

Jeremy Cunningham

Course Plan

The following plan reflects an overall aesthetic class strategy. The descriptions that are below will be used throughout seven eras of American literature: Early American, Romanticism, Transcendentalism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and the Harlem Renaissance. Each era will be dealt with aesthetically, and the class will culminate in a final multi-modal project expressing student interpretation of the American Dream.

Era Introduction: Transmediation

Our first day dealing with each era will be dedicated to transmediation. The students will be first be asked to listen to music with their eyes closed. The music has been chosen to express the feelings associated with the era being studied. Then, the students will be responsible for creating a work of art that goes along with the feelings they experienced during the music. They will be supplied with a variety of art supplies to complete this task. After they have worked, we will observe art works of the era. We will study these not only as a comparison to the student work, but also as a tool to interpret the era before we read any literature.

Reading

The student will go through 3-4 days of readings of the era being studied. The list of titles can be found in the "Annotated Reading List" document. These 3-4 days will be spent reading the texts and responding to them. As a class, we will discuss traits of the American Dream. The students will be charged with analyzing texts specifically for the theme of the American Dream and expressing that analysis in written format.

Culminating Project

The students will complete a culminating project using their transmediation pieces. The students will be asked to express the American Dream aesthetically. They will be required to present pieces that explain the concept. One of their final pieces must be from their seven transmediations. The students will be given work time to continue the pieces and add to them if they need to. Work for this project will be given throughout the class, along with a concentrated period of time at the end of the trimester.