

AMERICAN LITERATURE FROM 1492 TO 1865

English 346, fall 2007

time: odd days 2:40-3:50 pm

place: Quad 459

course website:

<http://www.employees.csbsju.edu/swthomas/engl346.htm>

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office hours:

even days 2:15-3:00 pm

odd days 1:15-2:00 pm

or by appointment

Goals and Expectations:

This course will do two things. First, it will give you a broad overview of the literary and cultural history of the United States of America from the moment of Christopher Columbus's accidental discovery of the "new world" to the end of the Civil War. Unfortunately, sometimes depth will be sacrificed for breadth; in other words, in order to expose you to the range of cultural production over such a long period of time, literature anthologies typically offer only snippets of texts and snapshots of authors rather than complete works, detailed biography, and insightful contextualization. Second, the class will ask you to consider and reconsider ways of conceptualizing not just literary but also cultural history. Fortunately, the editors of the new Heath Anthology did consciously arrange their texts for this purpose by including "clusters" of primary and secondary readings that address various concepts and themes. Ultimately, the goal of the class is for you to become independent, critical thinkers about literary and cultural history.

Towards these goals, I expect you be prepared to discuss the reading every day. Some days I will lecture, some days we will together analyze the texts as a class, and some days we will divide into small groups where you can critically discuss the texts independently of me.

Eight times over the course of the semester, you will write a one page, single spaced essay on the given prompt. On those days, you will bring this essay to class, immediately get into groups, discuss the prompt with your groups for 40-45 minutes, and then on the back-side of your essay, use the remaining 25 minutes to write a revision of your essay based on the conversation you just had.

Required Texts:

The Heath Anthology of American Literature, 5th edition (2006), vol. A and B

occasional supplementary readings, either handed out in class or posted on the course website

Evaluation:

Attendance and Class Participation... 10%

Eight Essays... 10% each

Final Paper... 10%

Attendance Policy:

I expect you to come to class everyday. If you miss more than three classes, I will lower your grade as I deem appropriate.

Essays:

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

Your essays should be *exactly* one page, single spaced, using 11 point Times New Roman font, with one inch margins. As for the header, 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 essay (e.g., Essay #?). 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, 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.

Final Paper

Take one of your eight essays and develop it into a 3-4 page paper (single spaced). The goal of this assignment is for you to develop a critical apparatus for analyzing literary or cultural history. You will learn more about what a “critical apparatus” is over the course of the semester, but for now consider it to be something like a conceptual “lens” through which you “read” literature or “see” culture.

You should arrange to see me to discuss your plan as soon as you can, and I expect you to consult at least one secondary source through the MLA bibliography or JSTOR (library databases). If you are unsure what the difference is between a primary and a secondary source, or if you do not know how to use those databases, please ask.

As with your eight short essays, your final paper will be graded on (1) how well you formulate your critical apparatus, (2) how well you support your claims with evidence from the texts, and (3) your reasoning and organization.

As for the format, this paper should be single spaced, 11 point font, one-inch margins just like the other eight shorter essays. For this paper, however, you should have a title in bold face between the header and your essay. You should also add a Works Cited at the end, which need not be a separate page, but should be distinguished and properly formatted according to MLA style guidelines.

You can hand in your final paper anytime between October 25 and December 18.

CALENDAR

UNIT -A- The Fantasy of America (1492-1736)

- Aug. 29 (W) Introductions
- Aug. 31 (F) “Colonial Period: to 1700” pp. 1-15
Christopher Columbus, “First Voyage” and “Third Voyage” pp. 119-31
“The Origin of Stories” pp. 51-53
- Sept. 4 (T) “Cluster: America in the European Imagination” pp. 106-112
from Sir Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Emphyre of Guiana* (course website)
Thomas Harriot, *Brief and True Report... Virginia* pp. 237-47
Handsome Lake, “How America Was Discovered” pp. 802-04
- Sept. 6 (Th) William Bradford, Book 1 of *Of Plymouth Plantation* pp. 324-29
John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” pp. 307-17
Thomas Morton, Book 1 of *New English Canaan* pp. 294-99
Roger Williams, “Preface” to *A Key into the Language of America* pp. 347-49
Cotton Mather, “General Introduction” to *Magnalia Christi Americana* pp. 507-17

Paper #1 Due

How was literature symptomatic and/or diagnostic of the fantasy of “America”?

- Sept. 10 (M) movie: *The Mission* (on reserve in library)
“New Spain” pp. 113-119
“Creation of the Whites” pp. 65-66
- Sept. 12 (W) “Cluster: Cultural Encounters” pp. 132-138
Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *Relation* pp. 139-152
Samson Occom, *A Short Narrative of My Life*, pp. 1115-1122.
- Sept. 14 (F) William Byrd II, *History of the Dividing Line* and *The Secret History...* pp. 610-30
Ebenezer Cook, “The Sot-weed Factor” pp. 723-41
- Sept. 18 (T) John Smith, *Generall Historie of Virginia* pp. 255-264
Morton, book 3 of *New English Canaan* pp. 299-307
William Bradford, book 2 of *Of Plymouth Plantation* to ch. XXIX, pp. 329-40
- Sept. 20 (Th) Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration...* pp. 440-68
Briton Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings and...* pp. 1137-43

Paper #2 Due

Theorize a model for analyzing the literature we’ve read for this section. Consider the models proposed in the “cultural encounter” cluster (and be aware that the phrase “cultural encounter” is itself a model.)

UNIT -B- Enlightenment and Its Discontents (1690-1794)

- Sept. 24 (M) "Eighteenth Century" pp. 565-81
Samuel Sewall, "The Selling of Joseph" pp. 496-506
John Saffin, "The Negroes Character" pp. 550, 552-3
Cotton Mather, "The Negro Christianized" pp. 527-32
Benjamin Franklin "On the Slave-Trade" pp. 825-27
- Sept. 26 (W) HERITAGE DAY
- Sept. 27 (Th) "Cluster: On Nature and Nature's God" pp. 635-643
James Grainger, *The Sugar-Cane*, pp. 1097-1115
- Oct. 1 (M) Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, pp. 990-110
Phillis Wheatley, "To Maecenas" pp. 1238-42
Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* pp. 804-8 and 828-76
- Oct. 3 (W) Franklin, *Autobiography* pp. 876-90
Charles Brockden Brown, "Somnambulism, a fragment" pp. 1373-87

Paper #3 Due

How does literature investigate what is essential to our nature?

- Oct. 5 (F) "Cluster: On the Discourse of Liberty" pp. 1049-66
- Oct. 9 (T) Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* pp. 957-65
"Federalist and Anti-Federalist Controversy" pp. 1027-42
Toussaint L'Ouverture, "Proclamations and Letters" pp. 1042-48
- Oct. 11-12 "FREE" DAYS
- Oct. 15 (M) Olaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative*, pp. 1152-79
- Oct. 17 (W) Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* pp. 1340-59
- Oct. 19 (F) Susanna Haswell Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* pp. 1360-73

Paper #4 Due

Using the literature, identify and explore the paradoxes of "freedom."

UNIT -C- Race and Nation (1800-1865)

- Oct. 23 (T) from “Early Nineteenth Century” pp. 1389-1400 and 1410-12
“Native America” pp. 1420-22
Elias Boudinot, “An Address to the Whites” pp. 1442-52
Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney, “Indian Names” pp. 1372-3
- Oct. 25 (Th) no class, watch the movie *Last of the Mohicans* (on reserve in library) on your own
- Oct. 29 (M) James Fenimore Cooper, pp. 2185-7
selected passages from James Fenimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans* (course website)
William Apress, “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man” pp.1459-65
George Copway, *The Life of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh* pp. 1475-91
- Oct. 31 (W) Washington Irving “Rip Van Winkle” pp. 2143-45 and 2153-65
Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* – “Preface” and verses one and eight through twenty-one
pp. 2920-37 and 2942-52
- Nov. 2 (F) Sarah Margaret Fuller, from *American Literature* pp. 1719-26
Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar” pp. 1578-81 and pp. 1609-21

Paper #5 Due

How is a “national” identity imagined or contested by literature?

- Nov. 6 (T) “The Debates over Racism and Slavery” pp. 1400-05
David Walker, “Appeal... to the Coloured Citizens of the World” pp. 1825-37
- Nov. 8 (Th) Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July” pp. 1879-82 and 1946-65
Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Concord Hymn” pp. 1669
- Nov. 12 (M) Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* pp. 2547-89
- Nov. 14 (W) Henry David Thoreau, “A Plea for Captain John Brown” pp. 1787-1803
Walt Whitman, “Ethiopia Saluting the Colors” pp. 3012

Paper #6 Due

Using the literature as your concrete evidence, propose a concept for analyzing antebellum culture.

UNIT -D- Labor, Resistance, and Possibility

- Nov. 16 (F) “Debate over Women’s ‘Sphere’” pp. 1405-10
Sarah Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* pp. 1692-5 and 1697-1719
Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments” pp. 2109-11 and 2113-15
- Nov. 20 (T) Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Custom House” pp. 2242-45 and 2307-31
- Nov. 21-25 THANKSGIVING
- Nov. 27 (T) Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter* pp. 2331-2406
Fanny Fern, “Hints to Young Wives” pp. 2100-02
Emily Dickinson pp. 3042-46
“Title divine—is mine!” p. 3075
“Rearrange a Wife’s Affection” pp. 3080-1
- Nov. 29 (Th) Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter* pp. 2406-44
Emily Dickinson, “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant—” p. 3076
Sojourner Truth, “Speech at New York Convention” and
“Address to the First Annual...” pp. 2092-94 and 2097-100

Paper #7 Due:
Theorize “feminist” literature.

- Dec. 3 (M) “The Rise of Industry” and “Individualism and/versus Community” pp. 1412-1419
Alexis de Tocqueville, from *Democracy in America* p. 1419
Melville, “The Paradise of the Bachelors and the Tartarus of the Maids” pp. 2651-69
- Dec. 5 (W) Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government” pp. 1738-52
Herman Melville “Bartleby, the Scrivener” pp. 2625-51
- Dec. 7 (F) Thoreau, *Walden* pp. 1753-87
Emily Dickinson, “Your Riches—taught me—Poverty” p. 3052
“I tie my Hat—I crease my Shawl—” p. 3060
“I dwell in possibility” p. 3068
- Dec. 11 (T) Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life...* pp. 1882-1946
- Dec. 13 (Th) Harriet Ann Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* pp. 2029-56

Paper #8 Due:
Theorize the relationship of individuals, communities, and labor.