

Original Paper

On the Teaching Reform of *History and Anthology of American Literature* Course from the Perspective of Ideological and Political Education in the Curriculum

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Abstract

History and Anthology of American Literature is one of the core courses of English major in Chinese universities. Based on the ideological and political ideas of the curriculum, combined with the actual classroom teaching, the author explores the curriculum teaching reform of *History and Anthology of American Literature* from four aspects: the setting of teaching ideological and political goals, the ideological and political construction of textbooks, the design of curriculum ideological and political teaching links, and the evaluation of students' ideological and political effects of the curriculum. Strengthening the ideological and political construction of the course can better cultivate students' patriotism, help students establish their sense of home and country, enhance their cultural self-confidence, and make them grow into foreign language pillars in the new era.

Keywords

curriculum thought and politics, *History and Anthology of American Literature*, teaching reform

1. Introduction

History and Anthology of American Literature is one of the core courses for English majors in domestic colleges and universities. The literature course bears the heavy responsibility of cultural inheritance and cultural exchange. The study of British and American literary works is conducive to broadening students' knowledge and cultural horizons, and cultivating students' international thinking and critical thinking ability. At the same time, Western literature is full of Western culture, and the differences between Chinese and Western culture require students to read and learn from a critical perspective when learning

British and American literature. The Guiding Outline of Ideological and Political Construction of Curriculum in Colleges and Universities issued by the Ministry of Education points out that: “Comprehensively promoting the ideological and political construction of the curriculum is a strategic measure to implement the fundamental task of cultivating morality and cultivating people, and put forward clear guidance on the ideological and political teaching of the curriculum, requiring that education and teaching should be effectively regarded as the most basic and fundamental work, and in-depth exploration of ideological and political education resources contained in various courses and teaching methods, so that students can master the law of development of things through learning.

Understand the principles of the world, enrich knowledge, increase insight, shape character, and strive to become a socialist builder and successor with all-round development of morality, intelligence, body, aesthetic education and labor education (2021).” Therefore, it is of great necessity and epochal that curriculum ideology and politics should be integrated into the course of *History and Anthology of American Literature*. How to carry out ideological and political practice and teaching reform in the course around the teaching goal, and realize the fundamental task of cultivating moral and cultivating people and guiding and cultivating the mainstream ideology and values of the country has become an important topic. Foreign literature has unique value and significance in exerting the function of “curriculum thinking and politics” (Wang, 2019). In view of this, the author takes the course *History and Anthology of American Literature* as an example to explore the teaching reform from four aspects: the setting of ideological and political teaching objectives, the mining of ideological and political elements in textbooks, the design of ideological and political teaching links, and the evaluation of possible ideological and political effects, so as to realize the mission of The Times.

2. Method

The research methods employed in this paper includes: literature research: Collect, sort out and analyze literature materials related to the course of *History and Anthology of American Literature*, including course textbooks, teaching reference books, academic papers, etc. Through the study of these literatures, we can understand the current teaching content and methods of this course, find the existing problems and challenges, and understand the research results and suggestions of other scholars on this course.

Questionnaire survey: Questionnaire survey was designed to investigate different groups such as students, teachers and administrators to understand their cognition, attitude and expectation of the course *History and Anthology of American Literature*. A large amount of quantitative data can be collected through questionnaire survey, and the current situation and problems of the curriculum can be objectively analyzed to provide basis and reference for teaching reform.

Interview: Select a few students and teachers to conduct individual or group interviews, in-depth understanding of their feelings, experiences and suggestions on the *History and Anthology of American Literature* course. Interviews can provide a wealth of qualitative data to help researchers understand the

impact of courses on students and teachers' teaching experience, and explore potential problems and possibilities for improvement.

Experimental research: Design and implement teaching experiments to compare the influence of different teaching methods or textbooks on students' learning results and ideological and political education results. Through the data collection and analysis of the experimental group and the control group, we can draw a scientific conclusion about the reform of teaching methods, and provide a scientific basis for the teaching of *History and Anthology of American Literature*.

3. Results

3.1 Setting of Ideological and Political Course Objectives

In the traditional American literature course teaching, there are generally the following teaching objectives. Master the development process and important works of American literature. Study the history and evolution of American literature, learn about genres, writers, and works from different periods, and master the themes, styles, and expressions of classic literary works. Understand the cultural context and social significance of literary works. Through the study of literary works, we can understand the background of American history, culture and social issues, understand the social phenomena, ideas and values reflected in the works, and deepen our cognition and understanding of American society. Develop critical reading and thinking skills. Through the analysis and interpretation of literary works, students are trained to critically read and think about literary works, so that they can understand the hidden meaning, theme and symbolic meaning in the works, and improve the interpretation and evaluation ability of literary works. Develop students' creative expression and critical writing skills.

Through the study of literary works, to cultivate students' creative expression ability, encourage them to write critically, improve writing skills and expression ability, and cultivate good literary appreciation and literary criticism ability. Develop students' ability of intercultural communication and understanding. Through the study of American literary works, students can cultivate their cross-cultural communication and understanding ability, deepen their understanding of American culture and Western literature, and enhance their openness and tolerance to different cultures. Cultivate students' comprehensive quality and all-round development. Through the study and research of American literary works, we can cultivate students' academic accomplishment, research ability and innovation ability, and improve their comprehensive quality and all-round development level.

The traditional teaching goal lays more emphasis on cultivating students' basic literary knowledge, reading and writing skills of literary works, and intercultural communication ability, while neglecting the ability of critical thinking of Chinese and Western cultures. Because many American works reflect the mainstream values and culture of the United States, some of these culture and values are contrary to or even contradictory to the mainstream values of China in the new era. "Teachers should recognize the inevitable influence of British and American culture on students' ideology and spirit, guide students to establish a sense of The Times, establish ideals and beliefs for striving for socialist construction in the

new era, maintain cultural self-confidence, and actively participate in the practice of the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation (Gong, 2023).” Therefore, we should combine the mainstream values and patriotism of China in the new era, adjust the achievable teaching goals of American literature course, and integrate the ideological and political elements of the course into the teaching goals.

In the teaching of American literature history and elective courses, the ideological and political elements of the curriculum should be integrated into the curriculum objective design. It includes developing students’ awareness and understanding of American history, culture, and social issues. Through the study of American literature, students can gain an in-depth understanding of the historical development, cultural traditions and social changes in the United States, and understand the diversity and complexity of American society. For the reading and understanding of literary works, it is necessary to break the limitations of the text, integrate the works into the social background to understand, recognize the disgraceful history of the development of the United States, and look at the United States objectively. Guide students to analyze and evaluate ideas and values in American literature. The cultivation of English majors is directly confronted with foreign ideologies and values, so teachers must pay attention to value judgment and ideological screening (Luo, 2021). Through the study and discussion of literary works, students are trained in critical thinking and dialectical thinking, so that they can independently think and judge the rationality and impact of the ideas and values involved in literary works.

American values and culture are not perfect values and culture, so students should avoid the unhealthy psychology of worshipping foreign things when reading American literature. Develop students’ critical thinking and analytical skills through the selection and analysis of literary works, students’ critical thinking and analytical skills are cultivated, so that they can think and interpret the themes, characters, plots and meanings behind literary works from multiple perspectives. Students can understand more about the reality of the United States and the living conditions of the American people from the works. Especially when explaining the Renaissance of African American literature, students should think about the existence of African Americans. Enhance students’ cultural confidence and intercultural communication ability.

Through the study of American literary works, students can understand and understand the core values and ideological traditions of Western culture, cultivate students’ cultural self-confidence and cross-cultural communication ability, and enhance their competitiveness and adaptability in international exchanges. While learning about American culture through American literary works, students are encouraged to compare traditional Chinese culture with American culture to enhance students’ cultural confidence. Cultivate students’ sense of social responsibility and citizenship. By studying and thinking about social problems and human predicament in American literature, students are guided to pay attention to social problems, care about others, and have the ability and consciousness to solve problems and participate in social practice. The community of human destiny is a common issue for all mankind. While reading American literary works, students can think about the social and human dilemmas in the works

and how to find out the solutions to these dilemmas. It is also through reading and thinking about literary works that students can develop the overall view of solving problems.

Through the setting of ideological and political goals of the course, students can develop an international perspective, treat American culture and American values with a correct attitude, enhance students' patriotic feelings and feelings of home and country, enhance students' cultural self-confidence, and lay a foundation for their growth as foreign language talents with noble sentiments.

3.2 Construction of Ideological and Political Elements in Teaching Materials

The textbook *History and Anthology of American Literature* covers both "history" and "reading". On the one hand, it introduces the historical background and literary characteristics of different literary periods. The other party introduced the author and excerpted some of his literary works. Both parts can explore rich ideological and political elements of the curriculum. In the aspect of American history, teachers can combine the cruel history of Americans to Indians to stimulate students' understanding of the community of human destiny. On the basis of systematic teaching, the teaching materials emphasize the penetration of excellent traditional Chinese culture and Chinese stand, thus injecting ideological and political elements into the course content.

Teaching material is "an important means for teachers to implement teaching content and ideological content in the classroom, which is particularly important for teaching activities (Wang & Yang, 2021)." The *History and Anthology of American Literature* textbook contains excerpts from a large number of works by American writers. It is of great practical significance to dig out the possible ideological and political elements of these writers' works for the realization of the ideological and political goals of the curriculum. "As far as teaching foreign languages and literature is concerned, we are confronted with foreign ideologies and mainstream Western discourse, whose cultural values permeate behind the language (Yang, 2020)." Therefore, when leading the school text analysis, teachers should not only combine the analysis with literary theory, but also better combine the analysis with the current advanced literary theory in China, guide the students to combine the text and leap out of the text, form a critical understanding of the text, and form a unique patriotic cognition and humanistic concern for the destiny of the whole human being in combination with the socialist core values. Therefore, teachers need to base on the teaching materials and combine relevant resources at home and abroad to dig out the socialist core values of national consciousness, the excellent traditional culture of the Chinese nation and the ideological and political elements of lofty professional ideals contained in the works excerpted from the teaching materials into the curriculum teaching. In addition, the selection of content should also be integrated into The Times, and the topics in literary texts should be closely combined with realistic topics at home and abroad, so as to stimulate students' interest in learning.

For example, when learning American literary works about ideological views and values, in addition to analyzing the specific values expressed in the literary works, students can make comparative analysis and reflection in combination with the core values of Chinese socialism, so that students can deeply understand the significance of China's traditional excellent values in the new era. For example, when

explaining Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, you can compare the thirteen virtues proposed by Benjamin Franklin with the traditional Chinese virtues to find out the similarities and differences. Under the influence of Puritan thought, Franklin put forward values such as "thrift" and "diligence", which to some extent fit the excellent traditional Chinese values and affirmed the value of excellent traditional Chinese values. This kind of comparative analysis and thinking will have an important impact on the growth of students, and can also enhance students' cultural confidence.

For another example, in exploring the connection between literature and social issues, it is necessary to encourage students to explore the connection between literary works and contemporary social issues, guide students to think about the inspiration and warning of literary works to current social issues, and cultivate students' awareness and responsibility to pay attention to social issues and care for others. In the study of Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, students will be guided to explore the psychological trauma and faith crisis brought by American literature about the First World War, so as to help students establish a general view of supporting peace, opposing war justice and building a community with a shared future for mankind. In the study of *The Great Gatsby* by the American modernist writer Fitzgerald, students are guided to think about the theme of disillusionment of the American dream; At the same time, it compares the means of realizing the Chinese dream to help students establish a firm ideal of fighting for the realization of the great review of the Chinese nation.

The core of thinking and politics in English curriculum is that teachers should exert their initiative in the course teaching process, take students' development as the center, tap the characteristics and advantages of English subject courses, and cultivate students' comprehensive language ability, cultural awareness and thinking character (Xu, 2021). The textbook of *History and Anthology of American Literature* contains rich ideological and political elements, which requires teachers to thoroughly understand the textbook, think about the textbook, and dig deeply into the ideological and political elements of the curriculum, so as to achieve the perfect combination of curriculum ideological and political elements and literary texts. On the one hand, it increases students' interest in learning, and on the other hand, it further cultivates students' feelings of home and country and cultural self-confidence.

3.3 Design of Ideological and Political Teaching Links

The reasonable design and smooth connection of teaching links can ensure the implementation of curriculum ideology and politics in every class teaching. Therefore, the design of ideological and political teaching link of *History and Anthology of American Literature* course has an extremely important position. Excellent course teaching link design can bring students into the work naturally, stimulate students' thinking, and enable students to harvest valuable spiritual wealth. Through the creation of classroom context, guide them to think deeply about ways to carry forward and practice socialist core values, and promote them to actively assume the responsibility and obligation to promote the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The realization of curriculum ideology and politics needs appropriate guidance and ingenious methods. In today's artificial intelligence, the design and arrangement of teaching links is an important link to promote the *History and Anthology of American Literature* course to

implement the curriculum ideology and politics. In the specific teaching process, teachers can explore teaching reform by adopting the teaching model of mixed online and offline teaching, highlighting the humanistic care of teaching content, integrating Chinese elements into literary works, and telling Chinese stories well while understanding American literary works.

First of all, with the development of Internet technology and the wide application of artificial intelligence, the course *History and Anthology of American Literature* can combine digital technology and artificial intelligence technology to adopt a mixed teaching mode online and offline to improve the implementation efficiency of ideological and political construction of the course. In the actual teaching activities, the author adopted the “Chinese University MOOC” platform and Wechat group to carry out online and offline mixed interactive teaching, which improved the teaching effect. Online resources include micro-lessons, MOOCs, courseware, translated works and reading resources, etc., which enrich the content and ways of students’ independent learning. At the same time, the author also sends short videos or introductions of relevant literary works to the Wechat class group in combination with network resources for students to learn and enjoy, which enhances students’ interest in learning literary works. Through online learning, the learning difficulties in learning literary works are found in time, so that these difficulties can be better solved offline. In the classroom teaching, the author uses the Super Star learning to learn software, in class can immediately share the discussion ideas with the students, the students also actively participate in the class discussion in the way of writing, breaking the shy psychology of answering questions. The opinions expressed by many students are innovative and critical, which also enhances students’ ability to think deeply, analyze and solve problems.

Secondly, the design of curriculum teaching links emphasizes humanistic care. Many writers and works in the textbook of *History and Anthology of American Literature* are concerned with the living conditions of human beings and the exploration and attention of human beings to the spiritual world. At the same time of teaching specific knowledge, the teacher makes the students get inspired and excited from the writer’s growth background, the creation process and the publishing process through the group achievement display, the students’ class discussion, and the playback of short videos of the relevant writers, the creation background and influence of the works. While promoting students’ deep understanding of the works, it can also encourage students to gain the courage of life and the spirit of persistence of dreams from the growth and creation process of the writers themselves, so as to guide students’ values and finally realize the education goal of ideological and political courses. For example, the American poet Walt Whitman and the novelist Jack London grew up in a difficult situation, and their families were not well-off, and they had to make ends meet through trivial and complicated work. However, they did not compromise with the poor life, loved reading, persisted in learning, and achieved famous poems and novels in American realistic literature. In the study of these writers, through the authors’ lives, inspire students to overcome difficulties, not afraid of setbacks of life courage; it also cultivates students’ tenacious character. While learning American writers, the students feel the great humanistic care and inspiration brought by the growth of writers.

Last, in the design of ideological and political teaching links, teachers should fully integrate Chinese elements into textbooks and tell Chinese stories well while analyzing American literary works. On the road to realizing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, China has emerged a large number of great figures and deeds, which are valuable spiritual wealth to inspire the young generation. The course of *History and Anthology of American Literature* should explore the feelings of home and country, the self-confidence of Chinese culture and the humanistic connotation in the course to tell the Chinese story better. "Taking Chinese culture as the base point of thinking and politics in English major curriculum is the basic implementation path to realize curriculum thinking and politics (Zeng, 2019)." For example, when teaching Thoreau's *Walden*, a comparative analysis can be made between European and American ecologism and China's ecological concept that "Clear waters and green mountains are as valuable as mountains of gold and silver." In *Walden*, the author is more inclined to express the relationship between individuals and nature, while in the "Two Mountains" theory proposed by China, the connotation of collectivism is more emphasized, emphasizing the relationship between environmental protection and the fate of the whole human being, highlighting the overall consciousness of the community of human destiny. When studying O. Henry's short story *The Cop and the Anthem*, students can analyze the gap between the rich and the poor in American society and realize the real factors that lead to the absurd ending of the protagonist. At the same time, compared with our country's battle against poverty, it is the superiority of the system that has lifted the poor people out of poverty. While studying American literature, students will learn about the great progress of the country and train them to become excellent storytellers of Chinese stories.

3.4 Evaluation of Students' Ideological and Political Effects

In order to carry out the task of curriculum ideology and politics better, it is very important to evaluate the students' ideology and politics comprehensively. On the one hand, teachers should evaluate their own teaching curriculum system based on the ideological and political goals of the curriculum. On the other hand, in addition to the consideration of students' knowledge and skills, the consideration of students' emotional attitude is particularly important.

To begin with, according to the goal set by the curriculum ideology and politics, improve the teaching quality assurance system of *History and Anthology of American Literature* course. Teachers clearly define the content of assessment and specific implementation plans to improve the scientific and normative evaluation work. Carry out formative evaluation of curriculum ideological and political assessment. In classroom teaching activities, teachers enhance students' interest in learning by means of group discussion, classroom display, and role play of literary stories, promote students to learn ideological and political elements in literature, and combine text stories with traditional Chinese culture and Chinese history to enhance students' cultural identity and sense of home and country. At the same time, it pays attention to the positive affirmation and encouragement of students' discussion in classroom teaching, and the effectiveness of interactive evaluation between students' groups, so as to improve the effect of ideological and political teaching in class.

Secondly, we should pay attention to the students' emotions, attitudes and the establishment of correct values, and take them as an important standard for the ideological and political considerations of the curriculum. "Emotion is a necessary condition for cognition and is associated with aesthetic experience and moral sense. Literature and art express human emotions, not only providing a form of representation and encoding of emotions, but also belonging to different ideological and cultural values from the point of view of a nation, a state, a collective (Wang & Shi, 2021)." The ideological and political curriculum of American literature should emphasize moral values and strengthen the educational function of literature, so as to help students realize the great emotional value of Chinese culture, so as to help students shape the sense of home and country and the overall national consciousness. For example, through the investigation of students' enthusiasm for participating in the course learning, the degree of completion of the course, the effective interaction between teachers and students in the classroom, and the practice of socialist core values, the ideological and political evaluation of the course *History and Anthology of American Literature* is made.

Based on the design of ideological and political teaching objectives of the curriculum, students turn the traditional boring text reading into lively and novel group presentation or profound and intense class discussion, which significantly improves students' learning interest and teachers' teaching effect. Teachers' guidance in the aspects of emotion, attitude and values has produced a good collision and communication with students and formed a positive energy to guide students' life and study. In the understanding of literary texts, the students deeply felt the national consciousness and feelings of the Chinese nation.

4. Discussion

To sum up, literature is a form of expression of human wisdom and emotion, and excellent literary works bear the heavy responsibility of spreading excellent culture. The didactic function of literature is the basic function of literature (Nie, 2014). The organic combination of curriculum ideology and politics with the course of *History and Anthology of American Literature* will be conducive to the development of ideological and political courses in American literature courses through the setting of teaching ideological and political objectives, the exploration of ideological and political elements in textbooks, the design of curriculum ideological and political teaching links and the evaluation of students' ideological and political effects. It can not only enhance students' interest in learning, improve teachers' teaching effect, but also help students establish correct values, form profound feelings of family and country and noble moral sentiments, which is of great practical significance for cultivating foreign language pillars with national consciousness and cultural confidence in the new era.

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