

English 440 American Literature to 1865

Fall 2018 T,Th 12:30-1:50
THH 109
Professor Thomas Gustafson

Office: THH 402C
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Course Description:

This study of American literature from the Colonial era through the Civil War will focus on the interrelationship between politics and literature with a special attention given to issues of freedom, justice and civil rights. After studying the hopes, fears, and ideology of the Puritans and Revolutionaries, the course will consider how writers such as Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, Thoreau, Douglass and Stowe confronted problems arising from the contradictions of American democracy such as the place of slavery in the land of freedom and the betrayal of visions of America as a "model of Christian charity" and "asylum for all mankind." Throughout the course, we will cross-examine how political leaders and writers sought to justify or critique Indian removal, revolution, slavery and secession, and we will judge the verdicts rendered against such figures as Nat Turner, John Brown and Billy Budd in famous trials of fact and fiction.

Course Objectives:

- (1) To examine major themes and issues of American literature from the early Colonial era through the Civil War;
- (2) To develop critical skills for studying literary texts and the language of America's cultural and political life;
- (3) To develop students' historical perspective on the events, issues, conflicts and traditions that have shaped America's imagination of itself and that have united and divided its citizens;
- (4) To understand more fully the diverse ways Americans have sought to pursue liberty, happiness and a more perfect union;
- (5) To study the myths, images and fictions of American history and culture--e.g., America as "a model of Christian charity," as "the last, best hope on earth"--as seen through the eyes of noted writers;
- (6) To develop students' awareness of the power of words and the imagination in shaping America's sense of itself;

(7) To appreciate various works of American literature as complex responses to and interpretations of the possibilities and tragedies of America as an unfolding experiment in human freedom and communal virtue;

(8) To call into question any tendency to make easy distinctions between myth and history, politics and literature, fiction and the 'real world.'

Texts:

Baker, *Nat Turner*

Gunn, ed., *Early American Writing*

Hawthorne, *Selected Tales and Sketches*

Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Tales*

Melville, *Moby-Dick; or The Whale*

Paine, *Common Sense*

Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*

Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Thoreau, *Civil Disobedience & Other Essays*

Schedule:

I. READING THE AMERICAN WORD AND ITS CONTRADICTIONS

T 8/21 Introduction

Abraham Lincoln, The Gettysburg Address (handout)

Herman Melville, "The House-top" (handout)

Viewing: Excerpt from "The Gangs of New York"

**Th 8/23 John Winthrop, excerpts from "A Model of Christian Charity" in EAW
(*Early American Writing*)**

John Winthrop et al, "City on a Hill: The American Mission Revisioned"
(excerpts from speeches by JFK, Ronald Reagan and others) (blackboard)

Viewing: Excerpt from "City on a Hill: The Spirit of American Exceptionalism"

Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener; A Story of Wall Street"

T 8/28 Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener"

Herman Melville, "The Spouter Inn," chapter 3 from *Moby-Dick*

Margaret Fuller, excerpt from letter on her America (blackboard)

George Fitzhugh, excerpt from *Sociology for the South* (blackboard)

Henry David Thoreau, excerpt from "Life Without Principle" (pp. 75-78, 87)

Andrew Delbanco, excerpt on “Bartleby” from *Herman Melville: His Life and Writings* (blackboard)

Anthology of Voices on Empathy (blackboard)

Pema Chodron, on “The Excellence of Bodhichitta,” an excerpt from *The Places that Scare You* (blackboard)

Diane Ackerman, excerpt from *A Slender Thread* (blackboard)

Nikhil Saval, excerpt from *Cubed: A Secret History of the Workplace* (blackboard)

Carey McWilliams, excerpt from Introduction to Carlos Bulosan’s *America is in the Heart*

Herman Melville, excerpts from his letters (blackboard)

Susan Sontag, “Literature and Freedom” (blackboard)

Th 8/30 **Herman Melville, “The Paradise of Bachelors and Tartarus of Maids”**

Selections from the essays and poetry of the “Lowell Factory Girls”

II. THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICA REVISITED: PLANTATION OF GOD OR GOLD?
REFUGE OF LIBERTY OR ORIGIN OF EMPIRE?

T 9/4 John Smith, excerpt from *A True Relation of Such Occurrences and Accidents Of Noate as Hath Hapned in Virginia* (EAW)
Chief Powhatan (EAW)
Robert Beverley, excerpt from *The History and Present State of Virginia* (Chapter II and III) (EAW)
Excerpts from the writings of John Rolfe, John Smith, Thomas Jefferson and Kirkpatrick Sale on Jamestown and Pocahontas (blackboard)

Selections from Joseph Bruchac, *Pocanhontas* and Linwood Custalow and Angela L. Daniel, *The True Story of Pocahontas*

Viewing: Excerpts from “Pocahontas”

Th 9/6 Thomas Morton, excerpt from *New English Canaan* (EAW)
William Bradford, excerpt from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Chapters IV, IX, XI, XIX, XXXII (EAW)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The May-Pole of Merry Mount"
Philip Roth, excerpt from *The Dying Animal* (blackboard)

Viewing: “After the Mayflower”

T 9/11 Samuel Danforth, from “A Brief Recognition of New England’s Errand into the Wilderness” (EAW)

Mary Rowlandson, selections from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (EAW)

William Apess, “Eulogy on King Philip” (blackboard)

Washington Irving, excerpts from “Philip of Pokanoket; An Indian Memoir” (blackboard)

Anne Bradstreet, “Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House” (EAW)

Viewing: Jill Lepore on King Philip’s War (YouTube)

Th 9/13 Catherine Sedgewick, *Hope Leslie*, Chapters 1-8, and selections

Richard Slotkin, “Our Myths of Choice” (blackboard)

John Brown, “Ten Ways to Interpret the War on Terror as a Frontier Conflict” (blackboard)

Cotton Mather, excerpt from *Magnalia Christi Americana* (EAW)

Cotton Mather, excerpt on Hannah Dustan’s “A Notable Exploit,” from *Magnalia Christi Americana* (blackboard) and from *Wonders of the Invisible World* (blackboard)

On Hannah Dustan: <http://99percentinvisible.org/episode/monumental-dilemma/>

Mary Beth Norton, excerpts from *In the Devil’s Snare: The Salem Witchcraft Crisis of 1692* (blackboard)

Maryse Conde, excerpt from *I, Tituba: Black Witch of Salem* (blackboard)

Viewing: Bill Moyers with Richard Slotkin (YouTube)
Mary Beth Norton on Salem (YouTube)

Benjamin Franklin, “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America” (blackboard)

Philip Freneau, “On the Emigration to America” (EAW) and “On the Civilization of the Western Aboriginal Country” (blackboard)

Lydia Huntley Sigourney, “Indian Names” (blackboard)

Native American Oratory (EAW)

III. INVENTING THE UNITED STATES: THE FICTIONS OF REVOLUTIONARY AMERICA

T 9/18 **Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Gray Champion”**

Jonathan Mayhew from “A Discourse Concerning Unlimited Submission and Non-Resistance to the Higher Powers” (EAW)

John Adams, excerpt from "A Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law" (blackboard) (See also excerpt in EAW)

Levi Hart, "Liberty Described and Recommended" (blackboard)

Samuel Langdon, excerpt from "Government Corrupted by Vice and Recovered by Righteousness" (blackboard)

Th 9/20 **Nathaniel Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”**

T 9/25 Thomas Paine, "Reflections on Unhappy Marriages" (blackboard) and *Common Sense*

Charles Inglis, excerpt from "The True Interest of America Impartially Stated" (blackboard)

1st Paper Due

Th 9/27 **Thomas Jefferson, The Declaration of Independence** (blackboard and EAW, The selection from *Autobiography*); excerpts from his *Notes on the State of Virginia* (EAW); selections from his correspondence (EAW).

Benjamin Banneker and Thomas Jefferson, An Exchange of Letters (blackboard)
Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Maria Cosway (blackboard)

Selected Correspondence of John and Abigail Adams (blackboard and EAW)

Viewing: Excerpts from “1776”

T 10/2 **Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”** and excerpts from *Salmagundi* on Logocracy (blackboard)

Selection from the writings of Benjamin Franklin (blackboard)

Jen Benka, “A Box of Longing with 50 Drawers: A [Poetic] Revisioning of the Preamble to the Constitution” (blackboard)

Alexander Hamilton, Federalist #1 (EAW)

James Madison, Federalist #10 (EAW) and #37 (blackboard)

George Washington, excerpt “Farewell Address” (EAW)

Thurgood Marshall, "Celebrating the Constitution: A Dissent" (blackboard)

Thomas Gustafson, "We the People and the Word: The Constitution as Scripture, Language-Experiment, and Collaborative Script" (blackboard)

Francisco Palou, excerpt from his *Life of Junipero Serra* (EAW)
Fray Carlos Jose Delgado, "Report....concerning abominable hostilities and tyrannies of the governors....towards the Indians" (EAW)

Robert Carson, excerpt from *The Outsiders* on founding of Pueblo of Los Angeles ((blackboard)

IV. FOUNDING FATHERS, SONS, DAUGHTERS, AND SLAVES: THE PARTY OF MEMORY AND THE PARTY OF HOPE

Th 10/4 Francis Scott Key, "Defense of Fort McHenry" (aka "Star-Spangled Banner") (blackboard)

The Abolitionist Star-Spangled Banner, "Oh Say, Do You Hear?" (1844) (Blackboard)

Daniel Webster, excerpt from "The Bunker Hill Address" (blackboard)

Abraham Lincoln, "The Perpetuation of Our Political Institutions," Springfield, Illinois (January 27, 1838)" (blackboard)

William Lloyd Garrison, excerpt from "The Liberator" (blackboard)

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Concord Hymn" and excerpts from *Nature* and "Self-Reliance" (blackboard)

Henry David Thoreau, "Slavery in Massachusetts"

T 10/9 Philliss Wheatley, poetry (EAW)
George Moses Horton, "On Liberty and Slavery" (blackboard)

Greenberg, ed., *Confessions of Nat Turner* (blackboard)

Kevin Baker, *Nat Turner*

Edgar Allan Poe, "Hop-Frog; Or, the Eight Chained Ourangoutangs" (1849) (blackboard)

Th 10/11 **Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?"** (blackboard)

Frederick Douglass, excerpts from *Narrative of his Life*

The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions (blackboard)

Frederick Douglass, selected quotations on “Women's Rights”

Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Earth’s Holocaust”

T 10/16 Midterm Take Home Due and Performance/Sharing

**V. WHITHER THE SHIP OF STATE AND THE HOUSE DIVIDED? MANIFEST DESTINY:
EMPIRE AND EVIL; GOLD AND GOD; COMPROMISE AND NO COMPROMISE;
CONQUEST AND SALVATION**

Th 10/18 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “The Building of a Ship” (blackboard)

Walt Whitman, “O Pioneers! O Pioneers” (blackboard)

Sam Houston, Frederick Douglass, Thomas Corwin, Abraham Lincoln on War with Mexico (blackboard)

James Russell Lowell, excerpt from *The Biglow Papers* (blackboard)

Henry Thoreau, excerpt from “Resistance to Civil Government” and excerpt from “Walking” and on the Gold Rush (blackboard)

Ralph Emerson, excerpt from journal on the Gold Rush (blackboard)

Herman Melville, excerpt from *Mardi*

Viewing: Excerpts from “The Red River,” “The Alamo,” and “Lone Star” and PBS documentary on the Gold Rush and “Hell’s Hinges”

T 10/23 **Herman Melville**, excerpt from *Typee* and *Moby-Dick*, *selected chapters*

Th 10/25 **Herman Melville**, *Moby-Dick*, *selected chapters*

T 10/30 **Herman Melville**, *Moby-Dick*, *selected chapters*

Th 11/1 Ralph Waldo Emerson, excerpt from “The Fugitive Slave Law” (blackboard)

John Pierpont, “The Fugitive Slave’s Apostrophe to the North Star” (blackboard)

John Greenleaf Whittier, “Ichabod” (blackboard)

Harriet Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

T 11/6 **Harriet Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin***

Th 11/8 **Harriet Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin***

T 11/13 **Harriet Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*** and excerpt from *Dred* (blackboard)

Selected Southern literary responses to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* including a selection from *Aunt Phyliss' Cabin* (blackboard)

Th 11/15 **Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno"**

Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask" (1896) (blackboard)
Frederick Douglass, Conclusion of "The Heroic Slave" (blackboard)
Herman Melville, "Misgivings" (blackboard)

John Quincy Adams, excerpt from *Amistad* defense (blackboard)

T 11/20 Herman Melville, "Portent" (blackboard)

John Brown, "Declaration of Liberty by the Representatives of the Slave Population of The United States of America," Preamble to "Provisional Constitution," and Speech to the Court at his Trial (blackboard)

Henry Thoreau, "Plea for Captain John Brown" (blackboard)

Lydia Maria Child, "Dear Captain Brown" and "The Hero's Heart" (blackboard)
Southern Watchman, "The Harper's Ferry Insurrection" (blackboard)
Margaretta Mason, "To Lydia Maria Child" (blackboard)
Thomas Hamilton, "The Nat Turner Insurrection" (blackboard)

Abraham Lincoln, "Thanksgiving Proclamation" (blackboard)
Lydia Maria Child, "The New England's Boys Sing about Thanksgiving Day" (blackboard)

2nd Paper Due

VI THE HOUSE RECONSTRUCTED AND WHAT HAPPENS TO A DREAM DEFERRED?

T 11/26 Abraham Lincoln, excerpt from "Address at Sanitary Fair" and "Second Inaugural Address" (blackboard)

Walt Whitman, "O Captain! My Captain!" (blackboard)

Herman Melville, selected poetry and excerpt from "Supplement" to *Battle-Pieces* (blackboard)

Th 11/28 Herman Melville, chapters 1-2, 14, 26 from *The Confidence Man* (blackboard)

Louisa May Alcott, "Transcendental Wild Oats" (blackboard)

Herman Melville, "Billy Budd, Sailor"

Frederick Douglass, "Our Composite Nationality" (blackboard)

Emily Dickinson, "There is no frigate like a book" (blackboard)

T 12/11 **Take Home Final Due at 11 am + Class Sharing/Performance**

Course Policies:

This syllabus is subject to revision, including adding some short supplementary readings. I will try to notify you in advance of each class the specific readings or chapters that will be the focus for the next class.

Regular, consistent attendance is expected and participation in class discussion is strongly encouraged.

Attendance, class participation and short commentaries on the reading due at the beginning of each class will account for approximately 20% of your grade. The commentaries, which can be handwritten, should be some form of intelligent response to the reading. *Each response should include a short passage from both a reading in boldface and one other assigned reading for the day.* At minimum, the response to each of the two passages should be 4 sentences in length. Do not plagiarize these responses from any source.

These responses can also include questions about the reading or reflections linking personal experiences to something in the reading. These commentaries will not be graded, but completion of each commentary will count for a 1/2 point. Late commentaries will not be accepted except in the case of illness or an excused absence. If you submit a make-up paragraph response, please note briefly on the response the reason for the absence.

SEVEN OR MORE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES (measured by failure to turn in a paragraph response) **COULD RESULT IN A FAILURE FOR THE COURSE REGARDLESS OF THE STUDENT'S PERFORMANCE ON PAPERS AND EXAM.**

The two papers will account for approximately 40% of your grade. Late papers will lose a half grade for each class day late. A re-write may be required or recommended for the first paper.

The take home midterm and take home final exam will each account for 20% of your grade. Each exam will be composed as an anthology of quotations from texts assigned plus commentaries on the quotations.

In lieu of completing the second paper and the Take Home Final Exam, you can write a longer paper (15-20 pages) that can be some form of combination of a research project, critical analysis of a set of texts, creative non-fiction writing and creative writing. A draft or partial completion of this project will be due 11/20 and the final project will be due 12/11.

This option to complete a longer project could include finding and comment upon a poem, a story, a speech, or essay not on the syllabus and a brief report on either a scholarly critical essay about a text or texts on the syllabus or a work of literature post-1865 that invokes or draws upon or rewrites or reconfigures a work of American literature before 1865.

FAILURE TO COMPLETE ANY OF THE WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS FOR THE COURSE WILL RESULT IN AN F FOR THE COURSE.

Grading breakdown:

20%: Attendance, participation, paragraph responses
20%: First paper
20%: Take Home Midterm Exam
20%: Second paper
20%: Take Home Final Exam

40% Longer project option (in lieu of 2nd Paper and Take Home Final)

Submission of Papers:

Papers should be typed and double-spaced (except for quotations and if otherwise noted). All page length requirements are for double-spacing. Please staple papers and do not submit with folders.

Each paper should have a title page that includes your name, title of paper, date of submission, and name of teaching assistant.

Every written assignment should be submitted as a hard copy, not by email.

Please retain copies of all written assignments, either a hard copy or in your computer, until you receive the final grade for the course.

STUDENT CONDUCT CODES REGARDING PLAGIARISM AS EXPLAINED IN SCAMPUS WILL BE RIGOROUSLY ADHERED TO IN THIS COURSE

USC Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in *SCampus* in Section 11, *Behavior Violating University Standards* <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in *SCampus* and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the *Office of Equity and Diversity*

<http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the *Department of Public Safety*

<http://capsnet.usc.edu/departments/departments-public-safety/online-forms/contact-us>.

This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. *The Center for Women and Men* <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems

A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more. Students whose primary language is not English should check with the *American Language Institute* <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students. *The Office of Disability Services and Programs* http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations. If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, *USC Emergency Information* <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.

From Walt Whitman, "Democratic Vistas" (1876):

Prospecting thus the coming unsped days, and that new order in them...we see, fore-indicated, amid these prospects and hopes, new law-forces of spoken and written language....In fact, a new theory of literary composition for imaginative works of the very first class, and especially for highest poems, is the sole course open to these States. Books are to be call'd for, and supplied, on the assumption that the process of reading is not a half-sleep, but, in highest sense, an exercise, a gymnast's struggle; that the reader is to do something for himself, must be on the alert, must himself or herself construct indeed the poem, argument, history, metaphysical essay--the text furnishing the hints, the clue, the start or frame-work. Not the books need so much to be the complete thing, but the reader of the book does. That were to make a nation of supple and athletic minds, well-train'd, intuitive, used to depend on themselves, and not on a few coteries of writers.