

Course Title: American Literature

Course Code: ENG 311

Course Lecturer: Dr Olusola Oso

Course Description

The course provides an in-depth study on American literature. It emphasizes on the historical background, the timelines, and the distinguishing features of American literature. The course will critically examine representative literary texts from the three genres of literature: drama, poetry and prose.

Course Outline

- Definition and Historical Background on American Literature
- Timelines on American Literature
- Distinguishing Features of American Literature
- Critical Evaluation of Selected Literary Texts.

Reading List

- The Color Purple by Alice Walker
- The Old Man and the Sea BY Ernest Hemingway
- A Raisin in the Sun by Lorraine Hansberry
- Black Boy by Richard Wright
- Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller
- 'Song of Myself' by Walt Whitman

Definition and Historical Background on American Literature

- American literature is literature written and produced in the United States of America and its provinces. It is the body of the written works produced in English Language in the United States of America.
- Since the USA was colonized by Great Britain, the American Literature was heavily influenced by the British Literature

Distinguishing Features of American Literature

- American literature is a body of works written by authors of American nationals.
- It mirrors American lives and experiences which vary from period to period.
- Each American writer sets a higher standard for the next.
- American literature consists of physical abuse, a lack of love, and morbid characters.
- The struggles of slavery and sexual assault are vividly captured in American literature.
- American literature don't usually have happy endings.

Analysis of Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun

- Background/Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characterisation

Analysis of Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea

- Background/ Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characterisation

Analysis of Richard Wright's Black Boy

- Background/Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characterisation

Analysis of Alice Walker's The Color Purple

- Background/Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characterisation

Analysis of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman

- Background/Setting
- Plot
- Themes
- Characterisation

Analysis of Walt Whitman's 'Song of Myself'

- Background
- Themes
- Language and Style