



American Literature, American Culture

Gordon Hutner

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American Literature, American Culture is the first comprehensive anthology of American literary criticism to appear in many years and the first collection to bring together the tradition of American literary criticism as cultural critique. This unique anthology assembles reviews of early works, major critical essays, excerpts from landmark studies, and the most influential examples of the criticism practiced today. The selections address the dominant questions in the American literary tradition: What are the cultural responsibilities of the American writer? What are the characteristics of a national literature? Is a national literature even possible? How do gender and race affect the way we understand literature? What role does literature play in a democratic society? Organized chronologically, the four sections of the volume gather the most vital and enduring arguments in American literary and cultural politics in each era, covering such prominent issues as American exceptionalism, the racial divide, gender, and class identity. The book pays particular attention to the historical background of contemporary debates about multiculturalism.

American Literature, American Culture is ideal for undergraduate and graduate courses in American literature, criticism, and American Studies. It also serves as a useful supplementary text in upper-level courses in criticism. Its range proves that at every juncture of the nation's intellectual history, criticism has provided an indispensable way of determining America's most fundamental meanings.



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