



ENGLISH 356  
**AMERICAN TEXTS  
LATER 19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY**

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**Course Website**

[www.wright.edu/~david.wilson](http://www.wright.edu/~david.wilson)

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**Meeting Place & Time**

184 Andrews | TTh | 8-9:40

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**Course Description**

English 356 surveys representative works by select major American writers from the mid-nineteenth century to World War 1 with an emphasis on Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*. Incited by the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution, literature of this period witnessed a shift from the fanciful, individualistic, idealized tenets of Romanticism to the experiential, matter-of-fact objectivity of Realism, Naturalism and Regionalism. We will examine the tension between these schools of thought while exploring representations of gender, class and race. Written texts will be studied as literary and historical documents. The goal of English 356 is to critically engage students with textual analysis while providing a broader scope of the development and diversification of the American literary voice.

## Texts

Krupat, Arnold and Jeanne Campbell Reesman, eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature: Volume C (1865-1914)*. Seventh Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.

Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick*. 1853. Second Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

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## Grading Scale

Course grades will be based on the following points system:

Attendance & Participation	100
Assignments	150
Discussions	150
Midterm Essay	300
Final Essay	300
Total Points	1000

As I grade your work, **Pilot** tallies the points so that you may gauge your performance in the course at any time during the quarter.

At the end of the quarter, points will be converted to percentages, and percentages will be converted to letter grades. Here is the grading rubric:

90.0-100%	A
80.0-89.9%	B
70.0-79.9%	C
60.0-69.9%	D
0-59.9%	F

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## Attendance

Attendance is an essential part of this writing intensive, discussion-oriented course. It is expected that you will come to each class period prepared for the day's activities; when you do not show up, or when you show up unprepared, the quality of the class's labor suffers. As we will only meet in person once a week, it is important that you attend class, barring any unforeseen illnesses, family emergencies, religious observances, etc. More than ONE absence will negatively affect your grade. You are responsible for all assignments given during a class period you miss.

## Participation

Participation includes in-class speaking, activities, and responsive listening. Simply showing up for class does not constitute participation. You are expected to present your informed ideas and show respect for others in the classroom. Participation is mental and verbal attendance. You will be graded on how much you contribute to the learning environment of each class session.

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## Writing Assignments

These writing assignments are designed to give you experience working with some of the forms used by professional scholars.

**Literary Elements Outline** – Identify the following formal elements in a work of literature, providing specific examples: CHARACTER, SETTING, PLOT, NARRATOR, TONE, DICTION, IMAGERY and THEME.

**Close Reading** – Choose a passage from a text and analyze it in fine detail, as if with a magnifying glass, focusing on the formal elements of literature.

**Short Essay** – Write a literary analysis in which you examine some aspect of a work of literature closely in order to understand its messages, interpret its dominant themes, and appreciate an author’s technique.

All assignments must be formatted according to MLA style and polished in terms of writing mechanics as well as content. In addition, pop quizzes will be given throughout the quarter to ensure that the reading schedule is being followed.

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## Discussions

There will be several online discussions conducted via **Pilot**. For each discussion, you will be given a writing prompt about a recent reading.

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## Midterm Essay

For this critical analysis, students must select a passage from *Moby Dick* and perform a detailed close reading of it, studying Melville’s use of language in order to come to a greater understanding of one or more of the novel’s dominant themes. Format according to MLA guidelines. 750-1250 words.

## Final Essay

This literary analysis should be based upon ideas developed in writing assignments, class discussions, and personal notes and research. Students are responsible for developing their own topics and must focus on no more than TWO texts (excluding *Moby Dick*). The essay should make a clear and engaging argument about a dominant theme in the text(s), then proceed to defend that argument using support from the primary source(s) alongside your own commentary and interpretation. Use of secondary sources is not required. Format according to MLA guidelines. 1000-1250 words.

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## Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a writer: (1) copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; (2) paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; (3) turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

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## Writing Center

The Lake Campus's writing center is located in room 221 in Dwyer Hall. Contact the director, Dr. Christine Wilson ([christine.wilson@wright.edu](mailto:christine.wilson@wright.edu)), to make an appointment.

STUDENTS WHO USE THE WRITING CENTER WILL BE GIVEN 5 EXTRA CREDIT POINTS FOR EACH VISIT.

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## Class Calendar

Week	Schedule
1	1/3 Introduction to the Course
	1/5 <b>Discussion:</b> Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i> (ix-xiv, 7-101)
2	1/10 Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i> (pgs. 101-151)

- 1/12  
**Due:** Literary Elements Outline  
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (pgs. 152-199)
- 3 1/17  
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (pgs. 199-248)
- 1/19  
**Due:** Close Reading  
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (pgs. 248-319)
- 4 1/24  
**Presentations:** *Moby Dick* Criticism  
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (319-363)
- 1/26  
 Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (363-427)
- 5 1/31  
 Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*
- 2/2  
**Due:** Midterm Essay
- 6 2/7  
 Peter Ramos, "Unbearable Realism: Freedom, Ethics & Identity in *The Awakening*"\*
- 2/9  
**Discussion:** Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron"
- 7 2/14  
 Emily Dickinson, Poems
- 2/16  
**Due:** Short Essay  
 Emily Dickinson, Poems
- 8 2/21  
 Edith Wharton, "Roman Fever"
- 2/23  
**Guest Lecture:** Mary Hunter Austin, "The Walking Woman"
- 9 2/28  
 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"
- 3/1  
**Discussion:** Final Essay Topics

10 3/6  
Barbara Suess, "The Writing's on the Wall: Symbolic Orders in 'The Yellow Wallpaper'"\*

3/9  
Office Hours

E 3/15  
**Due:** Final Essay

\*Text available at [www.wright.edu/~david.wilson](http://www.wright.edu/~david.wilson).