

英语专业系列教材

A SHORT HISTORY OF
AMERICAN LITERATURE AND SELECTED READINGS

美国文学简史与选读

李正栓 主 编 李圣轩 副主编
滑彦立



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内 容 简 介

本书是高等院校英语专业美国文学教材,内容包括美国文学简史、美国名家简介及作品选读。全书按体裁划分为诗歌、小说、戏剧和散文四大部分,每部分下面又按不同历史时期的代表作家进行编排,具体到每章,都包含作家生平及作品介绍、简要评论、作品选读、注释、作品赏析和思考题等几大板块。

本书的读者对象为英语类专业高年级学生、备考研究生的学生,以及渴望通过阅读文学作品学习英语语言和提高文学素养的读者。

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图书在版编目(CIP)数据

美国文学简史与选读:英文/李正栓主编.

--北京:清华大学出版社,2015

英语专业系列教材

ISBN 978-7-302-41864-1

I. ①美… II. ①李… III. ①英语-阅读教学-高等学校-教材 ②文学史-美国-高等学校-教材 IV. ①H319.4: I

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2015)第251955号

责任编辑:刘细珍

封面设计:覃一彪

责任校对:王凤芝

责任印制:杨 艳

出版发行:清华大学出版社

网 址: <http://www.tup.com.cn>, <http://www.wqbook.com>

地 址:北京清华大学学研大厦A座 邮 编:100084

社总机:010-62770175 邮 购:010-62786544

投稿与读者服务:010-62776969, c-service@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

质量反馈:010-62772015, zhiliang@tup.tsinghua.edu.cn

印装者:三河市少明印务有限公司

经 销:全国新华书店

开 本:170mm×230mm 印 张:31 字 数:535千字

版 次:2015年10月第1版 印 次:2015年10月第1次印刷

印 数:1~2000

定 价:66.00元

产品编号:063204-01

前言

近几十年来，我国的高等教育发展迅猛，英语专业的发展也势如破竹。绝大多数大学都设有英语专业。与此同时，与英语有关的，或者说，脱胎于英语专业而另图发展、更直接为社会经济发展服务的翻译专业（方向）和商务英语专业（方向）也发展得如火如荼。

近年来，相关部门和专家对专业建设和课程建设进行了调查，发现一些学校的英语专业建立和英语专业建设之间仍存在差距。一些地方没有完全按教育部英语专业教学大纲规定开设一些专业知识必修课，如语言学和英美文学。有些地方削减文学必修课的课时，简化课程。一些人认为，美国历史太短，美国文学课程没有必要作为重点。有些地方干脆不开这些课程。实际上，这一切现象都暴露出英美文学师资短缺这一客观情况，师资短缺严重影响了课程建设和专业建设。

英美文学教学历来是我国英语专业教学的重要组成部分。我国老一辈英语专家们都是通过阅读文学原著学到了优秀的语言，都是在中西文学王国自由徜徉的学者，所以他们中间大师层出不穷。今天，我们追逐前辈之伟大恐极为不易，但应有的文学知识，我们还是应当掌握。这是培养合格外语人才和建设者所必需的，因为文学作品体现了人类最美好的语言，展现了丰富多彩的世界，蕴含了深厚的人文素养。这也是英语专业教学大纲中要求的重要板块。

可喜的是，越来越多的专家学者和英语专业的掌门人已充分认识到英美文学课的重要性，呼吁并正在实现着英语专业建设中传统课程的回归。我们充分并欣喜地注意到，翻译专业和商务英语两个新建专业都把英美文学课程列入其中。这说明，无论英语专业、翻译专业，还是商务英语专业，都意识到在培养合格专业人才中文学所起到的基础作用和重要功能。

近年来，美国文学教材建设也取得巨大成就，成果很多。美国文学教材异彩纷呈，为学生们学习美国文学提供了丰富的菜单和自由的选择。然而由于学时有限，各地办学条件不一，学生家境不同，经济承受能力有别，要求学生大量采购和阅读美国文学原版图书与多种教材是不现实的。因此，我们决定推出这一版本的教材，



旨在让学生们在有限的学时内和经济能力能承受的情况下完成美国文学的学习。我们把文学史、作品选读和文学知识纳入同一本书。文学史和作家生平介绍部分文字浅显，易读易懂，学生可以自己读，教师辅以适当讲解。教师应当重点讲解作品部分。本书所选作品多于教学学时所要求的数量。教师可以从众多作品中挑选自己认为最应该让学生重点掌握的进行讲解，同时还要讲授文学的学习方法。学生可以在学有余力时自己多读一些本书所选作品，一般情况下，学生无须另外买书即可完成美国文学课程的学习。

根据这一指导思想，我们决定本书的编写体例是：全书分四部分，分别是诗歌、小说、戏剧和散文。每种体裁均有发展脉络概述（即简史）。每部分下面又按不同历史时期的代表作家进行编排，具体到每一章，都包含作家生平及作品介绍（Life story and works）、作家评论（Comments）、选文（Selected poems/novels/essays）、注释（Notes）、选文赏析（Appreciation）和思考题（For study and discussion）等板块，诗歌部分的选文均提供中译版本供参考。这样一种体例能够使学生通过注释、教师讲解和译文等更好地学习作品；对教师不能讲解的作品，注释和译文更加有用。同一作家根据其作品分类出现在不同体裁部分，讲解侧重点不一样。本书按历史时期划分，不以作品流派划分。

作家生平及作品介绍（Life story and works） 对作家生平及作品作简要介绍，并对未列入选文的经典作品进行提及性介绍。

作家评论（Comments） 对作家的写作风格、文学地位等进行简要评述，或提供评论家或同行间的权威评价。

选文（Selected poems/novels/essays） 指列入本书的经典选文，对较长的选文进行了删节。

注释（Notes） 对选文中难以理解或易产生误解的词、句进行解释，或简述某些词句的背景知识、文学典故等。

选文赏析（Appreciation） 包括选文的内容概述、遣词分析、写作特点、文学地位及影响等。

思考题（For study and discussion） 课后思考题及小组讨论，问题多以开放性的思考题为主，且不局限于选文。

本书集诗歌、小说、戏剧和散文为一书，但授课教师未必是同一教师，可以分成几个时段由不同教师共同承担此课程的教学任务，各自发挥自己的特长。此建议



仅供参考。本书选入作品较多，因为这些作品都很优秀，不选太遗憾；有些作品学生可以自学，遇到问题可以向教师请教，也可以上网或去图书馆查找译文、评论或赏析。

本书有以下创新之处：

1. 除对经典作家及作品进行介绍之外，还选了更多的作家及其作品。弥补了学生仅闻某作家其名，却未读过其作品的遗憾，并且对所有的选段进行了注释和赏析，列了一些课后开放性思考题，有助于学生课上学习及课下独立阅读。

2. 针对部分学生无法将某些作家的英汉名字对应起来的问题，本书将每位作家的汉语名称一一标出。

3. 本书充分采用了学界最新的研究成果和一些新观点，诸如流派划分等问题，还充分利用现代叙事学理论加强小说部分的选材、注释和思考题的设计。小说的节选最大限度地体现不同时期、不同作家的写作风格，体现了小说叙事技巧的脉络流变，以期提供多样的叙事审美体验。

4. 本书吸收了许多知识、术语讲解和文学批评常识。

5. 本书吸收了一些现代教学理论和教学方法。如书中内容有一些应该是以任务形式留给学生去读，有一些教师应重点讲解，有一些应该在课堂上加强互动，有一些应该是学生课下掌握。倡导学生拓宽比较视野，包括同一国家不同作家间的比较，也倡导广大师生在使用本书时加强英美作家与中国作家和其他国家作家的比较与分析。

清华大学出版社外语分社对英语专业教材建设极为重视，郝建华社长多次提出编写建议；刘细珍主任不仅狠抓图书质量，还为学生购买力着想，可敬可佩。在本书编写过程中，我们参考过网上一些资料和一些学者的同类书籍以及一些学术观点，在此一并致谢。

由于水平和学识有限，纰漏之处在所难免，敬请指出，以便改正。

编者

2015年6月



Contents



Poetry



Part 1 American Poetry of the Colonial Period: The Poetry of Elizabethan Initiative, Ingenuity, and Democracy

Chapter 1	Anne Bradstreet	6
	To My Dear and Loving Husband	8
Chapter 2	Philip Freneau	10
	The Wild Honey Suckle	11
	The Indian Burying Ground.....	14

Part 2 American Poetry of Romantic Period: The Witness of Growth, Independence and Originality

Chapter 1	William Cullen Bryant.....	20
	To a Waterfowl.....	22
Chapter 2	Edgar Allan Poe.....	26
	To Helen.....	28
	Annabel Lee.....	31
Chapter 3	Henry Wadsworth Longfellow	36
	A Psalm of Life.....	38
	The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls	43
Chapter 4	Walt Whitman	45
	O Captain! My Captain!	47
	Cavalry Crossing a Ford.....	51
	I Hear America Singing.....	52



Chapter 5	Emily Elizabeth Dickinson	54
	Success	56
	Wild Nights—Wild Nights	58
	I Died for Beauty.....	60
	I Heard a Fly buzz—When I died—.....	61
	Because I Could Not Stop for Death	64

Part 3 American Poetry of the Modernist Period: The Search for Impersonality, Objectivity and Distillation

Chapter 1	Edwin Arlington Robinson.....	68
	Richard Cory	69
Chapter 2	Robert Frost	72
	The Road Not Taken	73
	Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.....	76
	Fire and Ice.....	78
Chapter 3	Stephen Crane	80
	Black Riders Came from the Sea.....	81
	A Man Said to the Universe	83
Chapter 4	Carl Sandburg.....	84
	Fog	85
	Grass	87
Chapter 5	Wallace Stevens	89
	Anecdote of the Jar.....	90
	The Snow Man	92
Chapter 6	William Carlos Williams	94
	The Red Wheelbarrow	96
Chapter 7	Ezra Pound.....	97
	In a Station of the Metro.....	99
	A Pact.....	101
Chapter 8	Hilda Doolittle	103
	Oread	104
	Helen.....	105
Chapter 9	Edward Estlin Cummings	108
	L(a).....	109



Part 4 American Poetry of Contemporary Times: The Disruption of Authority; the Coming of All-embracing

Chapter 1	James Mercer Langston Hughes	112
	The Negro Speaks of Rivers.....	113
	Dreams	115
	Words like Freedom	116
	Warning.....	118
Chapter 2	Theodore Huebner Roethke.....	119
	My Papa's Waltz.....	120
Chapter 3	Elizabeth Bishop	122
	The Fish	124
Chapter 4	The Confessional School: Robert Lowell.....	129
	Skunk Hour.....	131
Chapter 5	The Beat School: Allen Ginsberg	135

Novel

Part 1 American Novel of Romanticism Period: The Concern for Humanitarian Reforms and National Morality

Chapter 1	Washington Irving.....	141
	Rip Van Winkle.....	143
Chapter 2	James Fenimore Cooper	158
	The Last of the Mohicans.....	160
Chapter 3	Edgar Allan Poe.....	173
	The Fall of the House of Usher.....	175
Chapter 4	Nathaniel Hawthorne.....	193
	Scarlet Letter.....	195
Chapter 5	Herman Melville	204
	Moby Dick	206

Part 2 American Novel of Realism Period: The Rendering of the Ordinary, Commonplace and the Low

Chapter 1	Mark Twain.....	216
	The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn.....	219
Chapter 2	Henry James.....	229
	The Portrait of a Lady.....	231

Part 3 American Novel of Naturalism Period: Dismissing the Validity of Comforting Moral Truths and Presenting the Extreme Life

Chapter 1	Stephen Crane.....	246
	The Open Boat.....	248
Chapter 2	Theodore Dreiser.....	251
	Sister Carrie.....	253
Chapter 3	Frank Norris.....	261
Chapter 4	Sherwood Anderson.....	262
	Winesburg, Ohio.....	264
Chapter 5	Jack London.....	273
	The Call of the Wild.....	275

Part 4 American Novel of Modernism Period: The Experience of Horrors and the Lost in Faith

Chapter 1	Willa Cather.....	291
Chapter 2	Sinclair Lewis.....	293
	Babbitt.....	295
Chapter 3	Francis Scott Fitzgerald.....	304
	The Great Gatsby.....	306
Chapter 4	William Faulkner.....	322
	The Sound and the Fury.....	325



Chapter 5	Ernest Hemingway	339
	The Sun Also Rises	342
Chapter 6	John Ernst Steinbeck	346
	The Grapes of Wrath	348

Part 5 American Novel Since 1945: The Normalization of Chaos and Absurdity

Chapter 1	Vladimir Nabokov	361
Chapter 2	Saul Bellow	363
	Herzog	365
Chapter 3	Jerome David Salinger	389
	The Cather in the Rye	391
Chapter 4	Jack Kerouac	399
	On the Road	401
Chapter 5	Kurt Vonnegut	404
Chapter 6	Flannery O'Connor	406
Chapter 7	Thomas Pynchon	408
Chapter 8	John Updike	410
Chapter 9	Ken Kesey	413

Part 6 American Multiethnic Novel Since 1945: Boiling of the Melting Pot

Chapter 1	Richard Wright	417
Chapter 2	Ralph Ellison	419
	Invisible Man	421
Chapter 3	Alex Haley	436
Chapter 4	Toni Morrison	438
	The Bluest Eye	440



Chapter 5	Maxine Hong Kingston	442
	The Woman Warrior.....	444
Chapter 6	Alice Walker	447

Drama

American Drama: The Critical Perception of the Changing Society and Life

Chapter 1	Eugene Gladstone O'Neill	452
Chapter 2	Thomas Lanier Williams III.....	453
Chapter 3	Arthur Asher Miller.....	455
Chapter 4	Edward Franklin Albee III	456

Essay

American Essay: The Recording of Truth and Times

Chapter 1	Ralph Waldo Emerson	463
	Nature	464
Chapter 2	Henry David Thoreau.....	467
	Walden.....	468
	参考文献	462



Poetry



American Poetry of the Colonial Period: The Poetry of Elizabethan Initiative, Ingenuity, and Democracy

American Puritanism was one of the most lasting influences on shaping American thought and American literature, not only in the early period, but also in the long years after. To American, it is not only a kind of religion or a philosophy, but also a cultural heritage or a state of mind. Its position in American culture can be compared with the Confucius in Chinese culture. Without understanding it, it is almost impossible to understand American culture and literature. The early American literature mostly is composed of Puritan literature.

Puritans were originally members of a division of the Protestant Church. They regarded the reformation of the church under Elizabeth as incomplete, and called for further purification. Puritanism, as a religious reform movement, appeared within the Church of England in the late 16th century. Under the siege from church and crown, some of Puritans left their homeland in the third and fourth decades of the 17th century to the northern English colonies in the New World. A few of Puritans as the first group settling in America became the founding father of the American nation, who laid the foundation for the religious, intellectual, and social order of New England. Puritanism, however, was not only a historically specific phenomenon coincident with the founding of New England; it was also a way of being in the world—a style of response to lived experience—that has reverberated through American life ever since. Doctrinally, Puritans insisted on the five viewpoints of Calvinism enunciated by John Cotton, one of the many powerful Puritan clerics in New England: (1) Unconditional Election (God “saves” those he wishes—only a few are selected for salvation—concept of predestination); (2) Limited Atonement (Jesus died for the chosen



only, not for everyone); (3) Total Depravity (through Adam and Eve's fall, every person is born sinful—concept of Original Sin); (4) Irresistible Grace (God's grace is freely given, it cannot be earned or denied. Grace is defined as the saving and transfiguring power of God); and (5) Perseverance of the "saints" (those elected by God has full power to interpret the will of God, and to live uprightly. If anyone rejects grace after feeling its power in his life, he will be going against the will of God—something impossible in Puritanism).

No matter what kind of reasons caused the first Puritans to migrate to the New World, it should be remembered that they were a group of serious, religious people, advocating highly religious and moral principles. They came to America with a code of values, a philosophy of life, and a point of view, which, in time, took root in the New World and formed the well-known American Puritanism.

The 17th-century American Puritans included two parts. One part of them were the creators of the Plymouth Colony; they took the Mayflower ship to the New World in 1620. They were called "Separatists"—they sought to escape the religious persecution and were also determined to find a place where they could worship in the way they thought true Christians should. They had gone to extreme. The other part were the Englishmen at the Massachusetts Bay colony, which was founded in 1630. Though they came later than those of Plymouth Colony, they were richer and better-educated. They devoted themselves to the reform of the Church of England and meant to clear away the rituals of the Roman Catholic Church. In fact, the majority of the people in the colonies were not Puritans, but the colony was rigidly controlled by the long-time governor, John Winthrop, the Puritan clergy.

The early American regarded the *Holy Bible* as the guidebook of their behaviors. Puritans' lives were extremely disciplined and hard. People's life was only the course of moral training and that of his struggle between God and devils. People had an austere and rigid way of life governed by the church. They tended to regard joy and laughter as symptoms of sin; they did not dance, they did not go to the theatre, but sang chant in church.

After undergoing the grim struggle for survival after their arrival in America, they became more and more practical, as indeed they had to be. The Puritans became more practical, tougher, and were ever ready for any misfortune and



tragic failure, which might wait for them in the future. They were optimistic. Puritanism encouraged people to struggle in their careers. If one's business was booming, it proved that he had gained God's providence. Over the years Puritans built a way of life that was in harmony with their somber religion, one that stressed hard work, thrift, piety, and sobriety.

Although puritans tried their best to help build a new nation and changed the wilderness into a civilized country, their offsprings have not always been full of gratitude. Owing to their religious intolerance and bigotry, and their austerity of taste and killjoy way of life, they have been criticized in the 19th century and especially in the first few decades of the twentieth. The person who wasn't consistent to their belief would be persecuted, which is blamed by their descendants. But we cannot negate their achievement. They did have a profound influence on the early American mind. American Puritanism also had an enduring influence on American culture. It had become, to some extent, so much a state of mind, so much a part of the national cultural atmosphere, rather than a set of tenets.

As to the influence of Puritanism on American literature, it will be more clarified in later chapters. Roughly they are: American literature is based on a myth, i.e. the Biblical myth of the Garden of Eden; the spirit of optimism of Puritans facing difficulty had infiltrated the making of American literature; The American Puritan's metaphorical mode of perception was chief instrumental in calling into being a literary symbolism which is distinctly American; simplicity has left an indelible imprint on American writing.

The literature of this period is often termed as "colonial literature". The religious and cultural background of the Puritan writers was responsible for two essential characteristics of the early American Literature: their religious subject and imitation of English literary traditions.

First, most of the writers were born in Britain. Some were explorers, some immigrants, and some colonialists. As their circumstances were hard and their life was difficult, the newcomers were very busy. Relying mainly on physical labor, they were not professional writers and did not mean to create a national literature, they wrote only because the life of the new world was inspiring and encouraging.



Secondly, the time when American literature was born was just the period when the Modern English developed and took shape. The early American literary works, therefore, were not so difficult to understand as the early English literary works. Certainly, it had some distinctions from present-day English, particularly in the spelling and pronunciation of some words.

Thirdly, the principal ideological trend of this period was Puritanism besides the ideological influence of the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, etc.

Moreover, in early Puritan writer's works, English literary traditions were faithfully imitated and transplanted. The American poets of the 17th century adopted the styles of established European poets.

In addition, in the categories of literary works, there were "travel" diary, and poem, etc., among which poetry and prose gained most achievements in this period.

In this period, American Literature, apart from the religious content, mirrors the history of America, and epitomizes the development of political, economic, social and psychological institutions. Captain John Smith, the first American writer, who was one of the founders of the first colony Jamestown, wrote *The General History of Virginia* and described New England as a promising virgin land, which came to the attention of many people in England and Europe and drew many of them to the New World. William Bradford, the first governor of Plymouth, who led the Mayflower in 1620 and established the Plymouth colony, wrote *The History of Plymouth Plantation*. John Winthrop, who led first group of Puritans in the Great Immigration in 1630 and was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote *A Model of Christian Charity*. But in the sense of literature, the greatest achievement in this period lies in poetry.

The theme of American poetry in the colonial period mainly focused on the Puritan ethic. Anna Bradstreet, as one of the first recorded poets of the British colonies, wrote poems of both religious experience and domestic intimacy. Edward Taylor wrote poems elaborating Puritan virtues in a highly wrought metaphysical style that can be seen as typical of the early colonial period.

The whole writing style of this period is fresh, simple and direct; the rhetoric is plain and honest, with a touch of nobility often traceable to the direct influence of the Bible. All these have left an obvious imprint on American writing.