

Nineteenth-Century Literature Survey Course
Writing the Emerging Anglosphere (1800–1900)



Course Description

How was an English-speaking “West” constructed? And how did it accumulate its power? Our class will trace the cultural roots of these Western alliances in the nineteenth century, surveying Anglophone literature from roughly 1800–1900. Our goal for the semester will be to understand how diverse writers—and diverse genres—from Britain, the United States, and their burgeoning empires, were envisioning national identities in relationship to global power. We will begin with writing about and from settlement, move through mid-century nation-making, and end with the turn-of-the-century’s new imperialism. As we do, we will pay special attention to: 1) racialized ideals of Anglophone whiteness; and 2) the ways in which literature came to stand in for nation/empire itself.

Required Texts

- *Transatlantic Anglophone Literatures, 1776–1920*, eds. Linda K. Hughes, Sarah Ruffing Robbins, and Andrew Taylor (EUP, 2022, e-book available for free through IUCAT)
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Broadview, 2012)
- Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* (Warner, 2003)
- Olive Schreiner, *The Story of An African Farm* (OUP, 2009)
- Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (Penguin, 2001)
- All other readings will be available as PDF files on Canvas.

How this Class Works

1. Portfolio. Each student will create a digital course portfolio in which they will compile all weekly notes on the assigned readings, reflections, writing components for in-class practice, process letters, and acknowledgement forms. You will build this as a Google folder, which you will share with me. I will check these weekly as part of your participation assessment, and after major writing assignments for your process letters.
2. Midterms. We will have two short midterms following Unit 1 and Unit 2. The midterm will consist only of “identifications”—short quotations and passages you will be asked to identify by author and work, and briefly to explain their importance or significance—and short-answer questions.
3. Explication Essay (5–7 pp). This essay will ask you to select two works we have read in class thus far, and write a close explication, analyzing how each text’s language, form, and historical context shape its meaning. Your essay should move beyond summary to unpack specific passages, showing how they reflect broader themes of the course (such as colonization, nation-making, or race). You may compare how both texts approach a shared issue or trace a key difference in their treatment of similar ideas.
4. Remaking the Canon (proposal and presentation). Imagine you are an editor of a new forthcoming anthology on nineteenth-century Anglophone literatures. Your task is to reimagine the canon and defend your principles of selection—consider texts’ representation, tradition, nationality, popularity then and now, and the broader concepts of what literature is for and how it should be used. For the purposes of this assignment, you will be limited to 15 texts. Which texts would you choose? Would you organize them thematically or chronologically? Why? Your proposal should be 2 pages single-spaced, and the presentation should be no longer than 5 minutes. More details to follow in the coming weeks.

Schedule of Readings

Unit 1: Colonial Relationships

Week 1	Introduction Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> (1789), selections Leonora Sansay, <i>Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo</i> (1808), selections William Wordsworth, “To Toussaint L’Ouverture” (1803)
Week 2	William Wordsworth, Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i> (1802) Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (1834 text), selections Anna Laetitia Aikin Barbauld, “Eighteen Hundred and Eleven” (1812), selections Percy Shelley, “Ozymandias” (1818) Lord Byron, <i>Don Juan</i> , (1819–1824), selections
Week 3	Washington Irving, <i>The Sketchbook</i> (1819), selections Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818)

Week 4 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mochicans* (1826), selections
Felicia Hemans, “Indian Woman’s Death Song,” (1828), “The Indian City” (1828), and “The Homes of England” (1827)

Week 5 Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (1831), selections
Thomas Macaulay, “Minute on Indian Education” (1835), selections

Unit 2: Race and Nations

Week 6 Juan Francisco Manzano, trans. Richard Robert Madden, “Thirty Years” (1840)
Charles Dickens, *American Notes* (1842), selections
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)
Sojourner Truth, *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1850), selections

Week 7 Mary Ann Shadd, *A Plea for Emigration* (1852), selections
Susanna Moodie, *Roughing it in the Bush* (1852), selections
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Song of Hiawatha” (1855)

Week 8 Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854), selections
Hannah Crafts, *The Bondswoman’s Narrative* (1853–1861), selections
William Wells Brown, *The American Fugitive in Europe* (1855), selections

Week 9 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852), selections
Frances Harper, “The Slave Mother” (1854), and “Bury Me in a Free Land” (1858)
Henry David Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts” (1854) and “A Plea for Captain John Brown” (1859)
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” (1848), and “A Curse for a Nation” (1856)
Elizabeth Gaskell and Charles Eliot Norton, Letters on the Civil War (1861, 1863)

Week 10 Martin Delany, *Blake; or, The Huts of America* (1859–1862), selections
Mary Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (1857), selections
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), selections

Unit 3: New Anglophone Imperialisms

Week 11 Charles Dilke, *Greater Britain* (1868), selections
Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887)

Week 12 Walt Whitman, “A Passage to India” (1871)
Toru Dutt, “Our Casuarina Tree (1881)
Lord Tennyson, “Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen, 1886” (1886)
Olive Schreiner, *The Story of An African Farm* (1883)

Week 13 E. Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake), “A Cry from an Indian Wife” (1885), “My English Letter” (1888), “A Strong Race Opinion” (1892), and “The Corn Husker” (1896)

H. Rider Haggard, *Montezuma's Daughter* (1893), selections
Zitkála-Šá, “The School Days of an Indian Girl” (1900)

Week 14 José Martí, “Our America” (1892)
 Henry W. Nevinson, “The New Slave-Trade: Introductory—Down the West Coast” (1905), selections
 Theodore Roosevelt, “What ‘Americanism’ Means” (1894), selections
 Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899)
 Mark Twain, “To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901)

Week 15 Course wrap-up, Remaking the Canon presentations and proposals, and final portfolios due