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美国文学史

The History of American Literature

主编　吴瑾瑾



经济科学出版社

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The History of American Literature

主　编　吴瑾瑾
副主编　张林栋　丁兆国　张　艳
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出版说明

为了进一步深化山东经济学院课程改革，充分发挥教学中的“精品示范效应”，根据《教育部关于启动高等学校教学质量与教学改革工程精品课程建设工作的通知》（教高［2003］1号）和《国家精品课程建设工作实施办法》（教高［2003］3号）文件精神，按照精品课程的立项程序和标准要求，经过反复论证，多门课程获校级立项，这是山东经济学院课程建设的一件大事。

精品课程是具有一流教师队伍、一流教学内容、一流教学方法、一流教材、一流教学管理等特点的示范性课程，包括六个方面内容：一是教学队伍建设。要逐步形成一支以主讲教授负责、结构合理、人员稳定、教学水平高、教学效果好的教师梯队，要按一定比例配备辅导教师和实验教师。二是教学内容建设。教学内容要具有先进性、科学性，要及时反映本学科领域的最新科技成果。三是要使用先进的教学方法和手段。相关的教学大纲、教案、习题、实验指导、参考文献目录等要上网并免费开放，实现优质教学资源共享。四是教材建设。五是实验建设。要大力改革实验教学的形式和内容，鼓励开设综合性、创新性实验和研究型课程，鼓励本科生参与科研活动。六是机制建设。要有相应的激励和评价机制，鼓励教授承担精品课程建设，要有新的用人机制保证精品课程建设等。

从以上表述可以看出，教材建设是精品课程建设的重要组成部分，系列化的优秀教材与精品课程相呼应非常有必要。

教材是教学之本，它规范着某一课程的基本内容，保证教学内容的规范化和科学化，以实现教学目的。因此，教材建设是实现教学计划和达到教学目的的基本建设工程。教材建设包括教材的编写、出版和发行

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等环节。其中，教材编写是关键，出版是保证，教材建设是否规范化和科学化，决定了教材质量的高低，关系到教学和教学目的能否实现。为此，山东经济学院组织精品课程负责人编写了这套精品课程系列教材，以适应精品课程建设的需要。

《高等财经院校精品课程系列教材》编写组

2007 年 6 月

前　言

《美国文学史》是高等院校英语专业高年级必修课之一。本课程的目的在于帮助学生了解美国文学发生、发展及嬗变的历史过程，培养他们阅读、欣赏和理解英语文学原著的能力，掌握文学批评的基本知识和方法。经典文学作品演绎着百态人生，书写着世界各族人民的生活变迁。它们可以引导学生了解各国人民对世界的诠释，在扩大学生视野、提高学生文化品位的同时，使他们学会独立思考社会和人生，最终获得完整的人格和较强的社会适应能力。因此，在培养学生的综合素质方面，英美文学课程具有其他学科不可比拟的优势。阅读和分析经典文学作品还可以增强学生对美国文化的历史和现状的理解，促进中美两国文化间的交流。因而，一本好的《美国文学史》教材是不可或缺的。

《美国文学史》是山东经济学院美国文学史精品课程建设的重要组成部分。在多年的课程建设中，课题组所有成员认真备课，精心制作出内容丰富、生动形象的教学课件，搜集了大量的教学资料，如美国文学经典影片、文化背景等视频图像，并不断总结、积累和交流教学经验，这些都为本教材的编写打下了良好的基础。《美国文学史》的编写原则充分体现了本学科先进的教学思想，编写过程中紧紧围绕英语人才培养的目标和思路，力求层次分明，条理清晰，章节安排合理，既突出重点、难点，又强调对本课程基础知识的全面理解和掌握。与当前市场上已有的各种版本的教材相比，本教材具有以下主要特色：

第一，通过内涵丰富的美国文学史、经典作家和作品介绍，本教程意在搭建一座沟通东西方文明的桥梁，以培养能够在当前文化全球化背景下灵活进行跨文化交际的新型人才——他们具有扎实的语言基本功、

深厚的人文底蕴以及独立的思考和创新能力。

第二，本教材的编写以文学作品为中心，注重培养学生的分析能力、思辨能力和语言表达能力，充分体现了素质教育的特点。通过对本课程的学习，学生可以在教师的指导下阅读英文作品原著，理解美国文学与文化，提高文学批评鉴赏能力和英语语言水平。

第三，正确处理文学史、经典作家、作品和文学理论之间的关系。通过美国历史和文学史，使学生了解美国文学的发展历程，建立整体的结构框架，把握文学流派、文学理论沿革的清晰脉络，认识到文学发展与社会发展的密切联系。通过介绍和分析具体作家和作品，使学生在欣赏、学习优美文学语言的同时，通过文本阅读了解人生、感悟生活。通过对文学理论深入浅出的讲解，使学生掌握文学阅读、文学批评的基本专业能力，使知识传授、能力培养和素质教育融为一体。

第四，本教程在文学史的梳理上，追溯美国文学产生、发展、演变的主流脉络，为学生的学习搭建起一个清晰的发展框架；在主要作家的评析上，重在理清作家的创作思路、写作风格及其在文学史上的深远影响；在经典作品的解读方面，着重主题探讨、人物分析和审美鉴赏；在课前预习、学习重点、课堂讨论、课后复习等方面，紧扣课程内容，进行了精心设计，鼓励学生进行研究性的学习。

本教程内容丰富、资料翔实，融社会思潮、历史和文化知识于一体。在编写过程中，积极跟踪学术前沿，注重汲取国内外在这一领域的最新研究成果，使本教程成为英语专业高年级本科生和文学爱好者的一本有用的教材。本教材的另一个重要特点是全部采用流畅、地道、通俗易懂的英文编写而成，具有较强的趣味性和可读性，因而也适合广大英语爱好者阅读鉴赏。

在编写过程中，我们参考了部分国外资料，如 *Norton Anthology of American Literature*，Emory Elliott 主编的 *Columbia Literary History of the United States* 以及一些网络资源。同时我们也参考了国内已有的多部美国文学史教材，如中国社会科学院董衡巽研究员的《美国文学简史》、吴伟仁教授的《美国文学史及选读》、南开大学常耀信教授编写的《美国文学简史》、旅美学者童明教授的《美国文学史》、北京大学陶洁教授主编的“十五”国家级规划重点教材《美国文学选读》、上海外国语大学吴定柏教授的《美国文学大纲》、南京大学刘海平教授和王守仁教授主编的四卷本《新编美国文学史》等，在此向各位学界前辈表示衷心的感谢。

另外，我们要特别感谢山东经济学院的英籍教师、我们的老朋友 Findlay

Nicol，他不仅认真校对了整部书稿，还从学生学习的角度提出许多建设性意见，使本教材更趋完善合理。本教材在编写过程中一直得到山东经济学院校方、教务处和外语学院领导的大力支持和资助；另外，经济科学出版社财经教育分社社长吕萍及各位编辑的热心帮助使得本书最终得以付梓。在此，借本教材面世之际，向所有关心、支持本教材编写和出版的人士表示最诚挚的谢意。

最后，限于编者的水平和能力，本书中错误和不当之处在所难免，恳请专家、同行和广大读者批评斧正。

《美国文学史》编写组

2008 年 1 月

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Chapter One
General Introduction

I Background to English Literature

English Language and Literature

Is English purely a functional language that we learn primarily for practical purposes, such as everyday communication, international trade, scientific research, and many other things? Actually, there are two opposing views as to the purpose of English language learning in Chinese universities. Some hold that English should be learned as a functional language—nothing but a tool for practical ends. Others argue that English cannot be simply regarded as a technical language for professional use; it must also be studied as one of the major fields of academic inquiry. Generally speaking, the former idea is more prevalent among English learners in China, and more governmental funds are devoted to research projects focusing on practical uses of the English language.

How should we approach these two ideas of English language learning? We hold that English is both a technical language becoming more and more important in our daily life and work, and a language for aesthetic enjoyment and advanced thinking. It is universally acknowledged that language is a vehicle of culture, carrying people's feelings, thoughts, and their way of life. Taking English as purely a tool for professional ends deprives it of its underlying cultural implications in a brutal way, making it a dry, dull

thing to learn and to use.

People might then ask, what is the relationship between English language and its literature? Literature is often defined as creative writing of recognized artistic value. It is a deliberate use of language for artistic purposes. In other words, literary language is refined, elevated, evolved, and handed down from one generation to another in the cultural tradition of each nation. Therefore, as defined by the 20th century American New Criticism that "literature is the best that has been written," literature embodies the essence of a national language and culture. Thus, people who want to learn to use any language with real skill and beauty, have to study its literature. Nevertheless, some might argue that literary language seems a bit remote from our daily life and work. The Russian Formalist critic Victor Shklovsky has proposed two concepts to describe the fundamental nature of literary works in terms of linguistic characteristics — "literariness" and "defamiliarization"; the former refers to what makes a piece of writing literature, the latter explains literary language as a deviation from the use of everyday language. In fact, Shklovsky exaggerates the role of language in producing a literary work. Language is also the product of human invention, inseparable from our daily activities. Thus, literature can connect us with the actual world we live in; to use a cliché, it is a representation of life.

The Use of Literature

1. Literature and Language Competence

Literature uses the normal means of communication — language, images, symbols, codes, stories — but uses them with more complexity and subtlety than is normal in everyday communication. Our ability to conceptualize, analyze and to some extent to feel is dependent on our ability to use language accurately, freshly and complexly. A function of literature is to use the means of communication in precise and effective ways, and to engage in literature is to engage in a continuing process of refining our capacities to use language and our sensibilities to good language use. The sentimental and the clichéd disguise reality in that they produce immediate and unreflective feelings and ideas; literature, it is claimed, teaches us to be more alert to the whole range of ideas, feelings, images and symbols which ground our political, social and private lives.

Literature can also give us the range of language we require as a tool to conceptualize and talk about our experience. This access to the language of experience gives us access to our own experience in a way that we did not previously have and locates that experience within a cultural frame.

In short, literature as refined language can make us more sensitive to the nuances of language. People nowadays tend to say literature is useless, "a tale told by an idiot," simply because it is not practical. We disagree. It diversifies and enriches our ways of expression, widens and deepens our habits of thinking. Actually, reading literary works proves to be the most efficient way to learn the English language.

2. Literature and Human Wisdom

Literature, like any art form, engages the reader in a complex set of emotional, symbolic, moral, intellectual, and social considerations. Besides this, it avails itself of a certain sensibility we have to such things as form, sensual experience, rhythm, repetition, and contrast, which we call the "aesthetic".

According to this general thesis, literature explores the texture and meaning of human experience in a complex, compelling way, and leads us to insight and rich reflection, hence wisdom, concerning our lives and the nature of human experience. Literature does so for one or more (perhaps all) of the following reasons:

1) An argument is often made that the artist has heightened sensibilities, or powers of perception—that she or he feels, experiences and imagines intensely, richly, complexly, and so can convey a richer, deeper sense of experience.

2) It is argued that writing, to be considered "literature," requires a use of language, images and ideas which is refined, precise, and self-reflective, and that as we use language and imagination more fully and consciously, we actually can think about and imagine the world more accurately and deeply.

3) The point is made that literature is built on lines of tension and is composed of many ambiguities, contradictions and ironies. Such tensions, ambiguities and ironies bring out the richness, density and complexity of human experience.

4) Literature is written in various traditions and genres, and these traditions and genres have customary topics, themes, and patterns of reflection and representation. They have a rich history, and have accumulated wisdom and insight over time as many thoughtful people have contributed to their evolution. Literature, then, builds on previ-

ous literature to establish rich histories of thought and expression.

Therefore, literature can improve human intellect and strengthen people's sense of morality. Literature as an academic discipline appeared relatively late in human history. But as one of the significant parts of liberal education it was valued in many ancient nations such as Greece and China. Literature can make people more sensitive emotionally, more sophisticated intellectually, and more sound morally. Literature grows out of life; it is fed by life; and it reacts to life; therefore, it cannot disregard its responsibilities to life.

Literature: Some Related Concepts

1. Literature, History, Philosophy (Aesthetics)

Literature, as an independent discipline in the humanities, has its own specificities of existence. As mentioned previously, the Russian Formalist defined literariness as the necessary condition that makes a piece of writing literature. Literature becomes literature because of its unusual use of ordinary language. However, literature cannot be studied without considering other disciplines in the humanities, such as arts, history and philosophy. Excellent literary works always embody historical memory and the philosophical insights of generations. Historical knowledge provides authors with raw materials for writing and readers with necessary background knowledge to understand the specific historical and cultural context in which the work is produced, circulated and consumed. Philosophical wisdom helps us think deeply about the meaning of a piece of work. Literary writing is a special way used by poets, dramatists and novelists of reflecting upon the condition and significance of human existence from a variety of perspectives. As every work is written against the background of the specific intellectual context of its time, so a study of the main currents of intellectual thoughts is always necessary and useful. Therefore, in this sense, a study of American literature from historical and philosophical perspectives means to reveal the social, historical conditions and the cultural, intellectual values of the American people.

2. World Literature and American Literature

It was the great German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832) who initially proposed the concept of "world literature." Literary works written by people from

different parts of the globe reveals different national characteristics because of their cultural differences. The French critic Hippolyte Taine (1828 – 1893) in *History of British Literature* proposes "race, milieu, and moment" as three factors that determine the emergence, development, and traits of a definite national literature. Despite the differences between national literatures, there are some common points they share. They influence each other through transmission and translation. In this case, we cannot study American literature without considering other national literatures. We encourage a comparative and relational perspective in studying American literature.

3. Literature: Ancient and Contemporary

Literary works of a period cannot be studied as separate and independent from those of other periods. Whether reactionary to or inheriting from works of previous eras, literary history needs a historical consciousness to analyze them.

4. Literary History

The history of literature is the historical development of writings in prose or poetry, which seeks to provide entertainment, enlightenment, or instruction to the reader, as well as the development of the literary techniques used in the communication of these pieces.

5. Literary Criticism

Literary criticism is a view or opinion on what a particular written work means. It is about the meanings that a reader finds in an author's literature. It is an attempt to evaluate and understand creative writing. It is a description, analysis, evaluation, or interpretation of a particular literary work or of an author's writings as a whole. It is usually expressed in the form of a critical essay. In-depth book reviews are also sometimes viewed as literary criticism. Studying literary criticism can be a fruitful way to learn more about an author or delve deeper into a work.

6. Literary Theory

It is the theory (or philosophy) of the interpretation of literature and literary criticism. Its history begins with classical Greek poetics and rhetoric and includes, since at least the 18th century, aesthetics and hermeneutics. In the 20th century, "theory" has

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