**The WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**

**Virtual Campus**

**School of Languages and Literature**

**Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement:** Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success, and service to God and humankind.

**Course Name:** ENGL 5311-VCO1

**Course Term and Year: Spring 2 2021 (Second 8 weeks)**

**Office Phone and Email:** [maria.o’connell@wbu.edu](mailto:maria.oconnell@wbu.edu) **806-291-1102 Cell: 806-224-8234 (You can also find me on Facebook, if you would like to message me).**

**Office Hours, Building, and Location: I am available by email or text. If you need to talk by phone, email me to set up an appointment**

**Class Meeting Time and Location**: On BlackBoard

**Catalog Description:** A study of literary theory and criticism. Required of all MAE students.

* Required Textbook and Resources:
  + ***Cambridge Companion to American Literary Realism and Naturalism* (Automatic Ebook)**

**Other readings may be included from online sources.**

**Other Materials:** You will need good internet access and the ability to participate in discussion board threads and to turn in written work in a timely manner. You must have software that allows you to save materials as .doc or .docx formats and some form of storage. You will be responsible for making sure that you have saved all works in progress and other materials.

Course Competencies:

1. describe/define breadth and depth of the literary movement of Romanticism;
2. trace development of Romanticism in prominent, as well as lesser known, writers/works of American literature;
3. describe/define breadth and depth of the literary movement of Realism;
4. trace development of Realism in prominent, as well as lesser known, writers/works of American literature;
5. analyze and critique selected literary works of American Romanticism and Realism;
6. conduct graduate-level research on a topic related to Romanticism or Realism, producing polished written and oral presentation [or comparable format].

**The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.**

**Attendance Requirements**: The course will take place entirely online. You must have a functional Blackboard account and be able to access the WBU library website, as well as articles and other material provided through proprietary databases available via the WBU library website. You also must have an active WBU email address. Your WBU email address is the usual way that I will contact you. You are strongly encouraged to visit the Blackboard login page and test your browser for Blackboard compatibility, as well as take the Blackboard Tutorial if you are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support Contacts available on the Blackboard login page

**Disability Statement**: “In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university.  The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765.  Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.”

# Plagiarism and Conduct Statement

**Writing is a collaborative art. Working out ideas for your paper with an instructor, writing tutor, classmate, family member, or friend is encouraged not only for this class, but also for other classes that involve writing. Discussion and collaborative brainstorming are good. However, passing off another's *writing or ideas* as your own is plagiarism. It is unethical, it constitutes Academic Dishonesty (cheating), and it is sufficient grounds both for failure of a course and suspension from the university.**

**Common examples of plagiarism or academic dishonesty include the following:**

* **Copying any amount of text directly from an internet website, book, or other document without appropriate citation and synthesis into one’s own discussion.**
* **Paraphrasing the ideas presented in any source or oral discussion without *appropriate citation*.**
* **Using the evidence and conclusions of any source as the controlling framework for one’s own paper.**
* **Recycling work from a previous or current course, whether your own work or another student’s work.**
* **Purchasing or otherwise downloading a paper from an internet website.**

**In some writing assignments, you will be expected to incorporate scholarly sources into your document. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING must be met to constitute *appropriate citation* of any source:**

* **Including MLA, Chicago, or APA parenthetical or note-style citation format as required by the instructor.**
* **Placing borrowed text directly from another source within “quotation marks.”**
* **Introducing clearly another author’s voice into the document by means of a signal phrase (an introduction of that author).**
* **Offering, in short, a clear distinction between one’s own voice or ideas and those of any outside authors brought into the discussion.**
* **Wayland Baptist University observes a ZERO TOLERANCE policy regarding Academic Dishonesty.**
* **Any suspected instance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will first be evaluated by the instructor and discussed individually with the student.**
* **If the instructor determines that a student’s actions constitute Academic Dishonesty, the case will be filed with the school dean (as determined by course prefix) and reported to**

**the university executive vice president/provost, as per university policy. ALL CASES OF**

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL RE REPORTED.**

* **Per university policy as described in the Wayland Academic Catalog, second offenses**

**WILL RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM THE UNIVERSITY.**

* **In this course, the first instance of Academic Dishonesty may also result in a zero on the assignment.**

# Grade Appeals

**Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly**

**Course Requirements and Grading Criteria:** Students will provide evidence of successful completion of the course outcome competencies by:

**Semiweekly Responses to Study Prompts: 30%**

1 Regarding “Responses to Study Prompts”: these are decidedly not “essays,” merely two pages of organized thought per prompt. Select one of the possible prompts for each week and submit your considered two-page response by Wednesday and Friday mid-night of each course week. There is no order in which to answer the prompts and you might cite freely but meaningfully—by extending or challenging ideas—from your colleagues. Borrowings, of course, require in-text acknowledgments, whether of word or idea.

**Threaded Peer Reviews of Responses: 20%**

2 Respond to any two of the posted responses from your colleagues—one from the Wednesday submissions and one from the Friday submissions. Each review should consist of a single, well-developed paragraph (you will touch on your peer’s argument, question, and critique). This must go beyond, “I agree” or “good job” to really engage your peers. Ask questions, bring up ideas, or explain WHY you agree/disagree. Submit your considered reviews by Thursday and Saturday midnight of each course week.

**Paper proposal: 20%**

3.) Midterm detailed proposal for final paper: **3-4 pp** with a detailed plan for how you wish to approach a piece of American Romantic, Naturalist, or Realist literature. You can bring in literary or film efforts from outside the class as well, as long as they relate to/show the persistence of these literary movements in American literature. I need to see a tentative thesis, some scaffolding for your argument, and your lens/approach/methodology. This is a rumination; a chance to brainstorm arguments and show understanding. I will expect it to be in MLA format and fairly formal, but it can be fragmentary to some extent. I need to be able to evaluate your argument and themes and give you feedback on how to finalize your essay.

**Final paper 30%:**

4). Final paper: **5-8 pp** should be an extended argument about concepts of American Romanticism, Naturalism, Realism. You are also welcome to make connections to current literature, film, or historical events and how they continue or trouble these literary/mythological/historical concepts.

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**Tentative Schedule**: **Subject to (slight) revision as necessary! This is a basic overview and will evolve with time and discussion.**

Module: The Romantics and American Nostalgia

**Week** 1:

**Read provided scholarship on American Romanticism**

***[The Courtship of Miles Standish](https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-courtship-of-miles-standish/)* [Henry Wadsworth Longfellow](https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-courtship-of-miles-standish/)**

Discussion Prompts for Week 1.

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Tuesday)**

**Introduce yourselves! I’m interested to “meet” all of you and to know why you signed up for this course. ☺**

**Discussion Prompt 2 (Friday) Choose One (1)**

**Peer Response Saturday**

**Week 2:**

**Read** [***The Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper**](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/27681)**(Free download on Project Gutenberg. Other editions and formats also welcome)**

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Wednesday): Choose one (1)**

1. ***The Last of the Mohicans* is considered one of the great American Romantic works. How does it fulfil expectations for the movement? What is the role of the Native Americans in the novel?**
2. **Cora and Alice are very different in temperament and appearance. Who does the author lead us to admire more? Why?**
3. **American Romantics, held a Neoplatonic view of nature as a shadow of the Absolute or Ideal, which is not obtainable through our senses; it is “the great shadow pointing to the sun behind us” (Emerson *Nature).* Does nature point to something greater in this novel? How does it teach moral lessons?**

**Discussion Prompt 2(Friday): Choose one (1)**

1. **How is Cora’s appearance an indication of her morality? How does it parallel Uncas?**
2. **When in the natural world, Hawkeye always recommends trusting the Natives as better at understanding nature than a “man without a cross”? Why would they understand nature better? Hawkeye seems to admire the natives a great deal, particularly the Delaware Indians. Why then, is he so quick to announce that he’s white without any cross breeding? Why would it matter in an American Romantic work?**
3. **The narrator in this novel often mentions that the landscape he describes will be altered, settled, and “civilized” in a very short time. By 1826, when the novel is published, the east coast and New York are already bustling with modern industry and settlement. How does the novel reflect American desires for expansion? Why is it necessary to foreground that loss in a Romantic novel?**
4. **The Romantics were very concerned with the artist and with the sensitive soul. However, as Americans, they were also concerned with the masculine energy and industry of the frontier. Even the women reflect an admiration of strength and stoicism. How is Hawkeye more of an ideal man than the natives (in the structure of the story) and how does the singer, David, come to reveal an admirable manliness without a gun or violence? How is he a problematic character in the novel?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

Module: The Transcendentalists and Anxiety

Week 2:

**Read** [**“The Transcendentalist” by Ralph Waldo Emerson**](https://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/transcendentalist.html)

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Wednesday): Choose one (1)**

1. **Gilmore, in Chapter 1, sees Thoreau’s work as trying to “unite husbandry and literature and to formulate a conception of the writer that will exempt him from ‘the curse of trade’” (34). How is Emerson’s philosophy in “The Transcendentalist” different? If, as Gilmore concludes, loss of autonomy is Emerson’s concern, what is autonomy for Emerson?**
2. **Idealism is a Platonic philosophy the views our experienced reality as a shadow of some Absolute reality located outside of experience. How might this Transcendentalist position both relate to and exceed the cult of sensibility in Romanticism? How might the Transcendentalist position respecting autonomy and idleness, and the life of the mind, be dependent on class or other criteria in American society?**
3. **How does a Romantic work like *The Last of the Mohicans* both celebrate autonomy and challenge the idea of the autonomous human? If a human is autonomous and self-willing/self-creating, what role does nature play? Is Transcendentalism moving away from Romantic ideas?**

**Discussion Prompt 2 (Friday): Choose one (1)**

1. **How is autonomy concerned with moral virtue? What does Emerson say is the measure of morality? Is it different for each man?**
2. **Why does Emerson advocate a type of Pantheism? How does the idea of “spirit” undermine Christian principles? How might it lean toward a materialist worldview, even as Emerson denies being a materialist?**
3. **How does Transcendentalism become the apex or the height of Romanticism?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

Week 4:

**Read** [**“As I Ebbed…” by Walt Whitman**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/51003/as-i-ebbd-with-the-ocean-of-life)

[**“I Hear America Singing” by WW**](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46480/i-hear-america-singing)

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Wednesday): Choose one (1)**

1. **Whitman is usually included with the Transcendentalist movement. However, he does not always seem to fit. What ideas do you see as Transcendentalist in these poems? Where does he differ from his comrades?**
2. **Who is Whitman’s “Me” and why does it stand untouched in the ebb of the ocean?**
3. **Who are the mother and father to which he refers in the first poem?**

**Discussion Prompt 2(Friday): Choose one (1)**

1. **How is “I Hear America Singing” different from the first poem? What Transcendentalist value does it promote?**
2. **Whitman calls the songs “carols” or special religious occasional songs. Why is the work he identifies spiritual? Why does Whitman seem to emphasize physical labor and youth?**
3. **Can you see anything in these poems that might point to a more realistic and less romantic point of view?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

Module: American Realism and Naturalism

**Week 5:**

**Read Part One of *The Cambridge Companion* (The American Background)**

**Read:** [**“A Dark Brown Dog” by Stephen Crane**](https://books.google.com/books?id=AosqAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA149&dq=stephen+crane+%22a+dark-brown+dog%22&as_brr=1#v=onepage&q=stephen%20crane%20%22a%20dark-brown%20dog%22&f=false)

[**“Life in the Iron Mills” by Rebecca Harding Davis**](http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/876)

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Tuesday): Choose one (1)**

1. **How might “A Dark Brown Dog” consider that “The ancestors of Homo sapiens may include simians but not angels, that Homo may act far less from sapience than instinct” (Pizer Kindle)?**
2. **Pizer notes that “nurture within an inescapably specific environment shapes organisms in fascinating but sometimes grim ways” (Kindle). How do we see nurture acting in a grim way in “A Dark Brown Dog”?**
3. **What is Crane’s ‘argument’ in the story? Is he taking a social Darwinistic view of the family? Why or why not?**

**Discussion Prompt 2 (Friday) Choose one (1)**

1. **One form of Darwinism is expressed in Crane’s work, but Davis uses evolution a little differently. How does the environment work in her story, and how might the iron mills function like an island environment-similar to the Galapagos in Darwin’s work.**
2. **Who is the narrator of the story? How did he/she acquire Wolfe’s carving? What clues do you find in the story to support your contention?**
3. **Why does it matter that the Quaker woman comes to the prison? Does her effort do anything to soften or redeem the criticism of the Church in the story?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

**Paper Proposal Due!!**

**Week 6:**

**Read Chapters 1-20 of the** [***The Sea Wolf* by Jack London**](http://london.sonoma.edu/writings/SeaWolf/)

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Tuesday) Choose one (1).**

1. ***The Sea Wolf* is probably London’s most Social-Darwinistic work. Identify some areas where he shows a shift towards science and away from religion. How is Wolf Larsen an ideal scientific man?**
2. **The novel “argues” that civilization, the life of the mind, and too much civilizing influence from women weaken the evolution of man. Can you identify some ways that London undermines that argument?**
3. **Humphrey Van Weyden seems to be the epitome of the American dandy. What in the world attracts Wolf Larsen to him?**

**Discussion Prompt 2 (Friday) Choose one (1).**

1. **From an American literature standpoint, why is it important that the story takes place at sea? How is the sea voyage representative of American masculinity?**
2. **Hump tells Maud Brewster, "That it is unfortunate, especially if you have any engagements falling due in the course of the next several months. But, since you say that you were voyaging to Japan for your health, I can assure you that it will improve no better anywhere than aboard the *Ghost*." Is he right? Why is physical health valued over mental wellbeing?**
3. **How is the literary discussion over dinner a form of aggression against Wolf Larsen?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

**Week 7:**

**Finish *The Sea Wolf***

**Discussion Prompt 1 (Tuesday) Choose one (1)**

1. **Maud assails Hump for a lack of moral courage, saying it is “never without effect.” In the context of the novel, is she right? Why or why not?**
2. **Why are Wolf and Hump friends? Men fighting until they earn each other’s respect is narrative trope. Is there something more here? Why do you think Hump is so taken with Wolf’s physical appearance?**
3. **Maud is a type that Jack London likes in his fictions. He called his second wife his “mate woman” and admired her opinion and her athleticism. How does Maud earn the admiration of the two men who love her? How does she fit into a Social-Darwinist worldview?**

**Peer Response Saturday**

**Discussion Prompt 2 (Friday) Choose one (1)**

1. **Why is the incident with the shark and Muggeridge significant? Why does Larsen take revenge on the shark?**
2. **Hump and Maud take to calling Larsen “Lucifer” after reading Milton together. Is the nickname apt? Is it a criticism or admiration? Both? Why?**
3. **What does the brain disorder that takes Larsen’s life symbolize? Why do you think he wants Hump and Maud to stay on the island? Do you think that they could have escaped him without his illness? What might his illness have to do with his behavior on board ship?**

**Week 8:**

**Discussion Prompt: Answer BOTH of these. This is the only prompt this week.**

1. **What concepts do you take away from this class? Be as specific and clear as possible.**
2. **How does exploring the Romantic, Transcendentalist, and Realist/Naturalist movements in American literature help you to understand some of the ideas that are still current in American literature (and culture)? How do you think the movements differ and how do they blend into/influence one another?**

**Final Essay Due!**