

**RARITAN VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
ACADEMIC COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 221  
AMERICAN LITERATURE:  
COLONIAL THROUGH THE CIVIL WAR**

**I. Basic Course Information**

- A. Course Number and Title: ENGL 221 American Literature: Colonial through the Civil War
- B. New or Modified Course: Modified
- C. Date of Proposal: Semester: Fall Year: 2017
- D. Effective Term: Fall 2018**
- E. Sponsoring Department: English
- F. Semester Credit Hours: 3
- G. Weekly Contact Hours: 3                      Lecture: 3  
   Laboratory: 0  
   Out of class student work  
   per week: 6
- H. Prerequisite: ENGL 111 English Composition I
- I. Laboratory Fees: None
- J. Name and Telephone Number or E-Mail Address of Department Chair and Divisional Dean at time of approval: Susan Arvay [susan.arvay@raritanval.edu](mailto:susan.arvay@raritanval.edu); Patrice Marks [patrice.marks@raritanval.edu](mailto:patrice.marks@raritanval.edu)

**II. Catalog Description**

**Prerequisite: ENGL 111 English Composition I.** This course is a study of American literature from the period of European exploration in the 15<sup>th</sup> century through to the end of the Civil War. Students examine both historical nonfiction as well as literature, specifically the genres of novels, short stories and poems. In addition to the historical development of literary form, the course also examines literature in both a contemporary context and within the social context of the period. The Honors option is available for this class.

### III. Statement of Course Need

- A. American Literature: Colonial through the Civil War provides students with the opportunity to study an important literary period. It is typically taught in college English departments and meets RVCC's general education goals as well as those of the English Department's Associate of Arts degree in English. The course transfers to a four-year program as an elective, a general education elective, or a free elective.
- B. This course does not have a Lab component.
- C. This course generally transfers as a Humanities/English Literature general education course.

### IV. Place of Course in College Curriculum

- A. Free Elective
- B. This course serves as a General Education course in Humanities/English Literature.
- C. This course meets Category A elective requirement in the English AA degree.
- D. To see course transferability: a) for New Jersey schools, go to the NJ Transfer website, [www.njtransfer.org](http://www.njtransfer.org); b) for all other colleges and universities, go to the individual websites.

### V. Outline of Course Content

- A. Native American Literature
  - 1. Oral Traditions
  - 2. Poetry
  - 3. Essays
- B. European Views of America
  - 1. Explorers' Journals and Letters
  - 2. Defining "America"
- C. Puritans in America and Captivity Narratives
- D. The Enlightenment
- E. The Revolutionary Period (1760-1790)
- F. Transcendentalism
  - 1. Ralph Waldo Emerson
  - 2. Henry David Thoreau
  - 3. Margaret Fuller
- G. Slavery, Enslaved People, Abolitionists, and/or Suffragettes
- H. American Literary Romanticism
- I. The Civil War

### VI. General Education and Course Learning Outcomes

#### A. General Education Learning Outcomes

At the completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Use textual evidence to support logical and persuasive claims in writing using appropriate literary terminology (GE-NJ 1, 6, \*)
2. Demonstrate comprehension of American literature in historical and social context. (GE- NJ 1, 6, 7, \*)
3. Demonstrate how American writers' responses to historical events and social structures are influenced by their time, culture, and perspective (GE-NJ 7, \*)

(\*Embedded critical thinking)

**B. Course Learning Outcomes:**

SEE ABOVE

**C. Assessment Instruments**

1. Exams
2. in-class formal and informal writing
3. demonstrations or presentations
4. essays
5. journals
6. research papers
7. group projects
8. class participation

**VII. Grade Determinants**

- A. exams
- B. essays and/or response papers that communicate effectively in standard English, with attention to grammar, mechanics and the finer points of style
- C. demonstrations or presentations
- D. projects
- E. class participation

This course may include the following modes of teaching:

- A. lecture/discussion
- B. small-group work
- C. guest speakers
- D. student oral presentations
- E. simulation/role playing
- F. student collaboration
- G. independent study

## VIII. Texts and Materials

- A. textbooks
- B. primary sources
- C. student writing
- D. film and video
- E. audio sources
- F. web sources

Samples of specific texts:

- A. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature Fifth ed.*
- B. *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne
- C. *Uncle Tom's Cabin, or Life Among the Lowly* by Harriet Beecher Stowe
- D. *The Norton Anthology of Early American Literature 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Volumes 1 and 2*
- E. *The Norton Anthology of Early American Literature Shorter Eighth Edition*
- F. Different American Literature Anthologies and/or individual texts of the instructor's choice

(Please Note: This course outline is intended only as a guide to course content and resources. Do not purchase textbooks based on this outline. The RVCC Bookstore is the sole resource for the most up-to-date information about textbooks.)

## IX. Resources

- A. CAT Classroom
- B. DVDs

## X. Honors Option

Definition: According to the Honors Council, an Honors course is one that enriches and challenges students beyond a course's regular scope and curriculum. An Honors course will offer a sophisticated use of research, introduce intellectually stimulating readings and critical perspectives, promote a higher level of critical discussion and written work, and encourage independent study projects, at the option of the instructor.

### A. Educational Goals and Learning Outcomes:

In addition to the educational goals and learning outcomes in Roman numeral VI, A and B listed above, a student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of how and why a particular text "defines" the period in which it was written.

2. Demonstrate an elevated ability to research independently, find critical theory, and apply critical theory to a period, text or author.
3. Demonstrate the ability to apply appropriate critical theory to a period, text, or author in order to create an original understanding of that period, text, or author.

B. Honors Option Content:

A student who participates in the ENGL221 Honors Option will fulfill the following requirements:

1. Lead at least one in-class discussion in presentation form, providing historical content, author background, and any other essential information leading us toward discussion during that class period.
2. In addition to writing a standard research paper for the course, the option student will modify one of the short essays assigned to the rest of class; this modification will involve the use of minimal secondary sources. For example, one or two researched sources.
3. Conduct a semester long research project on a chosen period, author, or work, or theme relevant to the course.
4. Work independently with the instructor to discuss progress of the research project.

C. Assessment Instruments for Honors Option Work:

Honors Option students will be assessed for their ability to deliver the additional requirements:

1. Completing additional research
2. Completing a semester long research project

D. Grade Determinants for Honors Option Work:

In addition to quizzes and a final exam, the final grade for students in the Honors Option will be based upon the students completing the four additional requirements described above.

E. Extra Resource Materials for the Honors Option:

In addition to the suggested textbook above, Honors Option students will be expected to read scholarly books and journals relevant to their semester long research project as well as preparation for a lead discussion.