

English 337: American Literature, Beginnings to 1865

Spring 2010 (#34770)
MWF 2:00–3:00 pm; Parlin 105

Professor Matt Cohen
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Office Hours: M and W, 3:00-4:30pm, and by appointment

Description

This course surveys the role of writing in colonial North America and in the early years of the United States. It focuses on how what came during this period to be called "literature" shaped power, culture, and identity among the many groups that generated written works in and about North America. We will examine Native American representation, the literature of slavery and the growth of racialism, evolving and competing religious movements, the expansion of print culture, and the publications that came out of imperial competition and radical reform.

Objectives

The course will:

- survey American literature from its beginnings to the Civil War
- model methods of literary and cultural interpretation
- help students improve critical thinking, writing, and reading skills

Requirements and Evaluation

Participation (25%)

Students are expected to be active participants in the classroom and active readers outside of it. Reading quizzes and occasional short assigned presentations (individual and group) will be required. Each week you will be asked to write something in response to that week's reading, which you will email to me before Monday's class meeting. Bring a copy of it to class, because sometimes I will ask you to read (or perform, or demonstrate) it to the class. Attendance is mandatory; repeated unexcused absences will affect your grade negatively.

Examinations (50%)

You'll take two examinations during the term. The midterm exam will be worth 20% of the final grade; the final exam will be 30% of the final grade. Both exams will include identifications, short answer and essay questions.

Essay (25% of final grade)

Students will produce two 5-page essays during the course of the term; more specific instructions about these papers will be handed out in advance of the due dates, which are indicated on the schedule below.

NB: Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade of the course. Grades will be determined on the following basis:

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| A = 94-100 | C = 74-76 |
| A- = 90-93 | C- = 70-73 |
| B+ = 87-89 | D+ = 67-69 |
| B = 84-86 | D = 64-66 |
| B- = 80-83 | D- = 60-63 |
| C+ = 77-79 | F = 0-60 |

The University does not recognize the grade of A+.

Academic Integrity

Each student is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity:

“The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.” Any work submitted for academic credit must be your own.

Accommodations for students with disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (471-4641 TTY).

Email Protocol

Email will be used as a primary means of communication in this course. You will be responsible for checking your email regularly. I will, in turn, do my best to respond to emails in a timely fashion. While I am more than happy to answer brief queries over email, Office Hours are the place for substantial discussions about course materials and assignments. Please do come by.

Common courtesy

Please silence your cell phones, refrain from texting, and limit your use of laptop computers during class.

Course Texts

All texts available at the Co-Op, 2246 Guadalupe; additional readings listed on the schedule will be available via Blackboard.

Susan Belasco and Linck Johnson, eds., *The Bedford Anthology of American Literature* (2006)
(Bedford/St. Martin's: 031248299X)

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (1791)
(Modern Library: 0812971213)

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838)
(Penguin Classics: 0140437487)

Course Schedule

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| W Jan 20 | Introduction: Colonization and the Invention of Literature |
| F Jan 22 | N. Scott Momaday, "The Becoming of the Native"; Christopher Columbus, "Letter of Columbus" (<i>BA</i> , 54-59 and 66-73) |
| M Jan 25 | Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, "The Narrative" (<i>BA</i> , 74-85) |
| W Jan 27 | Cabeza de Vaca, <i>Relación</i> (PDF, Blackboard) |
| F Jan 29 | John Smith, from <i>The Generall Historie</i> (<i>BA</i> , 106-119) |
| M Feb 1 | Smith and Pocahontas (<i>BA</i> , 120-123) |
| W Feb 3 | John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity" (<i>BA</i> , 153-166) |
| F Feb 5 | William Bradford, from <i>Of Plimmoth Plantation</i> (<i>BA</i> , 135-145) |
| M Feb 8 | Anne Bradstreet, selected poems (<i>BA</i> , 167-176 and 181-185) |
| W Feb 10 | Mary Rowlandson, <i>The Sovereignty and Goodness of God</i> (<i>BA</i> , 190-217) |
| F Feb 12 | Mary Rowlandson, <i>The Sovereignty and Goodness...</i> (<i>BA</i> , 217-228) |
| M Feb 15 | Mather and the inoculation controversy (PDF, Blackboard); Byrd, from <i>The Secret Diary</i> (<i>BA</i> , 270-275) |
| W Feb 17 | Benjamin Franklin, from <i>The Autobiography...</i> (<i>BA</i> , 340-354) |
| F Feb 19 | Essay #1 due |
| M Feb 22 | Franklin, from <i>The Autobiography...</i> (<i>BA</i> , 354-371) |
| W Feb 24 | Olaudah Equiano, from <i>The Interesting Narrative...</i> (<i>BA</i> , 414-426) |
| F Feb 26 | Equiano, from <i>The Interesting Narrative...</i> |
| M Mar 1 | Samson Occom, <i>A Short Narrative of My Life</i> (<i>BA</i> , 402-409) |
| W Mar 3 | Susanna Rowson, <i>Charlotte Temple</i> ("Introduction" through Chapter 6) |
| F Mar 5 | Rowson, <i>Charlotte Temple</i> (Chapter 7 through Chapter 18) |
| M Mar 8 | Rowson, <i>Charlotte Temple</i> (Chapter 19 to end) |

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| W Mar 10 | Review for midterm exam; paper feedback |
| F Mar 12 | Midterm Examination |
| M Mar 22 | Thomas Jefferson, “The Declaration of Independence” and from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> (BA, 446-453; PDF on Blackboard); Phyllis Wheatley, selected poems (BA, 503-508 and 512-513); Apess, <i>An Indian’s Looking Glass for the White Man</i> (BA, 639-645) |
| W Mar 24 | Washington Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (PDF, Blackboard); Tim Burton, <i>Sleepy Hollow</i> , start |
| F Mar 26 | Burton; <i>Sleepy Hollow</i> , end |
| M Mar 29 | Edgar Allan Poe, <i>The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym...</i> (“Introduction” through Chapter 7) |
| W Mar 31 | Poe, <i>The Narrative...</i> (Chapter 8 through Chapter 13) |
| F Apr 2 | Poe, <i>The Narrative...</i> (Chapter 14 to the end) |
| M Apr 5 | Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (BA, 1072-1101) |
| W Apr 7 | Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Minister’s Black Veil” (BA 966-968 and 997-1006) |
| F Apr 9 | Essay #2 Due |
| M Apr 12 | Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (BA, 653-655; 683-701) |
| W Apr 14 | Emerson, “Circles” (BA, 701-709) |
| F Apr 16 | Lydia Sigourney, “Indian Names” (BA, 1201-1203); John Greenleaf Whittier, “The Hunters of Men” and “The Farewell...” (BA, 1218-1222) |
| M Apr 19 | Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life...</i> (BA, 855-909) |
| W Apr 21 | Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life...</i> (BA, 909-922) |
| F Apr 22 | Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life...</i> |
| M Apr 26 | Emily Dickinson presentations (BA, 1312-1315; “214” and “216” [1318-1319]; “465” [1329]; “508” [1330-1331]; “640” [1333-1335]; “1463” [1341] and “1737” [1343]) |

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| W Apr 28 | Dickinson presentations |
| F Apr 30 | Dickinson presentations |
| M May 3 | Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (<i>BA</i> , 1234-1283) |
| W May 5 | Whitman, "I Sit and Look Out" and "So Long" (<i>BA</i> , 1293 and 1306-1308) |
| F May 7 | Review; conclusions |
| M May 17 | Final Exam (2-5 p.m.) |