

PIRATES, PURITANS, AND THE LITERARY ORIGINS OF THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

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ENGL 346—01A, fall 2010

time: even days, 11:20 am—12:30 pm

place: Quad 343

THE IDEA OF THE CLASS

Almost everyone has seen the popular *Pirates of the Caribbean* movies, but where did these pirate stories come from? Would it surprise you to learn that the rigidly religious Puritans in New England sometimes did business with the anarchic pirates? The colonial period of America was a chaotic and strange moment in world history, but it is also a foundational moment. It was then that three of the most significant documents for American culture and economics were written: the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*. In this class, we will read some of the earliest pirate stories, the classic novel *Robinson Crusoe*, debates among Puritans about the morality of slavery and the nature of money, poems about the business of tobacco, the famous autobiographies of Benjamin Franklin and Olaudah Equiano, and the writings of Thomas Jefferson as well as some of Adam Smith's classic work on economics. This course is intended to be of general interest not only to English majors and future high school teachers, but also to majors in Economics, History, Political Science, and Business.

Therefore, this class will not be a traditional survey of American literature from the Puritans of the seventeenth century to the so-called "American Renaissance" of the 1850s up to the Civil War. Rather, the class will approach literature from a "trans-Atlantic" perspective—a perspective that reveals the many kinds of connections (both literary and economic) among Europe, the Caribbean, and Africa as well as North America. And considering the enormous breadth and scope of such a trans-Atlantic approach, the course will focus primarily on the eighteenth century. Hence, we will supplement and contextualize our reading of literature from a variety of geographic locations with a history book entitled *The Atlantic World*. Finally, because this class is imagining a new way of looking at literature, we will finish the semester by thinking about and practicing how literature gets edited for anthologies and textbooks.

TEXTS IN BOOKSTORE

Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Egerton, Games, Landers, Lane, and Wright, *The Atlantic World*

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*

Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography and Other Writings*

Jon Lewis, *The Mammoth Book of Pirates*

Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*

RECOMMENDED

Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. Clement Hawes (2004)

ON-LINE TEXTS

A significant amount of material will be available through Moodle. You can access Moodle through CSBSJU's Current Students page or here: <<https://moodle.csbsju.edu/login/index.php>>.

EVALUATION

Five Short Essays.....	15% each
Editorial Exercise.....	15%
Attendance and Participation.....	10%

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE CLASS

This class is divided up into units, each of which focuses on a specific theme and poses several questions about that theme. We will read a variety of texts including not only early British-American literature and early economic literature but also some recent scholarly study on that literature and history. The reasons for reading such a variety are (1) so that you will gain some historical and critical perspective, and (2) that you acquire a sense of the diversity of literature and ideas during the colonial period of American history. At the end of each unit, you will bring a two-page, single-spaced essay. In class when the paper is due, you will discuss your essays in groups for the first half the class and then quietly work on a revision of your own paper for the second half.

SHORT ESSAYS

Your essays will address the theme of each unit on the syllabus by engaging with at least four of the texts assigned for that unit of the course. I will grade you on (1) how well you formulate and answer a question, (2) how well you support your claims with evidence from the texts, and (3) your reasoning and organization.

Your essays should be *exactly* two pages, single spaced, using 12 point Times New Roman font, with 1.25 inch margins, no more, no less. As for the header on the first page, at the top left, put your name and date, and at the top right, put the name of this class – English 346 -- and the number of the unit (e.g., Essay, unit #?). There should be one line of space between the header and the essay, and no title.

On the back of your essay, after 40-45 minutes of group discussion on the day that it is due, you will re-think what you wrote based on the conversation you had with your group. Your in-class essay will be graded on (1) how honestly you reconsider the texts, (2) how well you draw upon the conversation with your group, and (3) how well you support your new ideas with evidence from the texts.

EDITORIAL EXERCISE

Usually the so-called “classic” texts that you read for college classes have been carefully edited. However, many of the literary texts from the past have never been edited and reproduced for classroom use. Why some texts get chosen for anthologies and textbooks and others don’t is a complex question that you can speculate about on your own (cf., Michel Foucault’s “What Is an Author?”); however, for this assignment, you will simply learn the beginnings of how to edit something from the archive for classroom use.

You will form teams of two or three people. Your team will be assigned one “primary” text along with some “secondary” reading to help with your interpretation and contextualization of the primary text. Your task is (1) to write a brief introduction that would help other students understand what they are reading, (2) to include a helpful bibliography of primary and secondary sources, and (3) to begin to make footnotes to explain any specific words or concepts. You are required to have a minimum of only ten footnotes.

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Half of your attendance and participation grade is your attendance. You are allowed three absences. Unless you have a documented excuse, I will reduce your attendance grade by 20% for each absence in excess of those three.

The other half of this grade is your participation. I expect you to be prepared to discuss the reading every day and to listen respectfully to your classmates. Some of your participation grade will include worksheets, handouts, or pop quizzes in class. I do not accept late worksheets, and there are no make-ups for missed in-class work.

POLICIES

Any act of plagiarism can result in an F for the course and can go on your permanent academic record. Please see The College of St. Benedict and St. John's University's official policy on plagiarism: <http://www.csbsju.edu/catalog/2003-2005/Academic_Programs/Rights_and_Responsibilities/002.htm>.

All students have the right of non-discriminatory access to the programs at the colleges. If you have a disability and require special consideration, you must inform me as soon as possible.

I reserve the right to change this syllabus at any time during the semester and will inform you of all changes in a timely manner.

CALENDAR

*nota bene: all readings followed by ** are on Moodle*

Unit One—Economic Criticism / Atlantic Framework?

Questions: *Literary history has been traditionally conceived nationally or ethnocentrically (e.g., French literature, American literature, Western literature), but how might we consider literature from a transnational, multiethnic, or oceanic perspective? What, after all, was the project (or imaginative projection) of America? How do we as scholars consider the difficulty of imagining economic realities in relation to imaginative literature?*

Aug. 26 (Thu)	Introductions
Aug. 30 (Mon)	<i>Atlantic World</i> , Introduction and ch. 1 George Berkeley, "Prospect of Planting Arts and Learning in America"*** Handsome Lake, "How America Was Discovered"***
Sept. 1 (Wed)	<i>Atlantic World</i> , ch. 2-3 Jennifer Baker and Eric Wertheimer, "Economics and Early American Literature," <i>Early American Literature</i> – Project Muse Adam Smith, <i>Wealth of Nations</i> , Introduction by Kathryn Sutherland
Sept. 3 (Fri)	<i>Wealth of Nations</i> , Introduction by Adam Smith and book IV, ch. vii
Sept. 6	LABOR DAY
Sept. 8 (Wed)	<i>Atlantic World</i> , ch. 4 <i>Book of Pirates</i> , p. xi-xiii and 49-96
Sept. 10 (Fri)	<i>Book of Pirates</i> , p. 114-125 and 206-214 and 292-299 and 455-458
Sept. 14 (Tue)	unit one paper due plus in-class revisions

Unit Two—Labor and Land

Questions: *In the eighteenth century, the Atlantic was a site and conduit of extensive migration, the majority of which was forced (not voluntary) labor. Debates about slavery and servitude took place from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. How did the rhetorical strategies of the pro and con positions change over time? How did they stay the same? What might you imagine is the economic as well as the poetic relationship between labor and land?*

- Sept. 16 (Thu) *Atlantic World*, ch. 5
Bartolomé de Las Casas, “The Destruction of the Indies”**
John Locke, “Property” from *Two Treatises of Government***
Benjamin Franklin, “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America”
- Sept. 20 (Mon) Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book I, ch. vii-xi
Benjamin Franklin, “Information to Those Who Would Remove to America”
- Sept. 22 (Wed) *Atlantic World*, ch. 6
Samuel Sewall, “The Selling of Joseph”**
John Saffin, “Brief... Answer to the Selling...” and “Negroes Character”**
Cotton Mather, “The Negroe Christianized”**
- Sept. 24 (Fri) Thomas Jefferson, “Laws” from *Notes on the State of Virginia***
Benjamin Franklin, “Sidi Mehemet Ibrahim on the Slave Trade”**
- Sept. 28 (Tue) Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, editor’s introduction and ch. 1-2
Phyllis Wheatly, “To Maecenas” and “On Being Brought from Africa”**
- Extra reading:
Steven Thomas, “Doctoring Ideology,” *Early American Studies* – Project Muse
- Sept. 30 (Thu) Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, ch. 3-5 and ch. 12
Book of Pirates, p. 241-56
Leeward Treaty with Maroon Captain Cudjoe**
- Oct. 4 (Mon) **unit two paper due plus in-class revisions**

Unit Three—Imagining Value

Questions: *How do things have value? Is value natural, social, imaginary, or poetic? What is the relationship between how we value things and how we value people? How do we communicate (or translate) value? How is value guaranteed?*

- Oct. 6 (Wed) Adam Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book I, ch. i-vii
Atlantic World, ch. 8
- Oct. 7—10 FALL BREAK
- Oct. 12 (Tue) Cotton Mather, *Life of Phips***
Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Sir William Phips”**
Book of Pirates, p. 257-71

- Oct. 14 (Thu) Mather, *Life of Phips***
 Anne Bradstreet, “To Her Father” and “Upon the Burning...”**
 Edward Taylor, “Another Meditation at the same time”**
- Oct. 18 (Mon) Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 1-71
- Oct. 20 (Wed) Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*
 William Dampier, “Rescue...” (in Norton edition of *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 227)
 Woodes Rogers’s account (in both Norton, p. 230 and *Book of Pirates*, p. 157)
- Oct. 22 (Fri) Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*, finish
 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book I, ch. viii
 Karl Marx from *Capital* (in Norton edition of *Robinson Crusoe*, p. 274)
 (Recommended: entire chapter of Marx’s chapter on the “Commodity Fetish”)**
- Oct. 26 (Tue) **unit three paper due plus in-class revisions**

Unit Four—The Culture of Commodities and the Meaning of Cash

Questions: What is a “cash crop”? How does the meaning of a commodity change over time? How did literature attempt to understand the workings of a single-crop economy? How does literature attempt to mediate the vicissitudes and politics of value? How do we guarantee or insure that a token of value (such as silver money, paper money, or a cash crop) will be worth what it is claimed to be worth? Is money imaginary?

- Oct. 28 (Thu) *Atlantic World*, ch. 7 and ch. 9
 review Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, ch. 8-10
- Nov. 1 (Mon) King James I, excerpt from *A Counter-Blaste to Tobacco***
 Isaac Hawkin’s Browne, excerpt from *A Pipe of Tobacco***
 Ebenezer Cooke, excerpt from *The Sotweed Factor***
 T. H. Breen, introduction to *Tobacco Culture***
- Nov. 3 (Wed) Ebenezer Cooke, *Sotweed Redivivus***
- Nov. 5 (Fri) Jennifer Baker, *Securing the Commonwealth*, Introduction and ch. 2**
 Benjamin Franklin, “A Modest Inquiry into... Paper Currency”**
 Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal” and the two Drapier’s Letters I and IV
 from *Gulliver’s Travels and Other Writings***
 Extra reading:
 Steven Thomas, “Taxing Tobacco and the Metonymies of Virtue”**
- Nov. 9 (Tue) **unit four paper due plus in-class revisions**

Unit Five—Economic Man

Questions: *What are the socio-economic circumstances in which a person becomes his or herself? In what way is the notion of the “self-made man” true and/or not true? Are concepts such as race, gender, and class useful for exploring this question? How does literature illuminate the paradoxes of those circumstances or attempt to change them? In what ways do some notions of “success” value us as things rather than as people?*

- Nov. 11 (Thu) *Atlantic World*, ch. 10, 11, and 14
- Nov. 15 (Mon) Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, p. 1-72
Annis Boudinot Stockton, “To Palemon No. 2”**
- Nov. 17 (Wed) Franklin, *Autobiography*. P. 72-134
- Nov. 19 (Fri) Franklin, *Autobiography*, finish
Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, ch. 6
Mark Twain, “Good Little Boy” and “Bad Little Boy”**
- Nov. 23 (Tue) Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, book IV, ch. i-iii and vii--ix
Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, ch. 7-8
- Nov. 24—28 THANKSGIVING
- Nov. 30 (Tue) Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, finish
Harriet Jacobs, excerpt from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl***
Toussaint L’Ouverture, excerpts**
- Dec. 2 (Thu) **unit five paper due plus in-class revisions**

Unit Six—Editing the Archive

- Dec. 6 (Mon) on CSBSJU library’s website, explore the databases Early American Imprints
and Early English Books Online
bring Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe*, Equiano’s *Interesting Narrative*, and
Lewis’s *Book of Pirates* to class
- Dec. 8 (Wed) to be announced
- Dec. 10 (Fri) workshop editing
- unit six edition due December 15**