Samuel Clemens entered the world and left it with Halley’s Comet, little dreaming that generations hence Halley’s Comet would be less famous than Mark Twain. He has been called our Rabelais, our Cervantes, our Homer, our Tolstoy, our Shakespeare. Ernest Hemingway maintained that “All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*.” President Franklin Delano Roosevelt got the phrase “New Deal” from *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court*. “The future historian of America,” wrote George Bernard Shaw to Samuel Clemens, “will find your works as indispensable to him as a French historian finds the political tracts of Voltaire.” Mark Twain defined the rhythms of our prose and the contours of our moral map. He saw our best and our worst, our extravagant promise and our stunning failures, our comic foibles and our tragic flaws. Throughout the world he is viewed as the most distinctively American of American authors—and also as one of the most universal. He is assigned in classrooms in Kolkata, Kyoto, Belfast and Beijing—and has been a major influence on writers in the twentieth century from Argentina to Nigeria to Japan. This freshman seminar will explore the vitality and versatility of the work of this remarkable author, focusing on the culture that shaped him and that he in turn helped shape. Our discussions will focus on the ways in which Twain’s work illuminates and complicates his society’s responses to such issues as race, gender, technology, heredity vs.
environment, religion, education, art, imperialism, animal welfare, and what it means to be “American.” We will examine the ways in which Mark Twain endeavored to clear a space for a new kind of literature, and will probe his successes and failures in a range of forms—including science fiction, travel books, and a play. Throughout our discussions, we will pay close attention to the ways in which his books provide a window on the social history of his time—and the ways in which they speak to our own time, as well.

Students should purchase the following required books:


Additional readings (as listed below) will be posted on Canvas or may be found through online links.

The following text is optional, since the readings assigned in it are also available online. If you prefer reading a hard copy, purchase

Requirements: Attendance / Reading / Speaking / Writing

Attendance
Come to all the classes and the field trip to the Mark Twain Papers.

Reading
Do all the assigned readings. Come to class having done the reading and having thought about it.

Speaking
It is important that you make engaged comments in class informed by careful reading of the assignments. In addition to reading the texts assigned for each class, please read the posts of your classmates in Discussion on Canvas and come prepared to discuss them. You will also participate in two debates, one on Huckleberry Finn, the other on Pudd’nhead Wilson. At the second class meeting, two debate teams of six students each will be determined by lot for each of the two debates. The three students with the lowest numbers will be the judges of the first debate. The three with the next lowest numbers will be the judges of the second debate.

Writing
Discussion posts on Canvas:
By 5 P.M. the evening before each class, submit a response paragraph on some aspect of the readings for that class. It should be followed by a question about the readings that you’d like to discuss in class (not necessarily directly related to your response). Your comments and questions posted in the Discussion on Canvas will not be formally graded, but they will make up part of your “writing” grade. You need not submit questions on days during which debates or film screenings are scheduled. There are 14 classes for which you may submit responses. You are required to submit responses for at least 11 of them (feel free to take 3 “passes” on these written responses—but that does not mean you should not do the readings and come prepared to discuss them.)

Brief response to documentary films:
Write a one- to two-page response to the two documentaries. (Discuss both Parts I and I in your paper). Post your paper in Assignments in Canvas.

Short paper and longer paper:
Write one three-page paper and write one final four- to five-page paper. Please meet with Course Development Assistant Eliza Pickering to go over the thesis you plan to argue before you begin writing each paper. Please show her a draft of the paper by the dates indicated below and incorporate her comments into your final version. Include both your first draft and your final draft (clearly labeled) when you post your paper in Assignments on Canvas.

Grading:
Class Participation: 40%
  --comments in class (30%)
  --contributions to the two Debates (10%)
Written Assignments: 60%
--response paragraphs & discussion questions posted prior to each class (15%)
-- one three-page paper (15%)
-- one- to two-page response to the two-part documentary (5%)
-- one five-page final paper (25%)

Computer Policy: Laptops are allowed in class for reading assigned online texts. You may not use them (or other devices) for email, texting, etc. Please take notes in a notebook. If you break this rule, points will be deducted from your final grade.

Schedule

Week One

1 INTRODUCTION – MONDAY, 9/25

2 BECOMING MARK TWAIN – WEDNESDAY 9/27

READINGS:
“Correspondence,” The Keokuk Saturday Post, November 1, 1856
http://www.twainquotes.com/Keokuk/18561101.html

“Petrified Man,” Virginia City Territorial Enterprise, October 4, 1862
http://www.twainquotes.com/18621004t.html

“A Gorgeous Swindle,” Virginia City Territorial Enterprise, December 30, 1863
http://www.twainquotes.com/18631230bt.html

Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog Saturday Press, November 18, 1865
http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/writings_jim.html

http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/tomsawye/mtbadboy.html

Week Two

3 BECOMING MARK TWAIN – MONDAY 10/2

READINGS:

“What Have the Police Been Doing?” Virginia City Territorial Enterprise, January 21, 1866
http://www.twainquotes.com/18660118t.html

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2r87m203#page-12

Selections from The Innocents Abroad (1869) Read chapters 1-2, 6, 11, 13-14, 16, 23, 26-27, 29-30, 45, 48, 59, 61, conclusion

“The Legend of the Capitoline Venus,” Buffalo Express, October 23, 1869
"Only a Nigger,”  *Buffalo Express*, August 26, 1869
http://www.buffalonian.com/hnews/1869onlyanigger.html

http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/tomsawye/mtgoodboy.html

4 BECOMING MARK TWAIN – WEDNESDAY 10/4

READINGS:
“Disgraceful Persecution of a Boy,” *The Galaxy*, May 1870
http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187005e.html

http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187010b.html

http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187010b.html

http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187101e.html

“Running for Governor,” *The Galaxy*, December 1870
http://www.twainquotes.com/Galaxy/187012c.html

“Buck Fanshawe’s Funeral” from *Roughing It*, Chapter XLVII (1872)
https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3177/3177-h/3177-h.htm#linkch47

Week Three

5 BECOMING MARK TWAIN – MONDAY, 10/9

READINGS:
“A True Story, Repeated Word for Word as I Heard It,” *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1874
http://www.pbs.org/marktwain/learnmore/writings.html

http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/huckfinn/socjimmy.html

*Selections from Old Times on the Mississippi* (1875) Chapters 1-4
http://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/twainold/twain.html

“Facts Concerning the Recent Carnival of Crime in Connecticut” (1876)
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3183/3183-h/3183-h.htm

“[Date, 1601] Conversation, as it Was by the Social Fireside in the Time of the Tudors” (1876)
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/3190/3190-h/3190-h.htm

6 THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER – WEDNESDAY, 10/11

READING: *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876)
Week Four

7–ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN - MONDAY, 10/16

READING: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)

8 WEDNESDAY, 10/18 ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN

READING: Adventures of Huckleberry Finn (1885)

Week Five

9 ADVENTURES OF HUCKLEBERRY FINN – MONDAY, 10/23

DEBATE: The “Evasion” section of Huckleberry Finn was a mistake on Twain's part vs. The “Evasion” section of Huckleberry Finn is an apt and inspired way to end the novel

** THREE-PAGE PAPER ON A TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE DUE 5 PM ON MONDAY, 10/23

A three-page free-topic paper about a piece or pieces that we’ve read. Make an argument and support it with evidence. Discuss your proposed thesis with Eliza Pickering before Monday 10/16. Share first draft with her by Wednesday, 10/18. She will get back to you with suggestions by Friday, 10/20. Incorporate her suggestions into your final draft. Due midnight, Monday 10/23. Submit via Assignments in Canvas.

10 A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR’S COURT – WEDNESDAY, 10/25

READING: A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court (1889)

**Thursday, 10/26 - Optional Event/Extra Credit**

Salon: “Why Has Huck Finn Been Challenged as Racist Since 1957? Understanding the Huck Finn Controversy”

Pizza lunch and discussion with Professor Fishkin, Terrace Room, 4th floor, Margaret Jacks Hall. 12:30 pm. (Please sign up by Monday, October 23rd using the sign-up tool in Canvas.)

Week Six

11 A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR’S COURT – MONDAY, 10/30
READING: A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur’s Court (1889)

12 The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson – Wednesday, 11/1

READING: The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson (1894)

Week Seven

13 The Tragedy of Pudd’nhead Wilson – Monday, 11/6

DEBATE:
Nature is more important than nurture (that is, heredity is more important than environment in Pudd’nhead Wilson “Evasion” section of Huckleberry Finn was a mistake on Twain’s part vs.

Nurture is more important than nature (environment is more important than heredity) ij Pudd’nhead Wilson

14 screening of Ken Burns’ Mark Twain, Part I - Wednesday, 11/8

Week Eight

15 screening of Documentary: Ken Burns’ Mark Twain, Part II - Monday, 11/13

** One- to two-page paper on Ken Burns’ Mark Twain, Parts I and II, addressing some aspect of the choices the filmmaker made in his presentation of the author due 5 PM Tuesday, 11/14 (submit via Assignments on Canvas)

16 Mark Twain and the Theatre – Wednesday, 11/15

READINGS: “Is He Living or Is He Dead?” (1893) [on canvas] and Is He Dead? A Comedy in Three Acts by Mark Twain (1898)

*Thanksgiving Break – Saturday 11/20 – Sunday 11/26

ASSIGNMENT: Familiarize yourself online with some of what the Mark Twain Papers have to offer, and come up with a list of items and topics you would like to examine during our trip to Berkeley.

Week Nine

17 Mark Twain and Imperialism – Monday 11/27
** Week Ten **

18 ** Mark Twain and Imperialism — Wednesday, 11/29 **

** Readings:**

“My First Lie and How I Got Out of It” (1899)

“To the Person Sitting in Darkness” (1901)
http://www.logosjournal.com/issue_4.3/twain.htm

“The War-Prayer” (1905)
http://www.quaker.org/minnfm/peace/war_prayer__mark_twain.htm

“King Leopold’s Soliloquy” (1905)
https://msuweb.montclair.edu/~furrg/i2l/kls.html

“The Stupendous Procession” (1901) [on Canvas]

“A Salutation to the Twentieth Century” (1900)
http://www.twainquotes.com/Salutation.html

19 ** Mark Twain and Animals — Monday, 12/4 **

** Readings:** Selected texts from the 1850s through 1910 from *Mark Twain’s Book of Animals*

20 ** Wednesday, 12/6 - Instead of class meeting we will take a field trip to the Mark Twain papers at the Bancroft Library at UC-Berkeley on Friday, December 8 **

** Friday, 12/8 **

** Field Trip to the Mark Twain Papers, the Bancroft Library, UC-Berkeley.** The Mark Twain Papers in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley is one of the greatest archives of primary sources in American literature, containing manuscripts and letters written by Twain, letters to him, writing about him, art featuring him, books that he owned (and annotated), and many other extraordinary holdings. The General Editor of the Mark Twain Papers, Dr. Robert H. Hirst, has generously agreed to share some treasures in the collection with us. He will also arrange to pull from the archives materials you request that
will help you answer specific questions that interest you. We will explore various possibilities during the weeks before we make this trip. We will leave by bus right after lunch at 12:30 PM, will arrive at the Bancroft (we hope) by 2:00, and will be able to look at materials from the Mark Twain Papers until 5, when we will have dinner together at a restaurant in Berkeley before heading back to Palo Alto. [Please post a few sentences in Canvas about what you found interesting about the trip during the week after we return.]

** FIVE-PAGE PAPER ON TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE ABOUT A TEXT OR TEXTS READ FOR CLASS (OR OTHER TEXTS IN *MARK TWAIN’S BOOK OF ANIMALS*) DUE BY NOON ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15. Discuss your proposed thesis with Eliza Pickering by Thursday, December 7. Share first draft with her by Saturday, December 9. She will get back to you by Monday, December 13. Incorporate her suggestions into your final draft. Due noon, Friday, December 16.

THE FOLLOWING CALENDAR IS A CONVENIENT REFERENCE GUIDE FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS:
(THREE-PAGE PAPER, FIVE-PAGE PAPER, RESPONSES TO THE READINGS, AND RESPONSE TO TWO FILMS)

WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE RESPONSES TO THE READINGS, WHICH SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN THE DISCUSSION SECTION OF CANVAS, ALL OTHER WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED IN THE “ASSIGNMENTS” SECTION.

**CALENDAR OF DATES FOR WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS, EXTRA CREDIT EVENT, AND FIELD TRIP**

**TUESDAY, 9/26:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**SUNDAY, 10/1:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**TUESDAY, 10/3:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**SUNDAY, 10/8:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**TUESDAY, 10/10:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**SUNDAY, 10/15:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**TUESDAY 10/17:** Post response to readings and questions for discussion

**MONDAY 10/23** THREE-PAGE PAPER ON A TOPIC OF YOUR CHOICE DUE 5 PM
A three-page free-topic paper about a piece or pieces that we’ve read. Make an argument and support it with evidence. Discuss your proposed thesis with Eliza Pickering by Monday, 10/16. Share first draft with her by Wednesday, 10/18. She will get back to you by Saturday 10/21. Incorporate her suggestions into your final draft. Due 5 PM, Monday, 10/23. Submit via Assignments on Canvas.

TUESDAY, 10/24: Post response to readings and questions for discussion

THURSDAY, 10/26 12:30 “HUCK SALON” [OPTIONAL EXTRA CREDIT EVENT]—TERRACE ROOM, MARGARET JACKS HALL. PIZZA WILL BE SERVED — PLEASE SIGN UP IN ADVANCE.

For decades, Shelley Fisher Fishkin has been on the "front lines" when it comes to controversies surrounding Adventures of Huckleberry Finn. Her research on Mark Twain, race and Huckleberry Finn has been featured twice on the front page of the New York Times. She has debated individuals who want to ban the book as "racist" on CNN and the CBS Morning News, and has led workshops on teaching the book for high school teachers around the country. Her books on Huck Finn include Was Huck Black? Mark Twain and African American Voices, and Lighting Out for the Territory. This "Huck Salon" will give you a chance to talk informally with Professor Fishkin about why Mark Twain's most celebrated novel is also one that is perennially challenged in the nation's schools and libraries. To receive extra credit, submit a one-page response within one week of the event (you're welcome to come, talk, and have pizza even if you do not want to submit the write up!). This event is open to students in Think 31: Race and American Memory as well as our own English 68N/American Studies 68N: Mark Twain and American Culture.

SUNDAY, 10/29: Post response to readings and questions for discussion

TUESDAY 10/31: Post response to readings and questions for discussion

TUESDAY 11/14: Post response to readings and questions for discussion

TUESDAY 11/14: response to Ken Burns’ Mark Twain Part II due 5 PM. Submit via Assignments on Canvas. Between a paragraph and a page addressing some aspect of the choices the filmmaker made in his presentation of the author. Due by 5 PM.

TUESDAY, 11/29 Post response to readings and questions for discussion

SUNDAY, 12/3: Post response to readings and questions for discussion

FRIDAY, 12/8 FIELD TRIP TO THE MARK TWAIN PAPERS, THE BANCROFT LIBRARY, UC-BERKELEY.

The Mark Twain Papers in the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley is one of the greatest archives of primary sources in American literature, containing manuscripts and letters written by Twain, letters to him, writing about him, art featuring him, books that he owned (and annotated), and many other extraordinary holdings. The General Editor of the Mark Twain Papers, Dr. Robert H. Hirst, has generously agreed to share some treasures in the collection with us. He will also arrange to pull from the archives materials you request that will help you answer specific
questions that interest you. We will explore various possibilities during the weeks before we make this trip. We will leave by bus right after lunch at 12:30 PM, will arrive at the Bancroft (we hope) by 2:00, and will be able to look at materials from the Mark Twain Papers until 5, when we will have dinner together at a restaurant in Berkeley before heading back to Palo Alto. [Please post a few sentences in Coursework about what you found interesting about the trip during the week after we return.]

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15:** Five-page paper on topic of your choice about a text or texts read for class (or other texts in *Mark Twain’s Book of Animals*) due by 5 PM on Friday, December 15. Discuss your proposed thesis with Eliza Pickering before Friday, December 8. Share first draft with her Monday, 10/10. She will get back to you by Wednesday 10/13. Incorporate her suggestions into your final draft. Due 5 PM on Friday, December 15. Submit via Assignments.

---

**Students with Documented Disabilities**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL: [http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae](http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae)).

**Honor Code**

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading.
2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.
Course Material Support
Stanford University and its faculty are committed to ensuring that all courses are financially accessible to all students. If you are an undergraduate who needs assistance with the cost of course textbooks, supplies, materials and/or fees, you are welcome to ask the Diversity & First-Gen Office for assistance by completing their questionnaire on course textbooks & supplies: http://tinyurl.com/jpqbarn or by contacting Joseph Brown, the Associate Director of the Diversity and First-Gen Office (jlbrown@stanford.edu; Old Union Room 207). Dr. Brown is available to connect you with resources and support while ensuring your privacy.