



Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
English

Syllabus

Literary value and 100 years of American literature

Course Code:	ENAL11
Course Title:	Literary value and 100 years of American literature <i>Litterärt värde och hundra år av amerikansk litteratur</i>
Credits:	7.5
Degree Level:	Master's level
Progressive Specialisation:	Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements (A1N)

Major Field of Study:
ENA (English)

Course Approval

The syllabus was approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences 2025-09-01, and is valid from the Spring semester 2026 at Karlstad University.

Prerequisites

90 ECTS credits including at least 30 ECTS credits at the G2F level in one of the main fields of study English, Comparative Literature, or Film Studies, and upper secondary level English 6 or English level 2, or equivalent

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. analyse literary texts using the theories, concepts, and methods of literary studies,
2. give an account of key ideas and concepts in theories of literary value,
3. reason about aspects of literary value in the analysis of literary texts,
4. discuss the types of value that can be related to specific works of literature based on historical and cultural contexts, and

5. express themselves well in English in terms of style and structure and present convincing analyses.

Content

In this course, students read 20th-century American literature and discuss it in relation to various aspects of literary value. These aspects include, on the one hand, key issues in literary studies such as high/low culture, highbrow/middlebrow/lowbrow literature, the canon and the bestseller, tradition and experiment, convention and innovation, compliance and controversy, genius and celebrity, and, on the other, the literary properties and affordances of particular texts that can be seen as valuable in relation to historical and cultural contexts. What types of value does a literary text offer? Aesthetic value? Knowledge value? Emotional value? Social value? Economic value? Throughout the course, there is movement and interplay between theories of literary value, twentieth-century literary history, and specific literary texts.

Instruction is in the form of seminars, for which students complete reading and writing assignments. Some texts are read by all students in preparation for seminars, and other relevant texts are selected by the students for their written and oral assignments. The course requires students to participate actively in seminars, which sometimes means mandatory oral presentations.

Reading List

See separate document.

Examination

All learning outcomes are assessed based on individual written hand-in assignments. Learning outcomes 1-4 are also assessed based on individual oral presentations and active participation in seminars.

If students have a decision from Karlstad University entitling them to Targeted Study Support due to a documented disability, the examiner has the right to give such students an adapted examination or to examine them in a different manner.

Grades

One of the grades Distinction (VG), Pass (G), or Fail (U) is awarded in the examination of the course.

Quality Assurance

Follow-up relating to learning conditions and goal-fulfilment takes place both during and upon completion of the course in order to ensure continuous improvement. Course evaluation is partly based on student views and experiences obtained in accordance with current regulations and partly on other data and documentation. Students will be informed of the result of the evaluation and of any measures to be taken.

Course Certificate

A course certificate will be provided upon request.

Additional information

The local regulations for studies at the Bachelor and Master levels at Karlstad University stipulate the obligations and rights of students and staff.