

- Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines
- www.unine.ch/lettres

Sém. Ang. II/TC: The American Renaissance in Context (2AN2085)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Pilier principal M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5
Pilier secondaire M A - littératures	Séminaire: 2 ph	Voir ci-dessous	5

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Automne

Equipe enseignante:

Prof. Patrick Vincent

Objectifs:

The aims of this course are the following:

- To pursue in more depth the study of a literary period within a specific national context
- To develop students' close reading skills
- To learn how to combine those skills with literary criticism in order to better appreciate and analyze a text
- To improve research-paper writing skills, notably by preparing an oral presentation based on secondary criticism, and by learning how to integrate primary texts and secondary criticism into a longer essay
- To generate ideas in view of preparing a mémoire project

Contenu:

This course will address the period between 1830 and the Civil War that was particularly rich in literary classics, and which was labelled "The American Renaissance" by F.O. Matthiessen in 1941. Centered on a handful of white New-England writers and often considered the equivalent to Romanticism, it gave rise to a "genteel" tradition in American letters in the midst of Jacksonian populism and of the growing tensions surrounding the institution of slavery. While this tradition's myths began to be challenged with the rise of Marxist and New Historicist criticism in the 1980s, we cannot ignore its authors' productive interactions with various reformist movements loosely categorized as transcendentalist. As such, we will devote a significant part of the semester to honor Henry David Thoreau's bicentenary and to better understand his search for 'higher principles.'

To aid us in our close readings of some of the period's most representative texts, we will discuss the many ambiguities, dualities, and divisions that defined the period's modernity, including: American exceptionalism versus Transatlantic influences; high versus low-brow literature; sentimental versus sensationalist literature; the gothic versus the sublime; individual versus collective reform; men versus women; slavery versus abolitionism; city versus country; industry versus agriculture; religion versus secularism; capitalism versus socialism; New England versus America; Jacksonian democracy versus Whiggism, etc.

Forme de l'évaluation:

One in-class presentation of a critical text (10%), one longer critical essay (12-15 pages) (90%)

Documentation:

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (1836) and other essays
Margaret Fuller, Woman in the Nineteenth Century (1841)
Herman Melville, Moby Dick (1851)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, The Blithedale Romance (1852)
Henry David Thoreau, Walden (1854)
Emily Dickinson, selected poems
Walt Whitman, Leaves of Grass (1855)

Optional: game version of Walden (2016)

All other reading, including poetry and criticism, will be placed on Moodle

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None

Forme de l'enseignement:

Seminar