

ENGL 333A: American Literature Beginnings to 1865

Humanities Division, Main Campus
Fall 2022

Course Description:

This course examines native oral traditions and selections by main authors in the United States from the pre-colonial period through the Puritan times and the Civil War era. Emphasis will be on both the texts and the social, historical, philosophical, and Christian influences on America's early literature. Prerequisite(s): ENGL 203 or consent of instructor. Fall, Even Years.

Required Texts:

Baym, Nina et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 9th Ed. Vols. A-B. New York: Norton, 2016. ISBN-13: 978-0393264548

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The House of the Seven Gables*. New York: Penguin, 1981. ISBN 9780140390056

Sikoryak, R. *Constitution Illustrated*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2020. ISBN 978-1770463967

Scope of the Course:

ENGL 333A is a course for English majors that covers American poetry, fiction, and drama from the beginning of the American colonial period until 1865. Because American literature is full of the voices of people from a variety of races, classes, gender, and ethnicities, our texts will draw from all of these voices and represent the diversity of ways in which American writers have written about, and continue to write about, their experiences. Students will read approximately 1000 pages throughout the semester. Primary assessments will include two exams, two literary analysis papers (750 words each), and a final research paper.

Course Assignments:

Literary Analysis Papers:

Two times this semester (dates indicated on the course schedule), you will write a short analysis paper in response to the two prompts below.

Paper 1: Word Study

Writers choose words carefully, whether they're industrious college students or British poets from a few centuries ago.

In this paper, a **word study**, your task is to examine one writer's use of language in a specific way, and use your examination to draw a conclusion about a major theme in the text(s) you're considering.

Steps in the Process:

1. Choose an author from our readings to date. I suggest choosing the author of a long work we've read OR choosing an author of multiple shorter works, like poems; don't try to do this assignment based on a single poem or a very short story.
2. Choose a **word** or **phrase** that this author uses repeatedly and significantly in his or her text(s). The word or phrase should appear at least three times.
3. Use **at least two** sources to provide you with the etymology and definitions of the word. I suggest using the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) here; the OED gives not just current definitions but historical definitions, so you can look back at how the word might have been defined differently in the author's day.
4. **Analyze the text:** look at each instance where the word appears and consider how it is being used in context.
5. Using your sources and your analysis of the text, **draw a conclusion** about how the author's use of this word helped him / her communicate a theme or idea.

Your finished essay should put all of these steps together, articulate a clear **thesis**, and support its argument with careful analysis of the text. The text you've chosen and the definitions you use must be cited correctly in-text and in a Works Cited page at the end of the paper in MLA format. Length: approximately 1000 words (4 pages)

Paper 2: Early American Genres

Early American literature influenced later American literature; it gave us many of the genres we recognize in fiction and other storytelling media today.

Choose one of the texts we've read so far this semester. Once you've made your choice, write a paper in which you do the following:

1. After carefully rereading the text, discern which contemporary literary genre(s) this text could be connected to.
2. Choose an example of a contemporary literary text (or TV show, or film, etc.) that fits the genre you identified and which you think is connected to your early American text.
3. Starting with a strong thesis and supporting your argument with clear evidence from both texts, persuade the reader that #1 and #2 are true.
4. So what? As you brainstorm, write, and conclude, consider why it's important (or at least interesting, which is itself a reason) to think about the connections between these genres and texts.

Your paper should be in 12pt Times New Roman font, at least 4 pages in length, and include a Works Cited page in MLA format.

Research Paper:

Your culminating project for the course will be a 9-10 page research paper. We will take time in class to discuss the paper's guidelines, and to explore the resources you have available to you through MBU's library databases and the MOBIUS catalogue.

Your paper must:

- **Consider at least three (3) texts.** These can be 3+ texts by different authors whose work shares a theme or responds to a similar issue, OR 3+ texts by the same author.
- Of these 3+ texts, at least one must be a work we did not read in class. For example, you might do a paper on Hawthorne and examine *The House of the Seven Gables*, *The Scarlet Letter*, and the short story “Young Goodman Brown,” though we did not read the last two in class.
- **Cite at least 4 scholarly sources** (not including the literary texts under consideration) in-text and in a Works Cited page using MLA format.
- Craft a clear thesis that incorporates and builds on the analyses of the scholars cited in the paper.
- Be 9-10 pages in length (not including the Works Cited page).

Exams:

You will be taking a midterm and a final. Exams will be a combination of short, objective questions, such as character identification or plot details; short answer questions requiring detailed and well-developed paragraphs in response; and essay questions requiring you to write a more lengthy and developed response connecting more than one text to a larger idea or theme.

Participation:

As a visible sign of your participation, come to each class prepared with **two significant quotes or passages** from the day’s reading. You may type these up / write them out—that will help you process and remember them, too. You may also highlight them in your text and bookmark the page. During class, you should be prepared to read and discuss at least one of the passages you chose—be ready to explain **why** the passages are significant.

Including, and beyond, this daily assignment, it is crucial that you interact with and thoughtfully consider each of these texts. Class discussions help foster learning and understanding for yourself and your classmates. Therefore, please come prepared and willing to discuss the texts. Talking in class can seem awkward and difficult at first, but I encourage you to step out of your comfort zones and really engage in the conversation. I want to hear you articulate what and how you are thinking about these texts and the issues they raise, and to engage with one another about these issues. The class, and the works themselves, will be so much more interesting to you if you do. The participation grade will be weighed partially by attendance and partially by frequency of participation, but primarily by the content and depth of your participation.

READING SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to change.

Day	Date	Reading	Assignments Due
1	8/22	Introduction to the Course, review Syllabus	
2	8/24	Native American oral literature, pp. 29-57	
3	8/26	Writings of Christopher Columbus, pp. 58-66 Writings of Bartolome de las Casas, pp. 66-71 Writings of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, pp. 71-79	
4	8/29	Early European Accounts of Native America, pp. 80-110	
5	8/31	William Bradford, "Of Plymouth Plantation," pp. 129-148, 150-154	
6	9/02	William Bradford, "Of Plymouth Plantation," pp. 154-159, 162-167 Anne Bradstreet, introduction, pp. 217-219; "To My Dear and Loving Husband," 237; "Before the Birth of One of Her Children," pp. 236-7; "Upon the Burning of Our House," pp. 243	
	9/05	NO CLASS – Labor Day Holiday	
7	9/07	Michael Wigglesworth, from <i>The Day of Doom</i> , pp. 249-266	
8	9/09	Cotton Mather, "The Condition of the Captives that from Time to Time Fell into the Hands of the Indians," and "A Narrative of Hannah Dustan's Notable Deliverance from Captivity" (Canvas) Edward Taylor, "Huswifery," 308	
9	9/12	Mary Rowlandson, "A Narrative of the Captivity," pp. 267-301	
10	9/14	Jonathan Edwards: "Personal Narrative," pp. 356-368; "Sarah Edwards's Narrative," pp. 369-376	
11	9/16	Benjamin Franklin, from part two of "The Autobiography," pp. 519-530	

		Thomas Paine, from <i>The Age of Reason</i> , pp. 681-682, 695-702	
12	9/19	Thomas Jefferson, from <i>The Declaration of Independence</i> , pp. 704-710 Tracy K. Smith, “Declaration” (Canvas) <i>Constitution Illustrated</i>	
13	9/21	Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes,” pp. 770-779	
14	9/23	Olaudah Equiano, “The Interesting Narrative of the Life,” pp. 731-751	
15	9/26	Olaudah Equiano, “The Interesting Narrative of the Life,” pp. 751-769	
16	9/28	Phillis Wheatley, introduction, pp. 787-789; “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” pg. 789; “To the University of Cambridge, in New England,” pp. 790-791; Letters, pp. 798-799	
17	9/30	NO CLASS – Work on your paper!	Paper #1 Due
18	10/03	Hannah Webster Foster, <i>The Coquette</i> , pp. 841-875	
19	10/05	<i>The Coquette</i> pp. 875-901	
20	10/07	<i>The Coquette</i> pp. 901-941	
21	10/10	NO READING – Midterm Exam Review	
	10/12	NO CLASS – Assessment Day	
22	10/14	MIDTERM EXAM	
23	10/17	Charles Brockden Brown, introduction, pp. 941-943; excerpt from <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , chapters 4-5 (Canvas)	
24	10/19	Excerpt from <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , chapters 6-8 (Canvas)	

	10/2 1	NO CLASS – Fall Break	
25	10/2 4	Washington Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” pp. 41-62	
26	10/2 6	Edgar Allen Poe: bio, pp. 604-608; “; “The Fall of the House of Usher,” pp. 629-642; from “The Poetic Principle,” pp. 710-711	
27	10/2 8	Catherine Maria Sedgwick, from <i>Hope Leslie</i> , pp. 86-106	Paper #2 Due
28	10/3 1	Hawthorne, <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> chps. 1-5	
29	11/0 2	<i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> chps. 6-9	
30	11/0 4	<i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> chps. 10-13	
31	11/0 7	<i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> chps. 14-18	
32	11/0 9	<i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> chps. 19-21	
33	11/1 1	Ralph Waldo Emerson: “The Divinity School Address,” pp. 223-236	
34	11/1 4	Henry David Thoreau, bio pp. 950-952; “Resistance to Civil Government,” pp. 953-968; from <i>Walden</i> chp. 1, “Economy,” pp. 970-977	
35	11/1 6	Walt Whitman: Preface to <i>Leaves of Grass</i> , pp. 1297-1311; “Shut Not Your Doors,” pg. 1312	
36	11/1 8	Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself,” pp. 1312-1356	
37	11/2 1	NO READING Class discussion of research plans	Plans for Paper Due 11:59pm
	11/2 3	NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break	
	11/2 5		

38	11/28	Harriet Jacobs, from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , pp. 909-931	
39	11/30	Frederick Douglass, appendix to <i>Narrative of the Life</i> , pp. 1224-1228; excerpt from “My Bondage and My Freedom,” pp. 1229-1236	
40	12/02	Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”, pp. 1236-1239	
41	12/05	Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno,” pp. 1511-1541	
42	12/07	“Benito Cereno,” pp. 1541-1568	
43	12/09	Emily Dickinson, selected poems **Of the Dickinson poems in the anthology, choose five and come to the discussion ready to talk about your chosen poems, why you chose them, and how you interpret them.	
44	12/12	Last Discussion Day: wrap-up and review	Research Paper Due
	12/16	Final Exam 2-4pm	

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to the syllabus at any time during the semester. In case a change is made, an announcement regarding the change will be made during class hour.