

American Lit I: Author Presentations

5% of Total Course Grade

Presentations should consist of the following information (but are not limited to):

- Image of Author
- General Biographical Information
 - Where/When born
 - Time of life
 - Regions of influence
- Professional Information
 - Just because the author is a “writer” does not mean that was his/her profession. Include other professional interests/livelihoods the author engaged in.
- Personal Life (Family, Beliefs, Politics, Health)
 - Include any relationship information: did the author marry? Was it a ‘strong’ marriage? Did the author have children, etc.
 - Include any significant other relationships, i.e. Dickinson lived with her family her entire life.
 - Did the author subscribe to a specific belief system/religion? To what extent?
 - Did the author align himself/herself with a particular political entity/agenda/party?
- The Work Itself/brief overview of the assigned selection
 - What kind of writing is the author most known for? For instance, Whitman wrote novels, but is more well-known for his poetry.
 - Does the writer represent a literary movement?
 - What are the **primary** themes in/subjects of the author’s writing?
 - Are there any other significant markers of the author’s work? (i.e. Dickinson wrote tight, ‘short’ poems in general that are praised for a balance of imagery + the abstract and reflect strong use of enjambment).
 - Does the writer have particular influences?
 - Does the writer’s work later influence poets/writers/thinkers/politicians?
- An electronic copy of your principle notes (can be in a word document) on the above or a ppt—these will be uploaded to the Learning Web so that the class can access them for review. (You can see sample author profiles in the American Lit I OR II folder on the Learning Web)

Exercise:

- You must create some kind of brief “hands on” exercise that allows students to tap into either who the author is or what themes he/she was working with or the era he/she was working in, etc.

Sources:

- You must utilize at least three sources for the presentation:

- Use your *Norton* anthology for one
- Use two CREDIBLE online/print/video resources: either an .edu, .org, etc.
 - Many of these writers have museums dedicated to preserving their work and may have information online
 - Also, think “outside the box”: consider video, documentary, even dramatic interpretations (movies) to a certain extent
 - FYI: the library has an online video database that houses a host of information applicable to this assignment; if you’re unfamiliar with how to access the library databases, contact the librarian: Daniel Dylla, at daniel.dylla@hccs.edu, or call the library at 713-718-5747. The library is in room 325, on the third floor across from the HCC Katy Writing Center.

Presentation Format:

Presentations should consist of 10 – 20 minutes. If you need longer than this, please let me know in advance so that I can augment lesson plans for the day. If you/your group is scheduled on a day with two writers, please be mindful of the time—it would not be a bad idea to communicate with that group and coordinate your presentations.

Beyond this, you will need to have the three principle components:

- a presentation on the background of the author
- a review of the major aspects of the assigned selection by the author
- an interactive exercise for the class

You may present these components in:

- lecture format (i.e. one group member presents on specific aspects)
- panel format (you create a panel table at the front of the room and each present)
- creative format (i.e. a jeopardy game or a staged interview—for instance, John Stewart interviewing Thomas Jefferson)
- powerpoint/ keynote/ prezi
- video (for instance, if you find a comprehensive documentary or website that covers the necessary points—be careful with films/movies as they are often dramatized)

Your overall goal is to educate yourself on at least one writer in depth and to help your class—as a whole—become more familiar with these figures of American Literature.

Other: It goes without saying, if you’re utilizing electronic media of any sort, always be prepared with “Plan B.” I realize this could be outrageously unfair if the Internet just so happens to not be working the day of your presentation ... but this happens to people even in the professional sector all the time. In other words, have some hard copy notes just in case. We can worry about uploading to the Learning Web later.

Evaluation of Presentation:

20 Pts. Presentation: presentation medium and organization

20 Pts. Information: covers all necessary author and text background

20 Pts. Sources: includes two outside credible sources

20 Pts. Visuals: includes at least one visual representation of the author

20 Pts. Exercise: student exercise