

# Analysis on Modern Teaching of English and American Literature Courses for College English Majors

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**Abstract:** As global economic integration development enters a realization era, English holds a very important position in China's diplomacy as the language is an internationally-used language. Besides, English also plays a very important role in our daily life. Colleges and universities should pay more attention in strengthening the development of English teaching courses as they are an important base for cultivating high-quality talents. In the modern teaching of English and American literature courses, college English majors do not only need to teach students English language knowledge but are also required need to strengthen students' knowledge and study of national culture. In this journal, the author investigates and analyses the current situation and existing problems of the modern teaching of English and American literature courses in English majors of colleges and universities. Then, puts forward the implementation strategies such as modern teaching of English and American literature courses in English majors' colleges and universities, aiming to help in implementing the teaching of English and American literature courses successfully.

**Keywords:** *Colleges and Universities; English Major; English and American Literature Courses; Modern Teaching*

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## 1 Introduction

The Anglo-American literature course is a key content in the teaching of English majors in colleges and universities.

The development of modern teaching in English and American literature courses helps to improve students' literary works appreciation ability and their humanities literacy. Judging from the current modern teaching of English and American literature courses in English majors in higher education institutions, there are still some problems yet to be solved. The existence of these problems has severely affected the effectiveness and efficiency of modern teaching in English and American literature courses. Therefore, colleges and universities should take immediate measures to solve these problems in order to improve the modern teaching of English and American literature courses into a perfection.

## 2 Current Situation of English and American modern teaching literature courses in English majors in colleges and universities

Teachers and students in English majors of colleges and universities are equally inadequate on emphasizing cultural heritage in the modern teaching of English and American literature courses. Most students often show any interest in modern teaching of English and American subjects due to the lack enthusiasm in learning. Plus, with the rapid development of China's social economy, the importance of learning English language is becoming more and more prominent as the economy is gradually developing globally<sup>[1]</sup>. However, most teachers and students' lack of emphasizing on the English and American literature courses has led to the gradual marginalization of English and American literature courses, which is very unfavorable for the improvement of students' English proficiency. According to relevant surveys at present, some English majors in China have set up courses in English and

American literature as elective courses, and usually only available at their senior stage. Moreover, for college students, formal students at lower grades go through an important stage of clarifying English foundation. Therefore, setting up English and American literature courses in the lower grades do not just stimulate students' interest in learning, but also deeply help to lay a good foundation for students' English learning as a basis<sup>[2]</sup>. Never the less, the higher-level stage of learning is often faced with the pressure of pressure. At this stage, the students are generally more difficult to calm down at full cost and take the English and American literature courses genuinely. Therefore, it is difficult to make full use of the course in the English and American literature if it is isolated only at the upper grades.

### **3 Problems in the modern teaching of English and American literature courses in English majors of colleges and universities**

#### **3.1 Lack of clear teaching objectives**

The demands of a talented society are constantly increasing with the continuous development and progress of the society. In order to cultivate talents that meet the needs of social development at this stage, colleges and universities are required to pay more attention to the setting of practical courses and the arrangement of hour classes<sup>[3]</sup>. Courses such as Business English, Economic and Trade English and Tourism English, etc., English and American literature courses generally only appear in the form of elective courses, and the number of teaching hours are shorter than the others. Teachers are lacking clear teaching objectives in the process of implementing teaching. Therefore, it is difficult to position their teaching correctly. However, some teachers regard the English and American literature courses as an English language tools course and they are an extension of English teaching. They focus on English vocabulary, syntax and discourse analysis as well as pay more attention to students' English language skills, while ignoring English and American literature, which is the human content of the course. Moreover, from a manifestation point of view, the implementation of English and American literature teaching does not have very important value, but in fact, it is a very important tool to improve students' humanity qualities. Therefore, the English and American literature courses

should not be just an embellishment course for English majors, but a key course for English majors, to improve students' appreciation, humanities and English language skills comprehensively.

#### **3.2 Lack of teaching methods**

In the traditional teaching of English and American literature courses in colleges and universities and literary history, teachers often rely too much on teaching materials and only teach the knowledge according to the method from textbooks. However, for text reading teaching, students pay too much attention to the introduction of English language itself instead of understanding the background of the article<sup>[4]</sup>. The English and American literature is not alike as any other courses in teaching. There are more ready-made teaching courses for teachers to use for reference. When preparing a lesson, the instructor needs a lot of time and energy to prepare and explain the manuscript and text. Moreover, during lectures, the document in text form is converted into PowerPoint slide presentation to allow the content of the slides being explained one by one. Occasionally, life portraits or photographs of the writer are added to the slides<sup>[5]</sup>. Although the class teachers used advanced multimedia technology to carry out teaching, the teaching was considered too single at the time and lack of diversity. It defeats the purpose of having fun in classroom during lectures and did not portray an important function of multimedia teaching equipment.

#### **3.3 Relatively old teaching contents**

Judging from the teaching content of the British and American literature courses in China's colleges and universities, there are two forms of teaching treatment. Firstly, one focuses on the history of English and American literature and the ability to read English and American literature as auxiliary. Secondly, the other is to focus on the reading of how English and American literary works, while ignoring the teaching of literary history as shown in Table 1.

Whether it is the emphasis on instilling knowledge of literature or English and American literature reading, the literary theory is still absent in the teaching of English and American literature in English majors in most colleges and universities. The teaching of English and American literature should combine the reading and the analysis of the works organically to cultivate the students' humanities more effectively.

**Table 1. Disadvantages of two forms of teaching treatment in China's colleges and universities**

Teaching Processing Situation	Teaching Focus	Disadvantages
Emphasis on instilling knowledge of literature	Time Era, Literary Genre, Biography of Authors, Art Features	1. Students are in a passive learning environment and in a lack of participant 2. The Teaching content is relatively not interesting, and it is difficult to attract students' attention 3. Students will only go through rote memorization instead of in depth understanding
Emphasis on English and American literature reading	Understanding of the English language, Use of vocabulary, Sentence characteristics	1. Students' lack of understanding the background information of literary works and it is difficult to locate literary works. 2. The text reading is too intensive and shallow on understanding of the language's expression.

#### 4 The implementation of strategies in modernization teaching of Chinese, English and American literature courses in English majors of colleges and universities

##### 4.1 Clarifying the teaching objectives of the English and American literature courses

In the teaching of English and American literature courses in English majors of higher education institutions, students should improve their basic English language ability and humanities literacy through reading and analyzing English and American literary works. Thus, this can increase students' understanding of Western literature and culture comprehensively<sup>[6]</sup>. Therefore, when setting teaching objectives of the

English and American literature courses, it is not only necessary to involve the training of the students' English language ability, but also the humanistic cultivation of the students. Besides that, on the surface of English and American literature teaching; which has no practical significance, it is essentially an important part of the quality education of college students. It will not only help to improve students' English language ability, but also helps students' humanities<sup>[7]</sup>. As shown in table 2, many English and American literary works will allow students to fully appreciate the charm of the English language in the process of reading, as well as a deep understanding of the culture of Western countries. It was said that it is a valuable opportunity to improve students' humanities.

**Table 2. Authors and their work**

Authors	Work
Shakespeare	Sonnet
Bacon	Exquisite Prose
Mark Twain	Humor
Hemingway	Concise

Therefore, students' English proficiency and humanities literacy should be the main objectives of the curriculum in the modern teaching of English and American literature courses for English majors in colleges and universities to make an improvement. Moreover, in the lower grades, English and American literature courses are required to set up and the number of class hours should be reasonably arranged as an important course for English majors.

##### 4.2 Taking advantage on using advanced modern technology to carry out teaching

The investment in education has been increasing and the teaching environment and teaching facilities have been greatly improved with the continuous

development of education in higher education institutions in China. Multimedia teaching equipment has become an essential teaching for higher education institutions[8]. Instructors are encouraged to make full use of advanced modern technology to carry out teaching activities of English and American literature courses. This can enrich the teaching methods of English and American literature courses, thus increasing the interest of the course teaching. Besides, advanced modern technology can not only simply just be presented on power point as slides' texts and images, but also support various files such as animation, sound, and images as shown in Table 3. This can be more helpful in stimulating students' enthusiasm and initiative.

**Table 3. Advantages of advanced modern technology**

Teaching Methods	Advantages
Video (Converting Literacy Works into Videos)	1. Helps to attract students' attention 2. Helps to enrich the teaching content 3. Helps to make students feel the charm of English language more vividly 4. Helps to improve the efficiency and effectiveness in teaching
Sound (Converting Literacy Works into Sound)	1. Help to get students' attention and focus 2. Helps students to understand English language better

### 4.3 Reasonable integration of the English and American literature courses' teaching content

The modern teaching content of the English and American literature courses should not only contain the design content of literary history, but also the reading of literary works. Thus, students will then have certain background knowledge of literary history. Then, students can read and deeply understand the ideas of writers' works to fully grasp the characteristics of English and American literary works<sup>[9]</sup>. The teachers should actively rotate the old and outdated teaching concepts by collecting a large amount of relevant content through the online platform, and effectively extend the teaching content as well as focusing on strengthening the students' ability to think independently, analyze the negligence, critical ability, and ability to debate. Therefore, it is curial to encourage students to explore problems in the modern teaching of open English and American literature courses actively, carefully read the text content and think about the theme of the work as well as fully express the results of exploration and thinking. In this process, it can improve students' comprehensive English ability effectively and at the same time, it can also improve students' comprehensive ability in humanities literacy and increase students' interest on English and American literature courses. Thus, this can transform a flexible use of English in English and American literature courses in English majors thus improving the teachings' efficiency and effectiveness<sup>[10]</sup>.

## 5 Conclusions

In summary, the modern teaching of English and American literature courses occupies a very important position in the English majors of colleges and universities. The effective development of the course teaching not only helps to improve students' English language ability but also helps to improve the humanity of students. Therefore, teachers should actively change the old teaching concept, break through the traditional teaching mode, clarify the teaching objectives and make

full use of advanced modern technology to carry out teaching. Moreover, teachers should also pay attention to the reasonable integration of teaching content to improve the modern teaching in English and American literature courses effectively and efficiently.

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