AML 3311: Major Figures in American Literature

"Crowds in Nineteenth-Century American Literature"

Spring 2019

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Office Hours: Mon/Wed 1:00-3:00 and by appt.

Course: AML 3311-2
Days: MW
Time: 3:35PM-4:50PM
Room: WMS 002

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This "Major Figures in American Literature" course focuses on nineteenth-century American authors, and more specifically, these authors' representations of crowds.

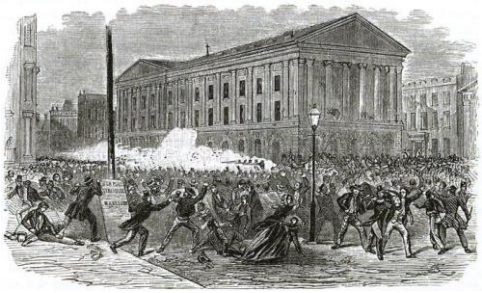
Our primary goal: to understand the relationship between literary portrayals of crowds and the political and cultural challenges faced by different groups in the United States. We'll find this period as not so different from our own.

Mihaly Munkacsy's Strike, an 1895 painting, depicts a group of boisterous strikers.

This era frightened the nineteenth-century middle class. For many, it was underscored by anonymity, vice, poverty, and the threat of violence. The period between 1820 and 1850 was the most intense period of urbanization in American history, and thus a new experience of crowding in urban centers and trafficking of peoples via travel.

The population in urban American environments inflated by roughly 500%, resulting in high unemployment and widespread poverty. Prostitution, crime, and violence structured the social atmosphere. Andrew Jackson led the near genocide of Native Americans. Economic stability was under constant threat. Popular reform movements—including abolitionism, women's suffrage, temperance movements, and labor reform—sparked protests, rallies, speeches, strikes, and fights across the nation.

The list of authors we will read together represent the diverse group of voices from the nineteenth century who imagined the idea of a people amidst an age of population expansion and its fluctuating, turbulent conditions. Crowds became one way for some writers to portray their ruminations and fears of "different" people with new ideas.



The Astor Place Riot, May 10, 1849, at the now-demolished Astor Opera House in Manhattan. At least 25 dead and more than 120 injured. It was the deadliest to that date of several civic disturbances in NY.

Other authors, such as Whitman, saw crowds as optimistic gatherings to be celebrated and embraced for their diversity and heterogeneity—they promote interpersonal connection, uniting individuals to one another and to the universe.

Today, many people share the same fears, apprehensions, and suspicions of crowds, while others celebrate and rejoice these same people. Just think of BLM, Occupy, teacher strikes, women's marches, gun reform protests, and political protests. All of these are sites of democratic meeting.

Moby-Dick, Ishmael: "Better to sleep with a sober cannibal than a drunken Christian."

These authors' portrayals of crowds have several important implications that force us to confront questions still pertinent today:

- ✓ Who is or is not allowed to participate in democracy?
- ✓ Should we privilege individual identity or collective identity?
- ✓ Who is socially, economically, and politically included or excluded?
- ✓ What does it mean for one person to be "different" in the crowd?
- ✓ How do we reconcile the rights of the individual with the demands of a crowd?
- ✓ What does it mean for a heterogenous group of individuals—composed of various races, ethnicities, class positions, and belief systems—to gather in a public space?

An examination of any theme in a text is not just a literary investigation, but also an examination of human nature. This course will revolve around decoding meaning from the latent and manifest content of literary works and connect that analysis to larger social, cultural, political, or economic issues particular to the works' historical and modern contexts.

A central goal of this course is to not only have students understand how the cultural and social milieu in which writers are writing within (or are revisiting) are shaping their work, but in turn, how we as readers are being shaped by these authors' vision of social, cultural, and historical events.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

- Formulate their own interpretation of the works we read based on their developing ability to recognize the decisions each author has made in constructing the text.
- Use the historical and social contexts of the works to build meaning from and about these literary texts.
- Compare and interpret a variety of intellectual and/or artistic works within their cultural milieu.
- Compare, interpret, and create or model cultural artifacts that function as widely varied reflections of human perspectives and/or practices.
- Select, critically evaluate, and apply relevant areas of scholarship to produce an original analysis, project, creative work, performance, or other scholarly work that reflects a body of knowledge relevant to the course.
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- Articulate the process of producing a work, from initial plan, to critique, revision, and completion.
- Critique existing applications of scholarship in order to learn from past success and failures.

COURSE TEXTBOOKS

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, vol. B (1820-1865), 9th ed. Edited by Robert S. Levine, 2017. ISBN 978039326447

Moby-Dick by Herman Melville. 3rd ed., W.W. Norton, 2018. Edited by Hershel Parker. ISBN 9780393285000

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading

Assignments should be read prior to class meetings on the date assigned. The amount of reading for this course is considerable. There is no excuse for not reading. If you do not read, you cannot pass. Note: If a Canvas reading is scheduled bring a hard copy or electronic copy to class.

Student Participation

This course's success largely depends on your participation. You should be engaged in discussions and readings and 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.

Here are four ways to be a good participant:

1. Ask questions and make comments that further the discussion in a meaningful manner.
2. Actively take notes.
3. Bring the required textbook and course readings to every class meeting.
4. Participate in all classroom activities and exercises.

Attendance and Lateness

Attendance is required. More than four absences can be cause for failure of the course. Being late to class three times equals one absence.

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 four 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 five absences, your final grade will be a B-; or, if you have six 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.

In the early nineteenth century, changing social conditions and the idea of equality led to the beginning of the woman suffrage movement.

Inclusive Learning Statement

Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodations because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.

GRADING

Grading breakdown:	Final Grades			
➢ Participation: 10%	A	93 – 100	C	73 – 76
➢ Reading Pop Quizzes: 15%	A-	90 – 92	C-	70 – 72
➢ Close Reading Papers (3): 75% (25% each)	B+	87 – 89	D+	67 – 69
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.	B	83 – 86	D	63 – 66
	B-	80 – 82	D-	60 – 62
	C+	77 – 79	F	0 – 59

College-level Writing Requirement	To demonstrate college-level writing competency as required by the State of Florida, the student must earn a "C-" (2.0) or higher in the course, and earn at least a "C-" average on the required writing assignments. If the student does not earn a "C-" average or better on the required writing assignments, the student will not earn an overall grade of "C-" or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

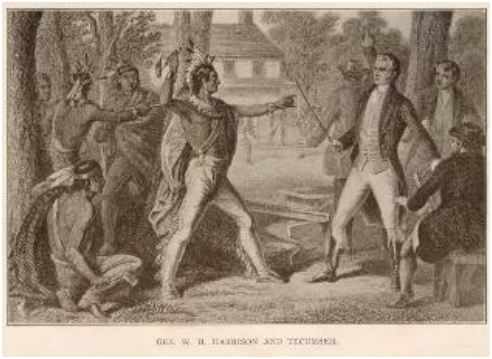
COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Pop Reading Quizzes: 15 in total

Throughout the semester I will give a total of fifteen pop reading quizzes, without advance notice, to ensure that everyone is keeping up with the reading. Questions will be easy: if you did the reading, you'll know the answer. Being absent or tardy on the day of a reading quiz does not exempt you from the quiz score affecting your final grade. These quizzes also cannot be made up under any circumstances. Lastly, at the end of the semester I will drop your lowest quiz grade (either a low earned score or a zero resulting from an absence or tardiness).

Close Reading Papers: 3 in total

The purpose of these papers is to familiarize yourself 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. Three of these papers are due in total during this semester.



The Mashpee Revolt broke out in 1833, and William Apess's name became briefly known throughout the United States: he was, in effect, the leader of one of the first Indian rights movements.

Paper should be approximately 3-4 pages using MLA formatting and should be no less than 2¾ pages (papers failing to meet this minimum requirement will not receive credit).

Each paper's topic should be on the reading assigned and discussed since the previous assigned paper. You may focus on one author, text, or theme, or place multiple authors and texts in discussion. However, your topic should also be *focused* so your analysis has the opportunity to go in-depth. These papers should include *very little summary* (generally, only as much summary as necessary to base your analysis on). Papers must include quoted material from our course texts.

Have a question? Need help? Please contact me and/or visit the Reading Writing Center (see page 7).

COURSE PROTOCOLS

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:

- 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, 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 or who 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).

Abolitionist Wendell Phillips spoke on behalf of fugitive slave Thomas Sims, and against the Fugitive Slave Law in 1851. Sims was later returned to Savannah where he was publicly whipped.

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 (including me). 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 - http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

New York, Little Italy, 1898

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.

Rapid Urbanization in Nineteenth-Century America

LIBERAL STUDIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The *Liberal Studies for the 21st Century* Program at Florida State University builds an educational foundation that will enable FSU graduates to thrive both intellectually and materially and to support themselves, their families, and their communities through a broad and critical engagement with the world in which they live and work. Liberal Studies thus offers a transformative experience. This course has been approved as meeting the Liberal Studies requirements for Humanities and Cultural Practice and thus is designed to help you become a thoughtful patron of and participant in cultural practice.

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: AMERICAN LITERATURE, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY	
7 January	9 January
• Syllabus and Introductions	• "American Literary Nationalism and the 1820s," pp. 5-8
	• J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur – *Letters from an American Farmer*, "Letter III: What is an American?" (Canvas Files)

WEEK 2: NATIVE AMERICANS AND AMERICAN EXPANSIONISM	
14 January	16 January
• James Fenimore Cooper from *The Pioneers*, pp. 64-79	• Catharine Maria Sedgwick – from *Hope Leslie*, pp. 89-106
	• William Apess – from *A Son of the Forest*, pp. 124-34
	• In-class exercise: How to do a "close reading"

WEEK 3: THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE LABYRINTH	
21 January	23 January
• No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day	• Notes from Gustave Le Bon – *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* (Canvas Files)
	• ---. "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," pp. 332-45

WEEK 4: THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE LABYRINTH	
28 January	30 January
• Edgar Allan Poe – "The Man of the Crowd," pp. 656-62	• "Walt Whitman – "Song of Myself," pp. 1312-56
	• "Renaissance,' Reform, Conflict," pp. 12-18
	• Discussion: Overview of material covered so far

WEEK 5: MELVILLE'S MARITIME DEMOCRACY: SLAVERY AND REBELLION	
4 February	6 February
• Herman Melville – "Benito Cereno" pp. 1511-38	• Melville – "Benito Cereno" pp. 1539-68

WEEK 6: SLAVERY AND ABOLITION	
11 February	13 February
• Andrew Delbanco – "The Abolitionist Imagination," pp. 1-55 (Canvas Files)	• Thomas Jefferson – from *Notes on the State of Virginia*, pp. 770-73
• DUE: Close Reading Paper 1	• David Walker – from *David Walker's Appeal in Four Articles*, pp. 773-77
	• Frederick Douglass – "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?", pp. 1236-39

WEEK 7: SLAVERY AND ABOLITION	
18 February	20 February
• Frederick Douglass – *The Heroic Slave*, pp. 1239-67	• William Wells Brown – from *The Narrative of the Life and Escape…*; and, from *Clotel*, pp. 931-49
• "Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature," pp. 769-70	

WEEK 8: SLAVERY, ABOLITION, AND HUMAN RIGHTS	
25 February	27 February
• Harriet Jacobs – from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, pp. 909-31	• Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker – "A Motley Crew in the American Revolution," pp. 211-47 (Canvas Files)
	• Discussion: Overview of material covered so far

WEEK 9: *MOBY-DICK*	
4 March	6 March
• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 1-63 (chapters 1-15)	• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 63-120 (chapters 16-33)

WEEK 10: *MOBY-DICK*	
11 March	13 March
• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 120-85 (chapters 34-51)	• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 185-246 (chapters 52-72)
• DUE: Close Reading Paper 2	

WEEK 11: SPRING BREAK	
18 March	20 March
No Class	

WEEK 12: *MOBY-DICK*	
25 March	27 March
• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 246-311 (chapters 73-95)	• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 311-374 (chapters 96-124)

WEEK 13: WOMEN WRITE WOMEN'S RIGHTS	
1 April	3 April
• Melville – *Moby-Dick*, pp. 374-410 (chapters 108-Epilogue)	• Fanny Fern – from *Ruth Hall*, pp. 905-09
• Discussion: Overview of material covered so far	• Louisa May Alcott – from *Little Women*, pp. 1742-48

WEEK 14: WOMEN WRITE AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS	
8 April	10 April
• Sojourner Truth – "Speech to the Women's Rights Convention," pp. 786-87	• Rebecca Harding Davis – "Life in the Iron-Mills," pp. 1698-1724
• https://sojournertruthmemorial.org/sojourner-truth/her-words/	• Discussion: Overview of material covered so far

WEEK 15: LAW, LABOR, LIBERATION	
15 April	17 April
• Melville – "Billy Budd," pp. 1573-1599	• Melville – "Billy Budd," pp. 1599-1629

WEEK 16: LAW, LABOR, LIBERATION	
22 April	24 April
• Melville – "Bartleby, the Scrivener," pp. 1469-95	• Discussion: Overview of material covered so far
	• DUE: Close Reading Paper #3