

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College**  
**Course Content Summary**

**Course Prefix and Number:** ENG 241

**Credits:** 3

**Course Title:** Survey of American Literature I

**Course Description:** Examines American literary works from pre-colonial times through the mid-nineteenth century, emphasizing the ideas and characteristics of our national literature. Involves critical reading and writing. ENG 241 has been designated as a "writing intensive" course according to standards developed by the English department. ENG 241 and 242 may be taken out of order. Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent. Lecture 3 hours per week.

**General Course Purpose:** ENG 241 develops skills in critical literacy, provides opportunities for humanistic study, and promotes an understanding of selected American literature from the pre-colonial period through the mid-nineteenth century. As a writing intensive course, ENG 241 will provide specific instruction in writing, especially literary analysis, and substantial written and oral feedback on formal writing, with the opportunity to revise at least one formal paper. Students will produce at least 12 pages (3000 words) of formal writing, including academic essays and essay exam responses, and at least 12 pages (3000 words) of informal writing, including reading responses or journal entries.

**Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:**

Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

Upon completing this course, the student will be able to

- a. Describe, analyze, and interpret themes and features of literary texts from a variety of genres, using appropriate literary terminology;
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of the literary movements covered in the survey, including literary techniques, innovations, major writers, and major texts;
- c. Explain the relationship between literature and the historical and cultural contexts in which it is produced, with particular attention to the shaping of cultural identities as reflected in the literature;
- d. Compose writing about literature that includes clear and concise argumentation and organization, valid textual evidence for support, and correct documentation; and
- e. Use literary study as a means for engaging in meaningful and enduring questions across human cultures.

**Major Topics to Be Included:**

Students may expect to study the following:

- a. Fifteenth- through sixteenth-century literature, including prose narratives and poetry from early European contact through the Puritan tradition, as well as myths and legends recovered from oral cultures.
- b. Eighteenth-century literature, including literature of the American Revolution. Students may expect to study texts reflecting the way America's literature addresses questions of personal and political freedom.
- c. Early- to mid-nineteenth-century literature, including the literature of the American Renaissance. Students may expect to study authors' various responses to the questions of cultural and national identity and to examine the influence of New England literature in the development of America's literary tradition.

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