

## READING LIST AMERICAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE

Like every attempt at making a canon, the following reading list is highly selective. It serves only as first orientation in the course of your study of American literature and culture. For a more comprehensive overview consult histories of American literature. Exam topics can be derived from the texts included in this list.

### 16<sup>TH</sup> - 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: COLONIAL PERIOD

John Smith (1580-1631)	"The General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles" (1624)
John Winthrop (1588-1649)	"A Modell of Christian Charity" (1630)
William Bradford (1590-1657)	"Of Plymouth Plantation" (1630-50)
Thomas Morton (c. 1579-c.1647)	"The New English Canaan" (1637)
Michael Wigglesworth (1631-1705)	"The Day of Doom" (1662)
Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)	"The Author to Her Book" (1678); "Contemplations" (1678) "In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth Bradstreet" (1678)
Mary Rowlandson (c. 1637-1711)	<i>A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson</i> (1682)
Cotton Mather (1663-1728)	"Magnalia Christi Americana" (1702)

### LATE 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD, EARLY REPUBLIC AND AMERICAN RENAISSANCE

#### NARRATIVE TEXTS

Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)	<i>Autobiography</i> (1771-1788)
Thomas Paine (1737-1809)	<i>Common Sense</i> (1776) "The Rights of Man" (1791-1792)
Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)	"The Declaration of Independence" (1776) "Notes on the State of Virginia" (1782)
Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (1735-1813)	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> (1782)
A. Hamilton, J. Jay, J. Madison	<i>The Federalist</i> (1787-1788)

Olaudah Equiano (1745 - 1797)	<i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself</i> (1789)
Susanna Rowson (1762-1824)	<i>Charlotte Temple</i> (1794)
Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810)	<i>Wieland</i> (1798), <i>Edgar Huntley</i> (1799)
Washington Irving (1783-1859)	"Rip Van Winkle" (1819-20) "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (1819-20)
James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851)	<i>The Pioneers</i> (1823) <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> (1826)
Lydia Maria Child (1802-1880)	<i>Hobomok, A Tale of Early Times</i> (1824)
Catharina Sedgwick (1789-1867)	<i>Hope Leslie</i> (1829)
Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)	Selected essays, e.g. "Nature" (1836), "The American Scholar" (1837), "Self-Reliance" (1841/1847)
Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)	Selected stories, e.g. "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (1841); "The Philosophy of Composition" (1846), "The Poetic Principle" (1850)
Margaret Fuller (1810-1859)	"The Great Lawsuit" (1843)
Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)	<i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave Written by Himself</i> (1845); Speeches, e.g.: "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (1852)
Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864)	<i>The Scarlet Letter</i> (1850) Selected stories, e.g. "My Kinsman Major Molineux" (1832), "Young Goodman Brown" (1835), "The Minister's Black Veil" (1836), "Rappaccini's Daughter" (1844)
Herman Melville (1819-1891)	<i>Moby-Dick</i> (1851) Stories, e.g. "Bartleby the Scrivener" (1853) "Benito Cereno" (1856), <i>Billy Budd, Sailor</i> (post.1924)
Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)	<i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> (1852)
Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)	<i>Walden, or Life in the Woods</i> (1854), selected essays, e.g. "Resistance to Civil Government" (1849)
Harriet Brent Jacobs (c.1813-1897)	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (1861)
Rebecca Harding Davis (1831-1910)	<i>Life in the Iron Mills</i> (1861)

Abraham Lincoln  
(1809-1865) "The Gettysburg Address" (1863)

### Poetry

Philip Freneau  
(1752-1832) Selected poems, e.g. "On the Emigration to America and the Peopling of the Western Country," "Indian Burying Ground"

Phillis Wheatley  
(c. 1753-1784) Selected poems, e.g. "On Being Brought from Africa to America", "To the University of Cambridge, New England"

Edgar Allan Poe  
(1809-1850) Selected poems, e.g. "The Raven", "Annabel Lee"

Walt Whitman  
(1819-1892) Selected poems, e.g. "Song of Myself", "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed"

Emily Dickinson  
(1830-1886) Selected poems, e.g. "I felt a Funeral in my Brain", "Because I Could Not Stop For Death", "There is a certain Slant of Light", "A Bird came down the Walk"

## 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY: REALISM AND NATURALISM

### NARRATIVE TEXTS

Louisa May Alcott  
(1832-1888) *Little Women* (1868/9)

Henry James  
(1843-1916) *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), *Daisy Miller* (1878)  
"The Turn of the Screw" (1898)

Mark Twain  
(1835-1910) *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884-85)  
*A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889)  
Selected short stories, e.g. "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" (1865)

William Dean Howells  
(1837-1920) *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885)

Edward Bellamy  
(1850-1898) *Looking Backward: 2000–1887* (1888)

Ambrose Bierce  
(1842-1914) Selected short stories, e.g. "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" (1890)

Hamlin Garland  
(1860-1940) *Main-Travelled Roads* (1891)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman  
(1860-1935) Selected short stories, e.g. "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892)  
*Herland* (1915)

Stephen Crane  
(1871-1900) *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1893)  
*The Red Badge of Courage* (1895)  
Selected short stories, e.g. "The Open Boat" (1898)

Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909)	<i>The Country of the Pointed Firs</i> (1896)
Kate Chopin (1851-1904)	<i>The Awakening</i> (1899); Selected short stories, e.g. "Désirée's Baby"; Selected short stories, e.g. "Désirée's Baby" (1892), "The Story of an Hour" (1894)
Frank Norris (1870-1902)	<i>McTeague</i> (1899)
Charles W. Chesnutt (1858-1932)	Selected short stories, e.g. "The Wife of His Youth" (1898), <i>The House Behind the Cedars</i> (1900)

## 20TH CENTURY: NATURALISM AND MODERNISM

### NARRATIVE TEXTS

Booker T. Washington (1856-1915)	<i>Up from Slavery</i> (1901)
Frank Norris (1870-1902)	<i>The Octopus</i> (1901)
W. E. B. DuBois (1868-1963)	<i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> (1903)
Jack London (1876-1916)	<i>The Call of the Wild</i> (1903)
Upton Sinclair (1878-1968)	<i>The Jungle</i> (1906)
Gertrude Stein (1874-1946)	Selected stories, e.g. "Three Lives" (1909)
Edith Wharton (1862-1937)	<i>Ethan Frome</i> (1911) <i>The House of Mirth</i> (1920)
James Weldon Johnson (1871-1938)	<i>The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man</i> (1912)
Willa Cather (1876-1947)	<i>O Pioneers!</i> (1913) <i>Death Comes for the Archbishop</i> (1927)
Abraham Cahan (1860-1951)	<i>The Rise of David Levinsky</i> (1917)
Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941)	<i>Winesburg, Ohio</i> (1919)
T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)	Selected essays, e.g. "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919)
Sinclair Lewis	<i>Main Street</i> (1920) <i>Babbitt</i> (1922)

Jean Toomer (1894-1967)	<i>Cane</i> (1923)
Ellen Glasgow (1874-1945)	<i>Barren Ground</i> (1925)
John Dos Passos (1896-1970)	<i>Manhattan Transfer</i> (1925)
F. Scott Fitzgerald (1896-1940)	<i>The Great Gatsby</i> (1925)
Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961)	<i>The Sun Also Rises</i> (1926), <i>A Farewell to Arms</i> (1929) <i>In Our Time</i> (1925); selected stories, e.g. "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (1926), "Hills like White Elephants" (1927),
Katherine Anne Porter	Selected stories, e.g. "He" (1927), "Flowering Judas" (1930)
Claude McKay (1889-1948)	<i>Home to Harlem</i> (1928)
Nella Larsen (1893-1964)	<i>Passing</i> (1929), <i>Quicksand</i> (1928)
William Faulkner (1897-1962)	<i>The Sound and the Fury</i> (1929); selected stories, e.g. "Dry September," (1931), "That Evening Sun" (1931), "The Bear" (1942)
Thomas Wolfe (1900-1938)	<i>Look Homeward, Angel</i> (1929)
John Neihardt (1881-1973)	<i>Black Elk Speaks</i> (1932)
Zora Neale Hurston (ca.1891-1960)	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> (1937) Selected stories, e.g. "Sweat" (1926)
John Steinbeck (1902-1968)	<i>Of Mice and Men</i> (1937) <i>The Grapes of Wrath</i> (1939)
Nathanael West (1904-1940)	<i>The Day of the Locust</i> (1939)
Richard Wright (1908-1960)	<i>Native Son</i> (1940)
Robert Penn Warren (1905- 1989)	<i>All the King's Men</i> (1946) Selected stories, e.g. "Blackberry Winter" (1946)
<b>DRAMA</b>	
Susan Glaspell (1876-1948)	<i>Trifles</i> (1916)
Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953)	<i>Emperor Jones</i> (1920), <i>Mourning Becomes Electra</i> (1931), <i>The Iceman Cometh</i> (1946), <i>A Long Day's Journey into Night</i> (1956)

Elmer Rice (1892-1967)	<i>The Adding Machine</i> (1923)
Maxwell Anderson (1888-1959)	<i>What Price Glory?</i> (1924), <i>Anne of the Thousand Days</i> (1948)
Lillian Hellman (1905-1984)	<i>The Children's Hour</i> (1934), <i>The Little Foxes</i> (1939)
Clifford Odets (1906-1963)	<i>Waiting for Lefty</i> (1935), <i>Awake and Sing</i> (1935)
Langston Hughes (1902-1967)	<i>Mulatto</i> (1935)
Thornton Wilder (1897-1975)	<i>Our Town</i> (1938)
<b>POETRY</b>	
Robert Frost (1874-1963)	Selected poems, e.g. "The Road Not Taken" "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening", "Mending Wall"
Carl Sandburg (1878-1967)	Selected poems, e.g. "Chicago", "Fog"
Wallace Stevens	Selected poems, e.g. "Sunday Morning", "Anecdote of the Jar", "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", "The Idea of Order at Key West"
William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)	Selected poems, e.g. "The Red Wheelbarrow" "Spring and All"
Ezra Pound (1885-1972)	Selected poems, e.g. "In a Station of the Metro"
Hilda Doolittle (H.D.) (1886-1961)	Selected poems, e.g. "Oread", "Helen"
T.S. Eliot (1888-1965)	<i>The Waste Land</i> , "The Love Song of J. Alfred Pufrock"
e.e. cummings (1894-1962)	Selected poems, e.g. "Buffalo Bill", "grasshopper" "pity this busy monster, manunkind"
Hart Crane (1899-1932)	<i>The Bridge</i> (1930)
Langston Hughes (1902-1967)	Selected poems, e.g. "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", "Harlem", "I, too, sing America", "The Weary Blues"
Claude McKay (1889-1948)	Poems, e.g. "If We Must Die" (1919)

## POST 1945/ POSTMODERNITY

### NARRATIVE TEXTS

Eudora Welty (1909-2001)	Selected stories, e.g. "A Worn Path" (1941) "The Burning" (1951)
Carson McCullers (1917-1967)	<i>The Member of the Wedding</i> (1946) <i>The Heart is a Lonely Hunter</i> (1940)
Norman Mailer (1923-2007)	<i>The Naked and the Dead</i> (1948)
Jerome D. Salinger (1919-)	<i>The Catcher in the Rye</i> (1951)
Ralph Ellison (1914-1994)	<i>Invisible Man</i> (1952) Essays: <i>Shadow and Act</i> (1956)
Saul Bellow (1915-2005)	<i>The Adventures of Augie March</i> (1953) <i>Herzog</i> (1964)
Ray Bradbury (1920-)	<i>Fahrenheit 451</i> (1953)
James Baldwin (1924-1987)	<i>Go Tell It on the Mountain</i> (1953) <i>Giovanni's Room</i> (1956) Essays: <i>The Fire Next Time</i> (1963), <i>The Price of the Ticket</i> (1985)
Flannery O'Connor (1925-1964)	Selected stories, "A Good Man Is Hard to Find" (1953), "The Displaced Person" (1954)
Bernard Malamud (1914-1986)	<i>The Assistant</i> (1957)
Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)	<i>On the Road</i> (1957)
Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977)	<i>Lolita</i> (1958)
John Updike (1932- 2009)	<i>Rabbit, Run</i> (1960)
John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)	"Inaugural Address" (1961)
Joseph Heller (1923-1999)	<i>Catch 22</i> (1961)
Martin Luther King (1929-1968)	Selected speeches & writings, e.g. "I Have a Dream" (1963), "Letter from Birmingham Jail" (1963)
Truman Capote (1924-1984)	<i>In Cold Blood</i> (1965)
Thomas Pynchon	<i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> (1966)

(1937- )

John Barth  
(1930-) *Lost in the Funhouse* (1968)

N. Scott Momaday  
(1934- ) *House Made of Dawn* (1968), *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (1969)

John Cheever  
(1912-1982) *Bullet Park* (1969)  
Selected stories, e.g. "The Swimmer" (1964)

Kurt Vonnegut  
(1922-2007) *Slaughterhouse Five* (1969)

Philip Roth  
(1933-) *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), *Operation Shylock. A Confession*  
(1993), *The Human Stain* (2003)

Rudolfo Anaya  
(1937- ) *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972)

Ishmael Reed  
(1938-) *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972)  
*Flight to Canada* (1976)

James Welch  
(1940-2003) *Winter in the Blood* (1974)

E. L. Doctorow  
(1931- ) *Ragtime* (1974)

Maxine Hong Kingston  
(1940- ) *The Woman Warrior* (1975)

Leslie Marmon Silko  
(1948- ) *Ceremony* (1977)

Alice Walker  
(1944- ) *The Color Purple* (1982)

Louise Erdrich  
(1954-) *Love Medicine* (1984)

Don DeLillo  
(1936-) *White Noise* (1985), *Falling Man* (2007)

Paul Auster  
(1947- ) *The New York Trilogy* (1985-86)

Toni Morrison  
(1931- ) *Beloved* (1987)  
*Song of Solomon* (1977)

Amy Tan  
(1952- ) *The Joy Luck Club* (1989)

Charles R. Johnson  
(1948-) *Middle Passage* (1990)

Gerald Vizenor  
*The Heirs of Columbus* (1991)



(1941-)

Sherman Alexie (1966-) *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993)

T.C. Boyle (1948-) *The Tortilla Curtain* (1995), *A Friend of the Earth* (2000)

► **Further contemporary texts...**

**DRAMA**

Tennessee Williams (1911-1983) *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1959)

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) *Death of a Salesman* (1949), *The Crucible* (1953), *A View from the Bridge* (1955)

Edward Albee (1929-) *The Zoo Story* (1959), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* (1962)

Lorraine Hansberry (1930-1965) *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)

Adrienne Kennedy (1931-) *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964)

Amiri Baraka (Jones, LeRoi) (1934-) *Dutchman* (1964), *The Slave* (1964)

Hanay Geiogamah (1945-) *Body Indian* (1972), *Foghorn* (1972)

David Mamet (1947-) *American Buffalo* (1975), *Oleanna* (1992)

Ntozake Shange (1948-) *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/ When the Rainbow is Enuf* (1975)

Sam Shepard (1943-) *Hawk Moon* (1978)

August Wilson (1945-2005) *Fences* (1986)

David Henry Hwang (1957-) *M. Butterfly* (1988)

Tony Kushner (1956-) *Angels in America* (1993), *Homebody/Kabul* (2001)

Suzan-Lori Parks (1946-) *The America Play* (1994), *Topdog/Underdog* (2001)

► **Further contemporary dramas ...**

## POETRY

Robert Lowell (1917-1977)	Selected poems, e.g. "Mr. Edwards and the Spider" "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket"
Allen Ginsberg (1926-1997)	Selected poems, e.g. "Howl", "A Supermarket in California"
John Ashberry (1927-)	Selected poems, e.g. "Soonest Mended", "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror"
Adrienne Rich (1929-)	Selected poems, e.g. "The Fact of a Doorframe"
Gary Snyder (1930-)	Selected poems, e.g. "The Bath"
Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)	Selected poems, e.g. "Lady Lazarus", "Ariel"
Simon Ortiz (1941-)	Selected poems, e.g. "Dry Root in a Wash" "Survival this Way"
Joy Harjo (1951-)	Selected poems, e.g. "Eagle Poem"

► **Further contemporary poetry ....**