

American Literature

9-12th Grades

American Literature is a college-preparatory course that takes students inductively through a study of major classics of American literature, including short stories, poems, novels, drama, speeches, sermons, letters, and political writings. Students will learn how to read a work of literature with discernment—understanding the techniques it uses to draw the reader in and convey its meanings. And students will explore how these meanings relate to their lives, including their walk with Christ. Literature at its best conveys universal truths about how our minds and hearts work, what we hope for and fear, what we long for and need, what leads us into sin or toward righteousness.

Students will see that because all truth is God’s truth, even classic works by unbelievers contain significant biblical truth, and they will also see that there are plenty of writers in American literature who are believers. The course will also show students how literature fleshes out that truth in story, character, and image, helping us see how truth applies to life and motivating us to make that application.

Students will learn through the Socratic question-and-answer techniques used in Dr. Whit Jones’s *American Literature* text. They will write their own answers to assigned questions using the *American Literature Student Notebook*, check the answers written by Dr. Jones that are available on Apologia’s website, and then participate in discussions of the works that flesh out even further the meanings and techniques they have already been studying. Students will learn how to take tests on literature that are contained in the Notebook, including objective and essay questions. They will get preparation on how to take college tests, including how to write more effective test essays.

- Finally, they will use step-by-step instructions in the *Notebook* to learn how to write interpretive papers on fiction and poetry, and again, these papers will be good preparation for college writing.
- The course is aimed at eleventh graders, but tenth graders who are disciplined students and good readers, precocious ninth graders, and twelfth graders can all profit from the course.

Required supplies for this class:

The supplies needed are (1) the *American Literature* text and (2) the *American Literature Student Notebook*, and the following works in paperback or in pdf files (you can definitely find some on the internet): (4) Mark Twain’s *Huckleberry Finn*, (5) Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*, (6) Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and (7) Lorraine Hansberry’s play *A Raisin in the Sun*. A few short stories and poems we read will need to be looked up online or found in a used anthology, but most works we study will be in the main American Literature text.

Instructor:



Whit Jones

DR. WHIT JONES is a professor of English at Bryan College, where for twenty-six years he has taught Introduction to Literary Criticism (Theory), Shakespeare, Southern Literature, Lewis and Tolkien, the British literature surveys, and World Literature I, along with freshman, sophomore, and junior composition and literature.

He has published reviews, articles, and literary dictionary entries and given a number of conference papers on literature as a member of both Christian and secular professional societies. His dissertation on Southern Novelist Walker Percy won the William Dougald MacMillan Award for the best English-Department dissertation of the year in 1997 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he received his M.A. and Ph.D. He is the author of *American Literature*, the Apologia text for Christian high schoolers, and is currently working on the *British Literature* text for Apologia. He plans at some point to revise his dissertation for publication as a scholarly book. He has served as an elder in his church and for years has taught a Sunday School class that covers subjects such as the Christian imagination, marriage, parenting, books of scripture, studied inductively, and books by Christian writers such as C. S. Lewis, John Eldridge, and Ken Sande.

His wife, Amy, has her master's degree in Special Education and has home-schooled their four children—Will (25), Mary Clare (24), Sam (20), and Cliff (18). Whit and Amy live in Dayton, Tennessee.