

# On the Teaching Practice Reform of British and American Literature Courses

## -Taking Sichuan Minzu College as an Example

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**Abstract:** British and American literature is the core course of Senior for English major. The aim of this course is to cultivate students' ability to read, understand and appreciate the original works of English literature, master the basic knowledge and methods of literary criticism, and promote the improvement of students' basic language skills and humanistic quality by reading and analyzing literary works. However, the British and American literature courses in different colleges are facing different problems. This paper takes Sichuan Minzu College as the research object to propose tentative reform ideas for British and American literature courses.

### 1. Introduction

British and American literature curriculum is the main and core course for English majors. It plays an important role in promoting students' language learning and English skills training, enhancing students' understanding of western culture, improving students' ability of thinking and innovation, and is one of the best ways to carry out humanistic quality education.<sup>1</sup> However, the British and American literature curriculum is facing many problems and needs to be reformed urgently. This paper takes Sichuan Minzu College as the research object, and puts forward the reform plan of the course.

### 2. Current Situation of British and American Literature Courses in Sichuan Minzu College

The purpose of the literature course is to cultivate students' ability to read, understand and appreciate English literary original works and master the basic knowledge and methods of literary criticism.<sup>2</sup> Through reading and analyzing literary works, the basic skills of students' language and the improvement of their humanistic quality can be promoted. Through studying this course, students can not only improve the theoretical knowledge of literature, understand the literature schools, representative characters and creative techniques of foreign literature, but also can widely contact with foreign literature classics, expand students' literary thinking, broaden their horizons, cultivate sentiment and enhance their ability to feel life and cognitive life. However as an important course of English major, British and American literature teaching is facing more and more challenges. The British and American literature curriculum has been seriously "marginalized". In the curriculum outline, the universities have shortened and simplified the British and American literature classes. For example, the School of Foreign Languages of Sichuan Minzu College only designed British literature and American literature courses for one semester, and the number of classes per week was 2 class hours, which greatly reduced the time and content of studying British and American literature.

As a newly-built college of ethnic minorities, students of Sichuan Minzu College has relatively poor basic knowledge and insufficient learning motivation compared with other university's undergraduates, which determines that students have relatively strong dependence on teachers and relatively low self-study ability. When students enter the senior learning stage, they are very difficult to learn well when they are exposed to the professional directional courses of senior grade, such as literature class, linguistics class, European culture class and translation class. Students not only face the pressure of language problems, but also have extensive knowledge of professional

supplement, which makes students' learning pressure is even greater. Therefore, some students will abandon themselves and give up their professional learning slowly. English majors of Sichuan Minzu College have started to learn British and American literature courses in junior, and the British literature and American literature courses only last semester, with two classes per week. However, the teaching content of literature course has a long history, many literary schools and diverse writers' styles, which makes it impossible to complete the complex learning content in a short term. Therefore, through long-term teaching practice, with the support of the college and the active cooperation of other subjects' teachers, this paper proposes to reform the course. The purpose of this reform is to improve the professional skills of English majors, and to improve the students' appreciation and humanistic quality of British and American literature, and to offer opportunity for students to read excellent literary works in the lower grades, and lay a foundation for the senior professional courses.

### **3. Specific Reform Plans**

Firstly, compared with the traditional British and American literature courses, this reform combines the basic English reading course of English major with the literature course. In order to stimulate interest and expand the vision, literature reading based on reading course is constructed to cultivate students' reading ability, enhance their literary literacy and improve English skills. Through reading the short stories, simple books and biblical stories of British and American countries, students can understand the British and American literature, western culture and other knowledge. Combined with reading courses, we should consciously choose British and American literature works which are suitable for students' level, and make students read after class. On the one hand, it not only expands the reading quantity of students, but also makes students familiar with the famous literary figures as the foundation for the third year to study British and American Literature courses; on the other hand, it is instructive to revise and perfect the syllabus of British and American Literature in foreign language college and adjust the teaching contents accurately.

Secondly, the course of British and American literature requires students to master the basic knowledge of British and American literature, based on rational cognition. The focus of this paper is to let students understand the general situation and context of the development of British and American literature history, and understand the important literature phenomena, schools, works and writers in the process of the development of British and American literature, so as to obtain the basic knowledge of British and American literature. The process of reading British and American literature works is handed over to students, which enables students to gradually cultivate their interest in literature and their ability to appreciate and judge literature through their own reading experience by reading the classic works of British and American literature. At the same time, through reading a large number of literary works, students' English level is improved and the ability of criticizing and analyzing texts and reading texts can be cultivated.

Thirdly, it is of practical educational and research significance to develop students' interest in reading literary works by carrying out extracurricular multi-channel British and American literature learning activities, such as reading activities of famous works, drama performances, dubbing competitions and other activities related to majors.

Finally, the British and American literature course is extended from the classroom to the extracurricular. Through the extracurricular multi-channel English literature learning activities, the training of students' basic skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing has been strengthened, and the students' enthusiasm and initiative in English learning are enhanced. It not only urges students to develop the habit of independent learning and independent thinking, but also trains students' ability to find and interpret problems and to cultivate their innovative consciousness. It not only cultivates students' ability of thinking and humanistic quality, but also enriches their extracurricular life.

Through two years of practice and exploration, the curriculum reform has preliminarily completed the following specific objectives:

1) According to the actual teaching situation, the teaching outline of British and American literature is revised and perfected, and the teaching content is optimized.

2). Combined with reading class, teachers choose British and American literature works suitable for the second grade students to read after class. On one hand, it expands the reading capacity of students; on the other hands, students are familiar with the famous names as the basis for the third year to study British and American literature.

3). To carry out extracurricular multi-channel British and American literature learning activities, such as reading activities of famous works, drama performances, dubbing competitions etc. greatly improve the students' initiative and enthusiasm in learning English.

4). To some extent, the students' professional knowledge and humanistic quality have been improved.

This paper makes some tentative reform to the British and American Literature Curriculum. Based on the sophomore course, the reading course has been selectively imported into the reading of British and American literature works. On the one hand, it has expanded the reading quantity of students; on the other hand, it has increased the students' literature knowledge and literature cultivation to lay the foundation for the study of the senior literature curriculum. In addition, this tentative reform is of practical research and educational significance to develop students' interest in reading literary works through the development of extracurricular multi-channel learning activities and to increase students' understanding of literary works through practical operation.

## References

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