

● 高等学校特色专业建设项目系列教材

# 新编

## 美国文学史及选读

A NEW SURVEY OF AMERICAN  
LITERATURE AND SELECTED READINGS

张颖◎主编

陕西师范大学出版总社有限公司  
SHAANXI NORMAL UNIVERSITY GENERAL PUBLISHING HOUSE CO., LTD.

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张颖 主编

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# 序

东北师范大学是教育部直属重点高校之一。从20世纪50年代初期起,在著名教育家、文学家成仿吾校长的领导下,就形成了很好的教学规范,培育了厚实的文学底蕴。近年,东北师范大学被教育部指定为国家公费师范生实施院校之一,也是在情理之中的。

国家公费师范生政策的实施自开始至今已有四年时间。该政策的目的是促进县级以下地区教育的发展。因此,公费师范生毕业去向明确,即:毕业后回生源所在地从事中小学教育十年以上。清晰的职业定位决定了公费师范生这一群体的特殊性,针对公费师范生的实践教学的要求更具针对性。结合师范生实际英语能力和社会需求等多方面的实际情况,东北师范大学外国语学院制定了公费师范生教学大纲,力求迎合英语师范生的教育需求,突出师范教育特色,优化英语师范专业课程设计,改革课堂教学与实践模式,发展具有鲜明特色的英语师范教学模式。为了突出师范特色,东北师范大学外国语学院决定编写一套适合师范生需求的特色系列教材,涵盖整个专业基础课和专业主干课。《新编美国文学史及选读》便是专业主干课“英美文学”的系列教材之一。

为更好地履行为师范生服务的宗旨,顺利衔接学生的课程学习与实践教学,该书在编写中打破了美国文学选读课本常用的编写体例,重点突出了以下几个方面:

首先,为科学全面地呈现美国文学的知识,教材采用史与选读结合的方式进行编写,且各自独立成篇。如此可供必修课“美国文学选读”和选修课“美国文学史”两门课程使用。内容安排上,文学史部分,注意知识的选择,突出重点,语言也较为简洁。选读作品的选择则注重典范性与可读性的结合,尽量选择语言相对易懂的经典作品,既保证了作品的典范性,又考虑了师范生的语言水平。例如,本书中绕开了霍桑脍炙人口但语言较为晦涩的《红字》,转而选择他的经典短篇小说。

其次,为保证教材的适用性,作品选读划分出三大板块,囊括了三大文学类型:小说、诗歌和戏剧。每个板块均另辟一节对该类型的特点和基本知识点进行概括性的介绍,并配备学习提示以说明学习要点和教学目的,之后附带习题,供学生进行巩固练习,以便为今后的独立赏析打下基础。此外,每篇节选作品均按照“题解”、“作品”、“注释”、“思考题”和“教学提示”的模式编

排。此番设计目的有四：一是题解可以帮助学生从整体上把握作品的赏析；二是注释能够解决实际阅读中的语言理解问题；三是思考题能有效地促进学生思考，培养其赏析能力；四则是教学提示这一小版块很好地践行了教学为实践服务的承诺，针对节选作品的教学给出了建议或方向，供学生参考，为其未来的教学打下基础。最后，教材专门开辟一个章节，节选了三大类型的数篇作品，为学生自由使用，或作自学赏析，或作教学讲解。

由此，作品选读的编写采用的是类型与编年史结合的形式。即首先将作品按照小说、诗歌和戏剧的文学类型分章，然后，在各章中又以编年史的体例分节。这样不仅强化了学生对文学类型的掌握，又温习了美国文学的发展。

作为一本文学类的专业教材，该书也力求与时俱进，包括了美国文学研究领域的新成果和新观点，以保证教材的科学性和前沿性。考虑到文学是文化传播的重要窗口这一事实，教材也试图在思想上引导学生正确看待文学与文化。

该教材主编张颖教授多年来从事美国文学教学与研究，有很高的学术造诣，她主持编撰的这部教材有很高的学术含量，但又深入浅出，通俗易懂，可以说是一部针对性很强的有特色的优秀教材，对提高师范生的美国文学素养将会大有裨益。

全国美国文学研究会副会长  
全国美国戏剧研究会会长  
郭继德  
2012年6月

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# 美国文学简史

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Part One  
A Survey of American Literature



# Chapter One

## *Early American Literature and American Romanticism*

### Section One Early American Literature



#### 学习提示

本节主要介绍早期美国文学。应掌握的内容主要有清教主义及其影响、独立战争时期文学及其主要文学形式和代表作家。

At the beginning of the 17th century, the vast continental area that was to become the United States had been probed only slightly by English and European explorers. At last early in the 17th century, the English settlements in Virginia and Massachusetts began the main stream of what we recognize as the American national history.

Talking about the forms of early American literature, we have to notice the following facts:

Early American literature begins with the orally transmitted myths, legends, tales, and lyrics of Indian cultures.

There was no written literature among the more than 500 different Indian languages and tribal cultures that existed in North America before the first Europeans arrived. And, American literature was not based on native Indian culture. It was a descendant of European literature.

#### 1. The Literature of Exploration

In the 17th century, pirates, adventurers, and explorers opened the way of permanent colonists, bringing their wives, children, farm implements, and craftsmen's tools. The early literature of exploration, made up of diaries, letters, travel journals, ships' logs, and reports to the explorers' financial backers—European rulers or, in England and Holland, joint stock companies—gradually was supplanted

ted by records of the settled colonies. Because England eventually took possession of the North American colonies, the best-known and most-anthologized colonial literature is English. As American minority literature continues to flower in the 20th century and American life becomes increasingly multicultural, scholars are rediscovering the importance of the continent's mixed ethnic heritage. Although the story of literature now turns to the English accounts, it is important to recognize its richly cosmopolitan beginnings.

## 2. New England Literature

### 1) Introduction to New England Literature

It is likely that no other colonists in the history of the world were as intellectual as the Puritans. Between 1630 and 1690, there were as many university graduates in the northeastern section of the United States, known as New England, as in the mother country—an astounding fact when one considers that most educated people of the time were aristocrats who were unwilling to risk their lives in wilderness conditions. The self-made and often self-educated Puritans were notable exceptions. They wanted education to understand and execute God's will as they established their colonies throughout New England.

The Puritan definition of good writing was that which brought home a full awareness of the importance of worshipping God and of the spiritual dangers that the soul faced on Earth. American Puritanism was a dominant factor in American life. It was one of the most enduring shaping influences in American thought and American literature. It has become so much a state of mind and a part of the national cultural atmosphere that the Americans breathed, that we may state with a degree of safety that, without some understanding of Puritanism, there can be no real understanding of America and its literature.

The American Puritans believed that the Church should be restored to the “purity” of the first-century Church as established by Jesus Christ. To them religion was a matter of primary importance. They made it their chief business to see that man lived and thought and acted in a way which tended to the glory of God. They accepted the doctrine of predestination, original sin and total depravity, and the salvation of a selected few through a special infusion of grace from God.

To sum up, American Puritanism could be defined as follows.

- (1) It is originally used to refer to the theology advocated by a party within the Church of England.
- (2) It is also used in a broader sense to refer to attitudes and values held by Puritans.
- (3) As a cultural heritage, American Puritanism exerted great influences over American moral values and literature.
- (4) Puritans hold three concepts: original sin; predestination and the salvation of selected few.

American Puritanism influences early American literature in the following aspects:

**Idealism:** American literature is in good measure a literary expression of the pious idealism of the American Puritan bequest.

**Symbolism:** American Puritan's metaphorical mode of perception was chiefly instrumental in calling



into being a literary symbolism which is distinctly American. Puritan doctrine and literary practice contributed to no small extent to the development of an indigenous symbolism. To the pious Puritan the physical, phenomenal world is nothing but a symbol of God. It is impossible to overlook the very symbolizing process that was constantly at work in Puritan minds. This process became, in time, part of the intellectual tradition in which American authors were brought up along with their people.

Plain style: With regard to technique one naturally thinks of the simplicity, which characterizes the Puritan style of writing. With regard to their writing, the style is fresh, simple and direct; the rhetoric is plain and honest, not without a touch of nobility often traceable to the direct influence of the Bible. All this has left an indelible imprint on American writing.

Thus American Puritanism has been, by and large, a healthy legacy to the Americans.

American literature grew out of humble origins. As previously we discussed, diaries, histories, journals, letters, common books, travel books, sermons, poems and personal literature in its various forms, occupy a major position in the literature of the early colonial period. Among them, sermons and poetry were two major genres. In content these early writings served either God or colonial expansion or both. In form, English traditions were faithfully imitated and transplanted.

## 2) Some New England Writers

Anne Bradstreet (1612 - 1672)

The first published book of poems by an American was also the first American book to be published by a woman—Anne Bradstreet. It is not surprising that the book was published in England, given the lack of printing presses in the early years of the first American colonies. Born and educated in England, Anne Bradstreet was the daughter of an earl's estate manager. She emigrated with her family when she was 18. Her husband eventually became governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, which later grew into the great city of Boston. She preferred her long, religious poems on conventional subjects such as the seasons, but contemporary readers mostly enjoy the witty poems on subjects from daily life and her warm and loving poems to her husband and children. She was inspired by English metaphysical poetry, and her book *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung up in America* (1650) shows the influence of Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, and other English poets as well.

Edward Taylor (1644 - 1729)

Like Anne Bradstreet, and, in fact, all of New England's first writers, the intense, brilliant poet and minister, Edward Taylor was born in England. The son of a yeoman farmer—an independent farmer who owned his own land—Taylor was a teacher who sailed to New England in 1668 rather than took an oath of loyalty to the Church of England. He studied at Harvard College, and, like most Harvard-trained ministers, he knew Greek, Latin, and Hebrew. A selfless and pious man, Taylor acted as a missionary to the settlers when he accepted his lifelong job as a minister in the frontier town of Westfield, Massachusetts, 160 kilometers into the thickly forested, wild interior. Taylor was the best-educated man in the area, and he put his knowledge to use, working as the town minister, doctor, and civic leader.

Modest, pious, and hard working, Taylor never published his poetry, which was discovered only in the 1930s. He would, no doubt, have seen his work's discovery as divine providence; today's readers should be grateful to have his poems—the finest examples of the 17th century poetry in North America.

Taylor wrote a variety of verse: funeral elegies, lyrics, a medieval “debate”, and a 500-page *Metrical History of Christianity* (mainly a history of martyrs). His best works, according to modern critics, are the series of short *Preparatory Meditations*.

#### Jonathan Edwards (1703 – 1758)

Jonathan Edwards was born on October 5, 1703, in East Windsor, Connecticut, into a Puritan household. From 1726 to 1750 Edwards served as the pastor of Northampton, Massachusetts, the largest and most influential church outside of Boston, succeeding his grandfather, the famous revivalist Solomon Stoddard. Turning his attention from theoretical to practical divinity, Edwards himself gained international fame as a revivalist.

The widespread revivals of the early 1740s, known to historians as the “Great Awakening”, stimulated one of the two most fruitful periods for Edwards' writings. Edwards furthered his renown as a revivalist preacher who subscribed to an experiential interpretation of reformed theology that emphasized the sovereignty of God, the depravity of humankind, the reality of hell, and the necessity of a “New Birth” conversion. While critics assailed the convictions of many supposed converts as illusory and even the work of the devil, Edwards became a brilliant apologist for the revivals. In *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (1741), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival* (1742), *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746), and *The Life of David Brainerd* (1749), he sought to isolate the signs of true sainthood from false belief. The intellectual framework for revivalism he constructed in these works pioneered a new psychology and philosophy of affections, later invoked by William James in his classic *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902).

Edward's published writings at Northampton also reflect strong millenarian and prophetic interests. In “A History of the Work of Redemption”, originally preached as a sermon series in 1739 but not published until after his death, Edwards cast theology into “a method entirely new” by showing God's work as a history structured around God's scriptural promises and periods of the outpouring of the Spirit. “An Humble Attempt to Promote... Extraordinary Prayer” (1747) was part of a larger movement towards Anglo – American “concerts of prayer” and was an important contribution to millennial thought. Scholars such as Alan Heimert have recognized the signal importance of these works in American history, particularly their contribution to revolutionary ideology. Both of these works have already been published in the Yale Edition (1989).

In late 1757, he accepted the presidency of the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University). However, he did not live to leave a permanent mark on the college. After only a few months there he died on March 22, 1758, following complications from a smallpox inoculation. He is buried in the Princeton Cemetery (The Grave of Jonathan Edwards in the Princeton Cemetery, Princeton, New Jersey).



Edward's reputation grew rapidly after his death. At the end of the 20th century, as both the American scholarly community and the nation at large are rediscovering religion's role in the formation of the country and are grappling with the issues of religion and society, the name of Jonathan Edwards continues to be invoked.

As Edwards has been studied over the generations, he has come to emerge as a quintessential "representative man", not in the usual sense but because in some profound sense he marked the culmination of one era and prefigured a subsequent one. While other colonial figures exerted comparable influence on their own age, none, with the possible exception of William Penn and Benjamin Franklin, so completely anticipated the subsequent shape of an American culture, at once material and spiritual, piously secular and pragmatically sacred, as did Edwards. It is due to the intersection of Edwards' colonial times with an ever - changing American "present" that he enjoys a uniquely representative status in American thought and letters.

### 3. The Literature of Reason and Revolution

#### 1) Introduction to the Literature of Reason and Revolution

In 1770s the English colonies in North America rose in arms against their mother country. The War for Independence lasted for eight years (1776 - 1783) and ended in the formation of a Federative bourgeois democratic republic — the United States of America.

This event of epoch - making significance had been predetermined by the whole course of historical development of the colonial America ever since the beginning of the 18th century. The spiritual life in the colonies during that period was to a great degree moulded by the bourgeois Enlightenment — a movement supported by all progressive forces of the country which opposed themselves to the old colonial order and religious obscurantism. The representatives of the Enlightenment set themselves the task of disseminating knowledge among the people and advocating revolutionary ideas. They also actively participated in the War for Independence.

In 1783, the year the United States achieved its independence, Noah Webster declared, "America must be as independent in literature as she is in politics, as famous for the arts as for arms". The beginnings of literary independence were evident in such celebrations of the American scene as Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1785), and *Bartram's Travels* (1791). Yet American literature throughout the century was largely patterned on the writing of 18th century Englishmen. Philip Freneau, the most important poet of the period, derived his power and style, his sentiments and regular couplets from English models. Franklin shaped his writing after *the Spectator Papers* (1711 - 1712) of the English essayists Addison and Steele.

However, while imaginative literature in America remained derivative and dependent, the heroic and revolutionary ambitions of the age had created great political pamphleteering and state papers. Essayists and journalists had shaped the nation's beliefs with reason dressed in clear and forceful prose.

Out of the tumult of the age came the inspired writing of Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, of T. Paine in *Common Sense* (1776), which stirred the world and helped form the American republic.

The best writings of the age were done by the founding fathers of the country and the popular literary forms then were as follows.

(1) Speech: Patrick Henry (1736 – 1799) was the representative of the genre. His revolutionary speeches were marked by force and sincerity as in his famous phrases “I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!”.

(2) Pamphlet: Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809) is considered the best writer of the genre. His pamphlets are characterized with clear thinking and exciting language. His best-known work is *Common Sense*, the most historically important pamphlet in American history.

(3) Essay: Thomas Jefferson’s (1743 – 1826) Declaration of Independence was regarded the best example. The characteristics of Jefferson’s essays are logical statement and freedom from emotional appeal.

(4) Poetry: Philip Freneau (1752 – 1832) was nicknamed the poet of revolution. The characteristics of his poetry are lyric quality, sensuous images and fresh perception of nature and “noble savagery”.

## 2) Some Important Writers

### Thomas Paine (1737 – 1809)

The life of Thomas Paine was one of the revolutionary fighters for the rights of man. He wrote a number of works of such a revolutionary and inflammatory character, with which he helped to spur and inspire the greatest revolutions that his age had witnessed. His *Common Sense*, declaring as it did that “government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one”, not only attacked British monarchy, but also helped in uniting the feelings of the colonial people in fighting against the British ruler in order to gain their independence. Paine declared that the crisis with which the North American colonies were then faced could only be solved by an appeal to man’s instincts and common sense and to “the clear, uniform and irresistibly obeyed” impulses of conscience. The booklet was warmly received in the colonies both as a justification for their cause of independence and as an encouragement to the painfully fighting people. Paine became a major influence in the American Revolution. Another important work of his to mention here is his *American Crisis* series of pamphlets, the first of which came out at one of the darkest moments of the revolution when Washington’s troops had just suffered one of the worst defeats in the war and were in the process of retreating. “These are the times that try men’s souls”, it declared. “The harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph”. The words turned out to be the inspiration to the soldiers and encouraged them with hope and confidence. Paine was highly praised by the Congress of the United States for his distinguished service to the country. Later he participated in the French Revolution, and wrote *The Rights of Man* and *The Age of Reason*, spreading the ideals of the French Revolution among the people. He was imprisoned during the “Reign of Terror” and escaped the guillotine only narrowly. He returned to America and died in poverty.



### Philip Freneau (1752 – 1832)

Philip Freneau was important in American literary history in a number of ways. First of all, he used his poetic talents in the service of a nation struggling for independence, writing verses for the righteous cause of his people and exposing British colonial savageries, and for this he was called the poet of revolution in American literature. Secondly, he was also a notable representative of dawning nationalism in American literature. While still an undergraduate, he wrote, with one of his friends, a poem entitled *The Rising Glory of America*, the national spirit of which pointed forward to the intellectual and literary independence which achieved its maturity first in the writings of men like Emerson and Whitman and other pre-eminent writers of the nineteenth century. Almost alone of his generation, he managed to peer through the pervasive atmosphere of imitativeness, to see life around directly, to appreciate the natural scenes on the new continent and the native Indian civilization. Some of his most famous works are distinctly American with unique features. Poems such as “The Wild Honey Suckle”, “The Indian Burying Ground” are among the best-known.

In the 18th century America, Freneau was certainly the most significant poet whose themes and images anticipated the works of such the 19th century American Romantic writers as Cooper, Emerson, Poe and Melville.

The period of some two centuries from the arrival of the Mayflower through the end of the 18th century was, from a literary point of view, one in which the national experience of the American settlers building the wilderness into a habitable place searched and struggled for literary expression. It represents a process in which colonial literature strove for a higher degree of excellence and evolved slowly but steadily toward the native literature. If the 18th century literary scene looked still barren and bleak, there appeared at least certain figures who had more or less influenced the later development of American literature. Benjamin Franklin is one of these.

### Benjamin Franklin (1706 – 1790)

America has never forgotten Benjamin Franklin because of his greatness in American history. He lived these words of wisdom by writing as much as he possibly could and by doing even more. He became famous as a printer and publisher, a scientist and inventor, a diplomat and statesman, last but not least, a writer.

Franklin was born in Boston, Massachusetts on January 6 into a very large family. He was the tenth son in the family. Franklin did have a bit more education than his brothers, but it was impossible for him to continue because they were not a rich family. His father was a soap boiler and candle maker. At the age of 12, Franklin was apprenticed to his half-brother, James Franklin, who was a newspaper printer in Boston. In 1722, when Franklin was only 16, he ran the paper on his own for a short time. One year later, he went to Philadelphia almost penniless. There he worked as a newspaper printer. He attracted the notice of the governor of Pennsylvania and then Franklin went to London through his influence. He stayed in London for two years. In 1726, he began to work industriously to set up his own press. In 1729, he already owned his own printing shop and published the newspaper *Pennsylvania Ga-*



zette. In 1732, he offered his *Poor Richard's Almanac* for sale. By 1748, at the age of 42, Franklin had earned enough money so that he retired. Then he became so active in civic and scientific activities.

Franklin was a rare genius in human history. He became almost everything: a printer, postmaster, almanac maker, essayist, scientist, orator, statesman, philosopher, political economist, ambassador and parlor man—Jack of all trades.

Franklin's claim to a place in literature rests chiefly on his *Autobiography*. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* was probably the first of its kind in literature. It is the simple yet immensely fascinating record of a man rising to wealth and fame from a state of poverty and obscurity into which he was born, the faithful account of the colorful career of America's first self-made man. The book is in four parts, written at different times.

*The Autobiography* is important in several aspects. First of all, it is a Puritan document. It is Puritan because it is a record of self-examination and self-improvement. *The Autobiography* is also a reflection of his age because of the fact that Franklin was spokesman for the new order of the 18th century enlightenment, and that he represented in America all its ideas, that man is basically good and free, by nature endowed by God with certain inalienable rights of liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thirdly, it is an illustration of American dream of which Franklin himself is an embodiment since he rose to success from a very humble beginning. Fourthly, the book has the features of plainness of its style—the homeliness of imagery, the simplicity of diction, syntax and expression are salient, therefore, it is a good example of Puritan plain style.

## Section Two American Romanticism



### 学习提示

本节主要概括美国浪漫主义文学、其产生的历史背景和主要特点、超验主义及其代表作家。这些都是学生要重点掌握的内容。

American Romanticism was also known as the New England Renaissance.

The Romantic Movement, which originated in Germany but quickly spread to England, France, and beyond, reached America around the year 1820, some 20 years after William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge had revolutionized English poetry by publishing *Lyrical Ballads*. In America as in Europe, fresh new vision inspired artistic and intellectual circles. Yet there was an important difference: Romanticism in America coincided with the period of national expansion and the discovery of a distinc-