

## AMERICAN AUTHORS TO 1875

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed 1-3PM and by appt.

Course: AML 2010-1

Days: MWF

Time: 10:10AM-11AM

Room: DIF 236

“What then is the American, this new man?...He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds...Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world...Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labour; his labour is founded on the basis of nature, self-interest; can it want a stronger allurement?...The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions...This is an American.” —J. Hector St. John de Crèvecœur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter III

“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails,  
and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress,  
rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”

—Frederick Douglass' speech in 1886 on the 24th anniversary of Emancipation, Washington, D.C.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will mainly examine American literature from the nineteenth century, a period that many consider the most influential in terms of mythmaking and the formation of American identity, culture, and values. Yet, in order to understand nineteenth-century American identity, we will look at the literature produced by the preceding two hundred years of colonial history. We will engage with authors both within and on the margins of the canonical tradition of American literature, coming to terms with the faultiness of a singular American narrative and instead embrace a chorus of voices. We will develop critical perspectives on privilege and sovereignty, the implications of racialist strategy, and the voices and cultures who affected—and who were affected by—the lives of diverse communities. To understand the importance and value of nineteenth-century literature today, we will focus on the significance and meaning of these texts in our daily class discussions.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students who participate actively and complete all assignments will:

- Learn to recognize key formal and thematic elements in American literature to 1875.
- Gain familiarity with issues of literary style, theory, and history.
- Understand how these authors, texts, and ideas are reflected in our own culture(s) and identities.
- Think through multiple categories of identity.
- Gain experience using various approaches to analyzing texts.
- Improve ability to develop independent thought.
- Improve ability to think and write critically and analytically with a high level of clarity.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

*The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 9<sup>th</sup> edition

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### *Reading*

Assignments should be read and/or written prior to class meetings on the date assigned. The amount of reading for this course is considerable. We will meet three times a week with the expectation that students will have read substantial amounts of the works between sessions. Note: If a Bb reading is scheduled bring a hard copy or electronic copy to class.

### *Student Participation*

Learning about composing requires you to be actively engaged participants. I expect you all to be engaged in discussions and readings and to attend class regularly. One of the most important benefits of taking a college level literature class is the opportunity to interact within an intellectual community, test your ideas with your peers, and receive feedback to sharpen your ability to analyze and articulate. This is impossible without taking an active role in class.

Participation involves taking an active role in class discussions and in-class writing assignments. Here are four ways to be a good participator: (1) ask questions and make comments that further the discussion in a meaningful manner; (2) actively take notes; (3) bring the required book to every class meeting; and (4) participate in all classroom activities and exercises. Consistently doing these things will demonstrate your engagement with the material and maximize your experience of the course.

### *Attendance and Lateness*

Attendance is required. Missing more than six classes, excluding excused absences, can be cause for failure of the course. Being late to class three times equals one absence. If you arrive more than fifteen minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent. Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

Each absence *after* the permitted amount of excused absences will result in the deduction of half a letter grade from your final grade. For example, if your final grade is a B, but you have seven absences, your final grade will be a B-; or, if you have eight absences, your final grade will be a C+.

All students are expected to abide by this class attendance policy. Students must also provide, when possible, advance notice of absences as well as relevant documentation regarding absences to the instructor as soon as possible following the illness or event that led to an absence. Regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused, the student is responsible for making up all work that is missed.

University-wide policy also states that students who do not attend the first class meeting of a course for which they are registered should be dropped from the course by the academic department that offers the course. In order to enforce this policy, instructors are required to take attendance at the first class meeting and report absences to the appropriate person in their department or school/college.

### *Close Reading Paper*

The purpose of this assignment is to familiarize yourself, through practice, with close reading to base your interpretation and analysis of a particular text. We will be discussing this throughout the semester and practicing close readings in class, so you will be well-prepared for this assignment. Paper should be approximately 2-3 pages using MLA formatting and should be no less than 1 ¾ pages (papers failing to meet this minimum requirement will not receive credit). Under no circumstances will I accept rewrites. However, I am willing to respond to specific questions about drafts up to one week before this paper is due. Use one text from our syllabus. Due Friday, October 6<sup>th</sup> in class.

### *Midterm and Second Exam*

Halfway through, and at the end of the semester, you will take an exam in which you will demonstrate your ability to analyze particular passages, connect themes and tropes across texts, and articulate your knowledge of the social issues encoded in the texts. Thus, both exams will consist of passage identification/analysis and short essays. The midterm

will cover material from the beginning of our course until the day of the exam. The second exam will cover all material since the midterm; it is not cumulative. Midterm scheduled for TBA. Second Exam scheduled for Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>.

#### *Final Paper*

Students will write one 5-7 page critical essay for this course. Consider this to be a longer version of our first “close reading” essay; however, I expect that students have taken my feedback and classroom discussion to improve upon their initial paper. All essays should demonstrate a scholarly approach to literary interpretation as well as conceptual agility. All essays should be typed and properly documented according to MLA guidelines. Under no circumstances will I accept rewrites. However, I am willing to respond to specific questions about drafts up to one week before this paper is due. Sources are permitted, but not required, for this assignment. Due Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup> in class.

#### **GRADING POLICY**

Participation: 15%

Midterm: 15%

Close Reading Paper: 20%

Final Paper: 30%

Final: 20%

All assignments are due on the date specified. If late, I deduct half a letter grade for every class period until the assignment is turned in. I will not accept any assignments after the last day of class.

Recommendation on backing up: I will not allow you to turn assignments in late due to any computer failure. Your work should always be backed up and saved. I strongly recommend that you all back up your work regularly throughout the semester, for all of your classes, including this one.

#### **COURSE PROTOCOLS (to be affirmed and/or amended)**

Whatever your reasons for choosing this course, your decision reveals your commitment to the subject matter as well as your interest in helping to create a productive learning environment. The following list comprises your responsibilities for maintaining productive and respectful classroom dynamics:

- Come to class having fully read the text(s) assigned along with questions and comments provoked by your reading.
- Among other reasons, you have chosen this course in order to learn something about its proposed topic. To do so, you must be exposed to in-class insights and assigned readings with which you may disagree or make you uncomfortable. No matter your political, social, and/or religious loyalties, engage these insights and readings with intelligent thoughtfulness. Avoid responses based solely on what you believe; instead, logically evaluate the strength of an argument based on its rhetorical and literary strategies.
- Be careful how you phrase your perceptions of the world, the readings, and/or other members of the community. Name-calling, accusations, verbal attacks and/or other negative exchanges are both counterproductive and unacceptable to the learning environment we are committed to creating.
- Recognize that not all social groups or identity categories are visible. Sexual orientation, nationality, disability, ethnicity, HIV status, mental health status, economic and/or social class, as well as one’s conservatism, liberalism, fascism, radicalism, and/or religion are some of the categories that may be represented in the classroom but may not be visible to the eye. Please don’t make assumptions based on what you think you see.
- Be mindful that an individual from a particular group does not represent that entire group. Refrain from in/directly asking any individual (including yourself) to do so.

#### **CIVILITY CLAUSE**

This class will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category).

While each of you have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones, pagers or any

other form of electronic communication during the class session (email, web-browsing). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

#### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic Honor Policy: The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>.)

If you submit work that has been copied without attribution from some published or unpublished source (including the Internet), or that has been prepared by someone other than you, or that in any way misrepresents someone else's work as your own, you will face severe discipline by the university. The minimum penalty for plagiarism is a failing grade for the course; the maximum is expulsion from the university.

You are responsible for citing sources fully and correctly according to MLA style guidelines.

Students are expected to learn and uphold the Academic Honor Code published in The Florida State University Bulletin and in the Student Handbook. <http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy>. The academic honor system of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility (1) to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity in the student's own work, (2) to refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community, and (3) to foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community.

#### DISABILITY SERVICES

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should: (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided. This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center - 874 Traditions Way - 108 Student Services Building

Florida State University - Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167

(850) 644-9566 (voice) - (850) 644-8504 (TDD) - [sdrc@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:sdrc@admin.fsu.edu) - <http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

#### SUPPORT

##### Reading Writing Center (RWC)

The Reading/Writing Center, located in Williams 222-C, is devoted to individualized instruction in reading and writing. Part of the English Department, the RWC serves Florida State University students at all levels and from all majors. Its clients include a cross-section of the campus: first-year students writing for composition class, upper-level students writing term papers, seniors composing letters of applications for jobs and graduate schools, graduate students working on theses and dissertations, multilingual students mastering English, and a variety of others. The RWC serves mostly walk-in tutoring appointments; however, it also offers three different courses for credit that specifically target reading, undergraduate-level writing, and graduate-level writing. The tutors in the RWC, all graduate students in English with training and experience in teaching composition, use a process-centered approach to help students at any stage of writing: from generating ideas, to drafting, organizing, and revising. While the RWC does not provide editing or proofreading services, its tutors can help writers build their own editing and proofreading strategies.

Our approach to tutoring is to help students grow as writers, readers, and critical thinkers by developing strategies for writing in a variety of situations. During the fall and spring semesters, the RWC is open Monday through Thursday from 10 - 6 and Friday from 10 - 2. Hours of operation vary in summer. Visit the RWC website or call 644-6495 for information.

#### Digital Studio

The Digital Studio provides support to students working individually or in groups on a variety of digital projects, such as designing a website, developing an electronic portfolio for a class, creating a blog, selecting images for a visual essay, adding voiceover to a presentation, or writing a script for a podcast. Tutors who staff the Digital Studio can help students brainstorm essay ideas, provide feedback on the content and design of a digital project, or facilitate collaboration for group projects and presentations. The Digital Studio currently has two locations: Williams 222-B and Johnston Ground. Students can use the Digital Studio to work on their own to complete class assignments or to improve overall capabilities in digital communication without a tutoring appointment if a workstation is available. However, tutor availability and workspace are limited so appointments are recommended. For hours and to make an appointment, visit the studio's website: <http://wr.english.fsu.edu/Digital-Studio/How-to-Make-an-Appointment>.

#### MLA REMINDERS

Below are basic and common MLA requirements. For additional help, ask me, or visit [Purdue OWL](http://owl.english.psu.edu/owl/resource/725/5/).

- All papers must be entirely and thoroughly double-spaced and in Times New Roman font, size twelve (12).
- Paper should be in “No Spacing” format (Select ‘Home’ in Word – On right side of header, select “No Spacing” (Word defaults this to “Normal”). Make sure this setting is throughout your entire document.
- Last name and page number in upper right-hand corner (e.g. Grech 1).
- In upper left-hand corner, put: Name, instructor name, class, date. For example,

Your name

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- One inch margins on all sides.
- Leave only one space after periods or other punctuation marks.
- Indent the first line of paragraphs one half-inch from the left margin.
- Paper titles are centered and creative!
- Staple your paper

#### SYLLABUS CHANGE POLICY

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the evaluation (grading) statement, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.

## DAILY SCHEDULE

## WEEK 1

## INTRODUCTIONS | BEGINNINGS AND FIRST ENCOUNTERS

28 August: Syllabus overview

Introductions

30 August: Christopher Columbus, “Letter of Discovery,” pp. 59-64

Bartolomé de las Casas, “The Devastation of the Indies,” pp. 68-71

1 September: William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, pp. 132-37, 150-58

John Winthrop, from *A Model of Christian Charity*, pp. 178-89

## WEEK 2

## ‘INDIAN’ CAPTIVITY NARRATIVES | THE GREAT AWAKENING &amp; THEOLOGY

4 September: Labor Day – No Class

6 September: Mary Rowlandson, “*A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration...*,” pp. 269-301

8 September: Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hand of Angry God,” pp. 390-402

## WEEK 3

## LITERACY, ACCESS, AND QUESTIONS OF DEMOCRACY

11 September: Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*, chapter 3: “Ideology and Genre,” pp. 101-120 (Bb)

13 September: Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word*, chapter 4: “Literacy, Education, and the Reader,” pp. 121-150 (Bb)

15 September: Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, pp. 682-89

Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams (dated March 31, 1776), pp. 666-67

## WEEK 4

## WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?

18 September: J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (only “Letter III,” “IX,” and “XII”), pp. 636-50, 651-56

20 September: Benjamin Franklin, “The Way to Wealth,” pp. 442-48

22 September: Judith Sargent Murray, *On the Equality of the Sexes*, pp. 772-79

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, pp. 711-21

## WEEK 5

## EPISTOLARY FICTION AND THE SENTIMENTAL NOVEL

25 September: Hannah Webster Foster: *The Coquette*, pp. 843-902 (Letters I-XLVII)

27 September: Hannah Webster Foster: *The Coquette*, pp. 902-923 (Letters XLVIII-LXV)  
 29 September: Hannah Webster Foster: *The Coquette*, pp. 923-941 (Letters LXVI-LXXIV)

#### WEEK 6

##### NATIVE AMERICANS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF

2 October: James Fenimore Cooper, excerpts from *The Pioneers*, pp. 64-72; excerpts from *The Last of the Mohicans*, pp. 79-84  
 4 October: Catharine Maria Sedgwick, excerpts from *Hope Leslie*, pp. 89-106  
 6 October: William Apess, *A Son of the Forest*, pp. 126-34

*Due: Close Reading Paper*

#### WEEK 7

##### THE SLAVE NARRATIVE

9 October: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, pp. 1163-93 (preface-chapter VIII)  
 11 October: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, pp. 1193-1216 (chapter IX-X)  
 13 October: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, pp. 1216-26 (chapter XI, prologue)

#### WEEK 8

##### THE SLAVE NARRATIVE | FOR WHOM IS AMERICA?

16 October: Harriet Jacobs, selections from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, pp. 910-31  
 18 October: Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” pp. 1236-39  
 Margaret Fuller, “Fourth of July,” pp. 762-764  
 Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (re: race), pp. 771-73  
 20 October: Sojourner Truth, “Speech to the Women’s Rights Convention,” pp. 787  
 “Ar’nt I a Woman?”: <http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman>

#### WEEK 9

##### TRANSCENDENTALISM

23 October: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance*, pp. 236-53  
 25 October: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Experience,” pp. 269-85  
 27 October: Henry David Thoreau, *Resistance to Civil Government*, pp. 953-68

#### WEEK 10

##### AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: WALT WHITMAN

30 October: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (from *Leaves of Grass*), pp. 1312-56  
 1 November: TBA

3 November: TBA

#### WEEK 11

##### AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

6 November: Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown,” pp. 345-54

8 November: Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Minister’s Black Veil,” pp. 368-77

10 November: Veterans’ Day – No Class

#### WEEK 12

##### AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: EDGAR ALLAN POE

13 November: Edgar Allan Poe, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, pp. 629-642;

15 November: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Man of the Crowd,” pp. 656-662; “The Cask of Amontillado,” pp. 696-701

17 November: TBA

#### WEEK 13

##### AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: EDGAR ALLAN POE

20 November: Edgar Allan Poe, “The Masque of the Red Death,” pp. 662-666

22 November: Thanksgiving – No Class

24 November: Thanksgiving – No Class

#### WEEK 14

##### AMERICAN RENAISSANCE: HERMAN MELVILLE

27 November: “Benito Cereno,” pp. 1511-1568

Course evaluations

29 November: Herman Melville: “Bartleby, the Scrivener,” pp. 1469-95

1 December: Discuss final paper

#### WEEK 15

##### EXODUS

4 December: Herman Melville: “Billy Budd, Sailor,” pp. 1573-1629

6 December: TBA

8 December: Second Exam

Final Paper Due