropriate inferences from quantitative representations, such as formulas, graphs, or tables. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use algebraic, numerical, graphical, or statistical methods to draw accurate conclusions and solve mathematical problems. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Represent quantitative problems expressed in natural language in a suitable mathematical format. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Effectively communicate quantitative analysis or solutions to mathematical problems in written or oral form. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate solutions to problems for reasonableness using a variety of means, including informed estimation. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Apply mathematical methods to problems in other fields of study. |

C. Life and Physical Sciences: Three credits

A course in this area must meet all the learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a life or physical science.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Apply the scientific method to explore natural phenomena, including hypothesis development, observation, experimentation, measurement, data analysis, and data presentation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Use the tools of a scientific discipline to carry out collaborative laboratory investigations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gather, analyze, and interpret data and present it in an effective written laboratory or fieldwork report.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and apply research ethics and unbiased assessment in gathering and reporting scientific data.

II. Flexible Core (18 credits)

Six three-credit liberal arts and sciences courses, with at least one course from each of the following five areas and no more than two courses in any discipline or interdisciplinary field.

A. World Cultures and Global Issues

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.

A course in this area (II.A) must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring world cultures or global issues, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, ethnic studies, foreign languages (building upon previous language acquisition), geography, history, political science, sociology, and world literature.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Analyze culture, globalization, or global cultural diversity, and describe an event or process from more than one point of view.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Analyze the historical development of one or more non-U.S. societies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Analyze the significance of one or more major movements that have shaped the world's societies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Analyze and discuss the role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, language, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation play in world cultures or societies.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Speak, read, and write a language other than English, and use that language to respond to cultures other than one's own.

B. U.S. Experience in its Diversity

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

Each week, students read a range of genres, including speeches, poetry, short fiction, essays, and novel excerpts, from authors across different historical periods and cultural backgrounds. The weekly discussion posts and journal assignments (together worth 40% of the course grade) require students to reference the assigned readings and use textual evidence, helping them practice gathering and interpreting information from multiple literary sources and perspectives.

The course includes comparative discussion prompts (e.g., analyzing how different authors define freedom, portray realism, or explore identity and justice), which ask students to evaluate how texts present contrasting social, moral, and cultural perspectives. For instance, in Week 2 students compare Mark Twain's satire with William Dean Howells's realism to examine how each author critiques social norms and moral behavior in everyday American life, and in Week 9 they analyze Martin Luther King Jr.'s rhetorical argument in "Letter from Birmingham Jail" alongside the personal narrative of James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" to consider different literary approaches to justice, voice, and social responsibility. As part of these comparisons, students may also gather outside critical or historical sources to help situate the texts within broader literary movements and cultural debates. Through in-class discussions, peer responses, and small-group work, students actively assess multiple points of view rather than relying on a single interpretation.

Students complete two formal writing assignments (each worth 25% of the course grade), in which they synthesize ideas from multiple readings, gather supporting textual evidence, and develop original analytical arguments. In the first assignment, students analyze two texts in relation to a major course theme such as freedom, identity, determinism, gender, capitalism, race, or modern disillusionment, gathering at least one scholarly secondary source, assessing how historical context or critical perspectives inform their analysis. In the final creative-critical assignment, students synthesize multiple course texts (including a post-1945 work), a scholarly source, and a contemporary cultural reference, evaluating how these different viewpoints intersect and engage themes such as race, voice, belonging, justice, gender, technology, protest, or multicultural identity.

- Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

The informal discussion assignments (200–300 words) require students to respond directly to prompts about the readings and support their ideas with textual evidence. By analyzing passages from authors such as Douglass, Eliot, Baldwin, and Rankine, students learn to assess how literary evidence supports particular interpretations and to develop analytical responses grounded in the texts rather than summary.

The first formal essay (due Week 6) asks students to develop a clear thesis about one or two course texts and support it with close reading and historical context, requiring them to evaluate which textual details best support their claims. The second formal essay (due at the end of the course) further strengthens this skill by asking students to construct a sustained argument using multiple texts from different periods, encouraging

- Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.

<p>them to weigh evidence, compare perspectives, and build a coherent analytical interpretation.</p> <p>Weekly discussion questions (e.g., on realism, alienation, redemption, and social justice) ask students to interpret characters, themes, and authorial choices and consider how different texts present moral, cultural, and social arguments. For example, in Week 2 students analyze how Twain and Howells use realism and satire to challenge idealized views of American life, and in Week 9 they examine how Martin Luther King Jr. and James Baldwin use voice and narrative to construct arguments about justice and moral responsibility. Through class participation, peer responses, and instructor feedback on drafts, students are guided to question assumptions, refine their claims, and critically assess both their own arguments and those of others.</p>	
<p>Students develop evidence-based written arguments through weekly discussions and journals. The informal writing assignments require students to respond to discussion prompts using textual evidence from the readings, rather than summary or opinion alone. In the 200–300 word discussion posts, students must support their interpretations of themes such as identity, justice, and alienation with specific references to the texts, helping them practice forming clear, supported written arguments on a regular basis.</p> <p>Students produce sustained, thesis-driven arguments in the two formal essays. Both formal writing assignments explicitly require a clear thesis, close reading, and supporting textual evidence. The first essay (due Week 6) asks students to construct a focused literary argument about one or two texts using historical context and analysis, while the second essay (due at the end of the course) requires students to develop a longer, coherent argument that synthesizes multiple texts and supports conclusions with detailed textual evidence and critical reasoning.</p> <p>Students practice oral argumentation through class participation and structured discussions. The participation component includes in-class discussions, peer responses, and small-group work in which students share interpretations of the readings and respond to guiding questions. These activities ask students to articulate their ideas verbally, defend their interpretations with evidence from the texts, and engage with alternative viewpoints, strengthening their ability to present well-reasoned oral arguments grounded in evidence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
<p>A course in this area (II.B) <u>must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes</u> in the right column. A student will:</p>	
<p>Students apply literary studies methods such as close reading and thematic analysis throughout weekly assignments. The learning outcomes and informal writing tasks explicitly require students to perform close readings, use literary terminology, and analyze themes such as identity, race, gender, and the American Dream. Weekly discussions and journals ask students to interpret how texts construct meaning, which reflects core disciplinary methods in U.S. literature and cultural studies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the U.S. experience in its diversity, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, economics, history, political science, psychology, public affairs, sociology, and U.S. literature.

<p>Students engage interdisciplinary perspectives through historically and culturally grounded readings. The course schedule moves from Reconstruction to contemporary America and includes texts addressing civil rights, immigration, gender roles, social protest, and technology. For example, in Week 6 students examine Langston Hughes’s poetry alongside Zora Neale Hurston’s “Sweat” to connect literary form and voice to the cultural politics of the Harlem Renaissance, and in Week 11 they read Jhumpa Lahiri and Maxine Hong Kingston to explore immigration, assimilation, and generational identity through both literary and sociocultural lenses. By reading authors like Frederick Douglass, Langston Hughes, Martin Luther King Jr., and Claudia Rankine, students connect literary analysis to historical context, cultural studies, sociology, and political thought, applying interdisciplinary approaches to understanding the diverse U.S. experience.</p> <p>Students synthesize literary, historical, and cultural concepts in formal and informal writing. The two formal essays require students to analyze literature alongside historical context and contemporary social issues, while weekly journals ask them to connect texts to lived experience and broader social realities. This structure encourages students to apply concepts from U.S. literature alongside insights from history, cultural studies, and social analysis when forming arguments about identity, justice, and American society.</p>	
<p>Students analyze historical themes through literature from multiple time periods and perspectives. The weekly schedule is organized around major themes in U.S. history, such as Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the Civil Rights Movement, immigration, and contemporary identity, and pairs readings from different authors who present varied viewpoints. For example, students examine freedom and citizenship in Week 1, racial identity in Week 8, and social justice in Week 9, allowing them to analyze shared historical themes through more than one literary and cultural perspective.</p> <p>Students compare informed perspectives in weekly discussions and prompts. The discussion questions consistently ask students to interpret how different authors address the same historical issues (e.g., justice, identity, alienation, and the American Dream). For example, in Week 7 students compare John Steinbeck and Richard Wright to examine how economic hardship and systemic injustice shape identity and agency, and in Week 8 they analyze how Bernard Malamud and Flannery O’Connor use morally flawed characters to explore redemption, morality, and postwar identity. By responding to prompts that require comparison, students practice explaining major themes of U.S. history using evidence from more than one informed perspective.</p> <p>Students synthesize multiple perspectives in the two formal essay assignments. The second formal essay requires students to analyze at least two texts from different historical moments (Weeks 6–12) and connect them to broader themes such as race, belonging, justice, or cultural identity in the United States. This assignment, along with the first essay’s emphasis on historical context, asks students to explain key U.S. historical themes by integrating literary evidence, historical background, and differing authorial viewpoints.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze and explain one or more major themes of U.S. history from more than one informed perspective.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate how indigenous populations, slavery, or immigration have shaped the development of the United States.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Explain and evaluate the role of the United States in international relations.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and differentiate among the legislative, judicial, and executive branches of government and analyze their influence on the development of U.S. democracy.
<p>Students examine social institutions and patterns of life through themed weekly readings and discussions. The course units explicitly focus on topics such as gender roles (Week 4), economic inequality and migration (Week 7), Civil Rights and justice (Week 9), multicultural identity (Week 11), and media and technology in contemporary society (Week 12). Through guided discussion questions, students analyze how institutions like family, education, labor, and media shape experiences of race, class, gender, and cultural identity in U.S. society.</p> <p>Students connect literature to contemporary social realities in weekly journals. The journal assignments regularly ask students to reflect on their own experiences with belonging, identity, technology, social expectations, and cultural background in relation to the readings. These prompts encourage students to discuss how broader social patterns, such as cultural norms, economic pressures, or digital media, interact with forms of social differentiation like race, class, and gender in their own lives and in the texts.</p> <p>Students critically analyze contemporary social issues in the second formal essay. The final creative-critical essay requires students to analyze texts from Weeks 6–12 and connect themes such as race, voice, belonging, justice, and media to present-day U.S. culture. By linking literary analysis to contemporary institutions and social dynamics, students produce sustained arguments about how modern American society both shapes and is shaped by differences in identity and social experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze and discuss common institutions or patterns of life in contemporary U.S. society and how they influence, or are influenced by, race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, belief, or other forms of social differentiation.
C. Creative Expression	
A Flexible Core course <u>must meet the three learning outcomes</u> in the right column.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions.
A course in this area (II.C) <u>must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes</u> in the right column. A student will:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring creative expression, including, but not limited to, arts, communications, creative writing, media arts, music, and theater.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze how arts from diverse cultures of the past serve as a foundation for those of the present, and describe the significance of works of art in the societies that created them.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Articulate how meaning is created in the arts or communications and how experience is interpreted and conveyed.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrate knowledge of the skills involved in the creative process.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use appropriate technologies to conduct research and to communicate.

D. Individual and Society

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions. |

A course in this area (II.D) must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the relationship between the individual and society, including, but not limited to, anthropology, communications, cultural studies, history, journalism, philosophy, political science, psychology, public affairs, religion, and sociology. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Examine how an individual's place in society affects experiences, values, or choices. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Articulate and assess ethical views and their underlying premises. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Articulate ethical uses of data and other information resources to respond to problems and questions. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and engage with local, national, or global trends or ideologies, and analyze their impact on individual or collective decision-making. |

E. Scientific World

A Flexible Core course must meet the three learning outcomes in the right column.

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|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Evaluate evidence and arguments critically or analytically. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Produce well-reasoned written or oral arguments using evidence to support conclusions. |

A course in this area (II.E) must meet at least three of the additional learning outcomes in the right column. A student will:

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Identify and apply the fundamental concepts and methods of a discipline or interdisciplinary field exploring the scientific world, including, but not limited to: computer science, history of science, life and physical sciences, linguistics, logic, mathematics, psychology, statistics, and technology-related studies. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Demonstrate how tools of science, mathematics, technology, or formal analysis can be used to analyze problems and develop solutions. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Articulate and evaluate the empirical evidence supporting a scientific or formal theory. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Articulate and evaluate the impact of technologies and scientific discoveries on the contemporary world, such as issues of personal privacy, security, or ethical responsibilities. |
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Understand the scientific principles underlying matters of policy or public concern in which science plays a role. |

English 74:

American Literature: Reconstruction to the Present

Section XX/ CF# XXXXX; 3 credits/3 hours

Class meeting days; Class times; Room: TBD

Professor Name; lastname.firstname@kbcc.cuny.edu; 718-368-XXXX

Office hours: time and location

Course Description

This course surveys American literature from the Reconstruction Era to the present. Students explore how writers respond to industrialization, war, migration, civil rights movements, gender roles, immigration, technology, and shifting ideas of the American Dream. Through novels, short stories, poetry, and essays, the course highlights diverse voices that shape and challenge American identity.

Learning Outcomes

This semester you will learn to:

- Apply key concepts from literary studies, which include performing close readings of literary texts, defending and supporting a thesis of a literary work, and incorporating terminology and strategies of literary studies to your analysis.
- Identify major themes and literary movements in American literature, post 1865, such as Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, the Harlem Renaissance, social protest literature, Civil Rights writing, feminist and multicultural literature, and contemporary voices addressing identity, race, technology, and the evolving American experience.
- Analyze, discuss, and assess a range of critical views about American literature generally and the assigned literary texts specifically, and incorporate these ideas into written assignments that offer an argument and supporting evidence.

Required Texts

The readings will be available on Brightspace or distributed in class. This is a Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) course.

Overview of Course Assignments

Informal Writing Assignments: Each week you will produce informal writing assignments in the form of online discussions and journals that ask you to consider how the assigned texts explore themes, questions, or connections to early American literary thought and identity. In your discussion responses, between 200-300 words, you will address aspects of the readings and offer textual

evidence to support your ideas. In your journals, between 300-400 words, you will consider your own relationship to the history and realities that the texts explore. Some of this informal writing may be developed into the formal assignments discussed below. I will offer written and/or oral feedback, and we will discuss these assignments in class.

Formal Writing Assignments: You will submit two formal writing assignments this term (each between four and five pages; 1,000-1,300 words) that blend literary analysis with reflective and creative-critical writing.

Assignment 1: Literary Analysis with Contextual Research (Due Week 6)

For this paper, you will analyze one or two texts from Weeks 1–5 in relation to a major course theme such as freedom, identity, determinism, gender, capitalism, race, or modern disillusionment. The primary focus of this assignment is close reading and thesis-driven literary analysis. You must present a clear, arguable thesis and support it through detailed analysis of specific passages, using appropriate literary terminology and interpretive strategies from our course. In addition to the assigned readings and class materials, you are required to incorporate at least one scholarly secondary source obtained through the library databases. This source should help you deepen your understanding of the historical context, literary movement (such as Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, or the Harlem Renaissance), or a critical perspective relevant to your text(s). The outside source should support and complicate your analysis rather than dominate it. While you may experiment with structure, the essay must remain clearly organized and grounded in textual evidence, and it must follow MLA format. This assignment fulfills the course learning outcomes by asking you to apply key concepts from literary studies through close reading and thesis development, identify major post-1865 American literary themes and movements through contextualization, and engage at least one critical perspective in support of your argument.

Assignment 2: Creative-Critical Literary Synthesis (Due Final Week)

The final project is a creative-critical hybrid essay that combines literary analysis with contemporary reflection. You will analyze at least two texts from Weeks 6–12, including at least one post-1945 work, and explore how they engage themes such as race, voice, belonging, justice, gender, technology, protest, or multicultural identity. The primary emphasis remains on literary analysis and synthesis of course texts; however, you must incorporate at least one scholarly secondary source from the library to help frame your interpretation, provide historical or theoretical context, or introduce a critical viewpoint. You are also encouraged to reference a contemporary cultural example (such as a current event, movement, or media text) to help illustrate the ongoing relevance of your argument. While this essay may include first-person reflection or a thematic structure, it must maintain a clear central thesis and remain grounded in close reading and textual evidence. MLA format is required, and meaningful revision after workshop feedback is expected. This assignment fulfills the course learning outcomes by requiring sustained close reading and use of literary terminology, identification of major post-1865 movements and contemporary voices, and engagement with at least one critical perspective in order to develop an original, well-supported argument about American literature and its continuing cultural significance.

Participation/Attendance: Active attendance and participation are essential to this course. You will engage in both in-class and online conversations, sharing your analysis of the readings and exchanging ideas with your peers. Participation may include speaking in class, responding to peers, small-group work, and online discussion activities. If at any point during the semester you stop attending class, you will be assigned a WU for this course.

Grade Distribution

Informal Writing Assignments (Discussions and Journals)	40%
First Formal Writing Assignment	25%
Second Formal Writing Assignment	25%
Class Participation	10%

Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Reconstruction & the New Nation

Themes: Freedom after slavery, citizenship, and unfinished promises of Reconstruction

Readings:

- Frederick Douglass, later speeches (excerpts)
- Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, poems

Discussion: How do Douglass and Harper define freedom beyond legal emancipation, and what limitations to that freedom do they reveal?

Journal: What does “freedom” mean in your own life today? Describe a time when you felt fully free and connect that experience to the struggles for freedom described in this week’s readings.

Week 2: Realism: Life as It Is

Themes: Realism, dialect, irony, satire and moral complexity in everyday life

Readings:

- Mark Twain, “Hadleyburg”
- William Dean Howells, “A Romance of Real Life”

Discussion: How do Twain and Howells use realism to challenge romanticized views of American life, and what do their portrayals of “real life” suggest about morality and social norms in their time?

Journal: Think about a time when humor or irony helped you understand a serious issue more clearly. How does that experience compare to the use of satire in this week’s readings?

Week 3: Naturalism & Determinism

Themes: Nature, survival, determinism, and the limits of human control

Readings:

- Stephen Crane, “The Open Boat”
- Jack London, “To Build a Fire”

Discussion: How do Crane and London portray the relationship between humans and nature, and what do their stories suggest about fate versus free will?

Journal: Write about a moment when you felt either in control of a situation or at the mercy of circumstances. How does your experience relate to the characters' struggles with nature and fate?

Week 4: Women & Early Feminist Voices

Themes: Gender roles, domestic confinement, mental health, and resistance

Readings:

- Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour"
- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

Discussion: How do private and domestic spaces function as sites of restriction and rebellion in both stories?

Journal: Reflect on a space (home, school, or another environment) that has shaped your sense of independence or identity. How does that space compare to those depicted in this week's readings?

Week 5: Modernism & Disillusionment

Themes: Alienation, fragmentation, modern anxiety, and the failed American Dream

Readings:

- T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
- Ernest Hemingway, "Soldier's Home"

Discussion: How do Prufrock and Krebs each experience alienation in modern society, and in what ways do their internal struggles reflect broader anxieties about purpose and connection in the modern era??

Journal: Reflect on a time when you felt out of place, uncertain about your direction, or emotionally distant from others. How does your experience compare to the sense of hesitation or detachment portrayed in the readings?

Week 6: The Harlem Renaissance

Themes: Black identity, cultural pride, artistic expression, and resistance

Readings:

- Langston Hughes, poems
- Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat"

Discussion: How do Hughes and Hurston use language, voice, and storytelling to affirm Black identity and challenge dominant cultural narratives?

Journal: Consider how art, music, storytelling, or cultural traditions shape your identity or community. How does this compare to the role of art during the Harlem Renaissance?

*Paper 1 Due

Week 7: Depression-Era & Social Protest

Themes: Poverty, migration, systemic injustice, and the struggle for dignity

Readings:

- John Steinbeck, *The Grapes of Wrath* (excerpts)
- Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"

Discussion: How do Steinbeck and Wright portray the impact of economic hardship and social systems on personal identity and agency?

Journal: Reflect on how financial pressures, work, or social expectations have influenced your decisions or goals. How does your experience connect to the struggles depicted in the readings?

Week 8: Post-World War II & Identity

Themes: Identity, race, morality, and the search for meaning in postwar America

Readings:

- Bernard Malamud, "The Magic Barrel"
- Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find"

Discussion: How do Malamud and O'Connor use morally flawed characters and moments of crisis to explore the possibility of redemption, and what do their stories suggest about identity and grace in postwar America?

Journal: Reflect on a moment in your own life when a difficult interaction or unexpected experience challenged your beliefs or assumptions about others. How did that moment shape your understanding of yourself or your moral perspective?

Week 9: Civil Rights & Social Change

Themes: Justice, moral responsibility, voice, and social change

Readings:

- Martin Luther King Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail"
- James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Discussion: How do King and Baldwin use personal narrative and rhetorical voice to advocate for justice and moral responsibility?

Journal: Describe an issue you care deeply about. How would you use your voice, whether through writing, speech, or action, to address this issue?

Week 10: Feminism & Expanding Voices

Themes: Feminism, intersectional identity, culture, and the search for voice

Readings:

- Adrienne Rich, poems
- Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street* (excerpts)

Discussion: How do Rich and Cisneros explore the intersections of gender, culture, and personal voice in shaping identity?

Journal: Reflect on where and when you feel a strong sense of belonging. How do your experiences of home, culture, or identity connect to this week's readings?

Week 11: Immigration & Multicultural America

Themes: Hyphenated identities, displacement, assimilation, and generational conflict

Readings:

- Jhumpa Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies"
- Maxine Hong Kingston (excerpt)

Discussion: How do Lahiri and Kingston portray tensions between cultural heritage and assimilation across generations?

Journal: Think about your own cultural background, family traditions, or generational differences. How have these shaped your identity, values, or worldview?

Week 12: Contemporary America & Technology

Themes: Race, media, contemporary identity, and modern alienation

Readings:

- Victor LaValle, "Slasher"
- Tracy K. Smith, "Sci-Fi"

- Claudia Rankine, selections from *Citizen*

Discussion: How do LaValle, Smith, and Rankine each explore the ways technology, media, and modern society shape us? In what ways do these texts reveal the intersection of race, culture, and alienation in contemporary America?

Journal: Reflect on how digital media, social platforms, or technology influence your sense of self and your relationships with others. Can you identify moments when technology connected you, misrepresented you, or heightened feelings of isolation, similar to the experiences depicted in these readings?

Additional Information

Absence Policy: Attendance in college is critical for students' learning. Regular attendance ensures that you will have the opportunity to learn from your professor, learn from your peers, participate in class discussions, keep up to date with in-class work (both individual and collaborative), and take in-class quizzes and assessments that will occur throughout the semester. If at any point during the semester you simply stop attending class, you will be assigned a WU for this course.

Classroom etiquette: Please do not come to class late and/or unprepared. I expect you to treat your instructor and your classmates the way you would want to be treated, by being respectful and thoughtful in your interactions with others in class. Failure to come to class prepared and failure to participate will result in a lower course work grade.

Academic integrity policy: Plagiarism is “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work” (www.dictionary.com). Please note that this includes language, text, or material taken (without acknowledgement) from AI text-generators. If you plagiarize in any of the work you submit, you may receive a grade of 0 for the assignment. Please see Kingsborough’s website page on Academic Integrity for more information on plagiarism.

https://www.kbcc.cuny.edu/studentaffairs/student_conduct/academic_integrity.html

Statement on accessibility: It is college policy to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals with disabilities. Any student with a documented disability who may need accommodations for this course is requested to contact AAS as early in the semester as possible. AAS can be reached by phone at 718-368-5175 or by email at AAS@kbcc.cuny.edu. The office is in room D205. All discussions will remain confidential. For more information, please click on the link to the Accessibility Services webpage in the Quick Links menu of the KCC homepage or at the bottom of every page on the KCC website. The AAS webpage also provides access to the AAS Student Handbook, which is a valuable introduction to the services and programs that are available.

Statement on preferred pronouns: I affirm all forms of gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to inform me on your preferred gender pronoun or if you do not have a pronoun. The gender-neutral bathrooms are located in the following places on campus: A117, A119, L303, L504, M436, T4 154,

T8 108B, V211, and V212. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.