

Jeremy Cunningham

LITR 592

Dr. Staunton

Annotated Reading List

Early American

Excerpt from A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson by Mary Rowlandson – This is an account of an early settler. It is a good example of the viewpoint of an Early American writing beyond the political struggle that was going on. Rowlandson is a settler, yet her voice echoes many of the things in the political treatises we read. Therefore, it shows the mentality and style of the era very well.

Excerpt from Speech to the Second Virginia Convention by Patrick Henry – These words by Henry feature many of the themes and ideas that the American Dream is based on. His famous phrase, “Give me liberty or give me death,” instills the passion and desire for freedom in the Early Americans. His argument is well communicated and will display the feeling of the era in a medium that was popular for the time period as well.

Excerpt from The Crisis, No. 1 by Thomas Paine – This is a text of a different form than both the speech and the narrative. Paine discusses many of the ideas that are associated with the American Dream in this piece and his style also is characteristic of the period. Paine’s ideas are throughout the American Revolution and this piece is a good excerpt to communicate that.

Romanticism

A Minister’s Black Veil by Nathaniel Hawthorne – Hawthorne is a major author of the period. This short story does a good job communicating Romanticism because it includes an ambiguous moral lesson, a trait of the era. The story also interests the students with its mysterious nature.

The Raven by Edgar Allen Poe – This is a quintessential poem of Edgar Allen Poe. It contains an ambiguous message and also contributes to our discussion on Poe as a major author of this era. The poem is an introduction to a class analysis of Edgar Allen Poe.

The Pit and the Pendulum by Edgar Allen Poe – This story is one of four the students will have a choice to read. The goal will be to take an overall look at Poe’s writing by reading a variety of pieces by him. This will serve as a good analysis of a major American author, and also a good discussion of many pieces of the Romantic era.

Fall of the House of Usher by Edgar Allen Poe – This story is one of four the students will have a choice to read. The goal will be to take an overall look at Poe’s writing by reading a variety of pieces by him. This

will serve as a good analysis of a major American author, and also a good discussion of many pieces of the Romantic era.

The Tell-Tale Heart by Edgar Allen Poe – This story is one of four the students will have a choice to read. The goal will be to take an overall look at Poe's writing by reading a variety of pieces by him. This will serve as a good analysis of a major American author, and also a good discussion of many pieces of the Romantic era.

Murders in the Rue Morgue by Edgar Allen Poe – This story is one of four the students will have a choice to read. The goal will be to take an overall look at Poe's writing by reading a variety of pieces by him. This will serve as a good analysis of a major American author, and also a good discussion of many pieces of the Romantic era.

Transcendentalism

Excerpt from Nature by Ralph Waldo Emerson – This piece gives a good introduction to transcendentalist thought. Specifically, it emphasizes the role of nature in human awareness. The excerpt will be used for introducing the era, and also used for people to understand a great author of the movement.

Excerpt from Self-Reliance by Ralph Waldo Emerson – This emphasizes the individual nature of transcendentalism. It is a good piece to emphasize the faith in the individual that is a cornerstone of the American Dream.

Excerpt from Walden by Henry David Thoreau – This introduces the class to a major author of the era. It emphasizes both a return to nature and individualism. It works well to inform the class on the unit as well as the American Dream.

Excerpt from Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau – This piece enforces individualism of the American Dream, and also features a questioning of the government that is inherent with the development of our nation. Thoreau asks questions and participates in discussions that display both the era and American values. It is a good culminating piece for the study of transcendentalism.

Naturalism

To Build a Fire by Jack London – This piece is a good example of naturalism. It does a good job of enforcing nature's power over man and man's struggle against the elements. The story also fits well into a discussion on the American Dream in terms of survival and faith in the individual and progress.

The Open Boat by Stephen Crane – This piece also shows the power of nature over man. It includes nature almost as another character, one who is choosing who lives and who dies. By personalizing nature, the piece does well to inform the class on the traits of naturalism.

Realism

The Story of an Hour by Kate Chopin – This work introduces the Realism discussion because it focuses primarily on the true feelings of one woman. The description and discussion of those feelings gives the students a good introduction to the characteristics of the era.

Look Up Mark TWAIN

Modernism

In Another Country by Ernest Hemingway – This story features a major author of the era and begins a discussion of its characteristics. The story will be good for introducing the despair that is featured in much of Modernist literature, along with discussing World War I and its historical impact on people.

Mending Wall by Robert Frost – This poem highlights a key theme of both modernism and the American Dream; it reevaluates our need for one another and our viewpoint of being individual. It questions a part of the American identity that is commonly accepted.

Harlem Renaissance

COPY TEXTS

Culminating Texts – The students have a choice of reading either of the following novels. They will use these novels to evaluate the American Dream and to understand questions or flaws in it that these authors point out.

- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald – This is a modernist text, but serves the purpose of evaluating the American Dream as a whole. Fitzgerald examines wealth, privilege, and class issues while commenting on the possibility of mobility and hope that the American Dream offers.
- Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck – This book also questions the possibility of the American Dream. It does not focus on class so much, but on America as a Land of Opportunity. The hope and ideal of hard work instilled in the American Dream is examined in this piece.