

ATTACHMENT A

Open Early American Literature Syllabus

Course Description

This class assumes the difficult task of covering the four centuries of literary history typically referred to as “early American.” As “America” was transformed from British colonies to a liberal democracy, from a country of farmers and frontiersmen into an industrialized economic and military power, its print culture played an important role by expanding the reading public and creating the definition of the nation. Our course will pay special attention to the role of print in politics, navigating the representative texts of dissent and rebellion in the national literature that stretched from the social scenes of puritanical authority and revivalist fervor, military expansion and indigenous rights, and slavery, reconstruction and violence against African Americans to the advance of women’s rights and suffrage and a peek into the Gilded Age struggles between labor and capital.

Course Objectives

- To become familiar with literary, historical, and philosophical movements in America from 1492-1900
- To evaluate key culture studies concepts, including: gender, race, class, nationality, genre, and context.
- To engage in debates about the construction of American literary history.
- To become more reflective, lucid and engaged readers, orators and writers.
- To engage in the professional scholarly process of researching and writing a critical essay.
- To engage in the scholarly process of editing a literary anthology.
- To appreciate the value of a liberal arts education and its applications in the public sphere.

Course Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Analyze and discuss cultural criticism and literary texts using appropriate terminology across a range of media, including written, oral, and digital modes;
- Illustrate knowledge of some of the major texts and traditions of early American literary history through class discussion, formal writing, and digital research;
- Compose critical analyses of literature, including short responses and formal essays, which demonstrate proficiency with MLA citation style;
- Discover and evaluate secondary sources using library and internet databases and integrate these sources into written and oral interpretations;
- Cultivate and maintain a collegial atmosphere—in the classroom and on the web—while exchanging critical ideas and opinions with instructors and colleagues;
- Display effective pedagogical and leadership skills through the design and execution of class presentations;
- Exhibit awareness of U.S. geopolitical history, and understand and critique complex systems of power through in-class responses;
- Develop and execute guidelines for a fair and useful self-evaluation, and for the assessment of peers, instructors, and the course in general;

- Show an appreciation of the arts and humanities by linking the aesthetic with other modes of political communication in written assignments and class discussions;
- Demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of human diversity as expressed in cultures other than one's own through the extensive reading of texts, authors, genres and styles of writing by men and women, Europeans, Africans, and Native Americans in and about America from 1492-1900.

Books:

The Open Education Anthology of Earlier American Literature. Edited by all of us.

Schedule of Assignments

Contact and Creation

Monday August 29:

Class: Introductions

Wednesday August 31:

Readings: Genesis: Books 1-3 (KJV); Native American and Ethnographic Texts: Introduction, "Of the Girl who married Mount Katahdin" (Penobscot)

Friday September 2:

Class: Taking notes: annotations and keywords

Readings: Christopher Columbus, Introduction and "Journal of the First Voyage to America, 1492-1493"; Papal Bull, "Inter caetera"

Monday September 5: *LABOR DAY*

Colonial America

Wednesday September 7:

Readings: William Bradford: anthology selections;

Friday September 9:

Readings: Roger Williams, "A Letter to the Town of Providence"

Monday September 12:

Readings: Cotton Mather, "Wonders of the Invisible World: The Author's Defence"; Anne Bradstreet, "Introduction," "The Flesh and the Spirit"

Wednesday September 14:

Readings: Mary Rowlandson, anthology selections

Friday September 16:

Readings: Jonathan Edwards, Introduction and "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Reason and Revolution

Monday September 19:

Readings: Ben Franklin, from *Autobiography*

Wednesday September 21:

Readings: Thomas Paine, Short Video, Introduction, *Common Sense* (Excerpt)

Friday September 23:

Readings: Thomas Jefferson, Introduction and “Notes on the State of Virginia”; Prince Hall, Introduction and “A Charge Delivered to the African Lodge”

New Nation

Monday September 26:

Readings: Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”

Wednesday September 28:

Readings: Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*: Volume I and II

Friday September 30:

Readings: James Fenimore Cooper, Chapter 3 from *Last of the Mohicans*

Monday October 3:

Readings: William Apess, “Indian’s Looking Glass for the White Man”

Wednesday October 5:

Readings: Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”; John L. O’Sullivan, “The Great Nation of Futurity”

Friday October 7:

Readings: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Introduction and “Young Goodman Brown”

Romanticism, Renaissance and Reform

Monday October 10:

Readings: Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature”

Wednesday October 12:

Readings: Edgar Allen Poe, Introduction and “The Raven”; Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Poet”

Friday October 14:

Readings: William Cullen Bryant, “Thanatopsis”

Monday, October 17: Fall Recess

Wednesday October 19:

Readings: Emily Dickinson, “My Life had stood - a Loaded Gun,” “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”

Friday October 21:

Readings: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”

Slavery and Resistance

Monday October 24:

Readings: Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government”;

Wednesday October 26:

Readings: Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*

Friday October 28:

Readings: Frederick Douglass, from *Narrative of the Life*

Monday October 31:

Readings: Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno”

Wednesday November 2:

Readings: Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, “Eliza Harris”; Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Addresses”; The Fourteenth Amendment

Friday November 4:

Readings: Rebecca Harding Davis, “Life in the Iron Mills”

Anthologies

Monday November 7:

Class: Open Educational Resources and Pressbooks

Readings: Robin DeRosa, “My Open Textbook: Pedagogy and Practice”

Wednesday November 9:

Class: Literature anthologies: editing selections

Friday November 11:

Class: Literature anthologies: writing introductions

Projects

Monday November 14:

Class: Group proposals

Reading: Group proposals

Wednesday November 16:

Class: Research

Friday November 18:

Class: Research

Monday November 21:

Class: Developing supplementary materials

Wednesday November 23: *Thanksgiving Recess*

Friday November 25: *Thanksgiving Recess*

Monday November 28:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

Wednesday November 30:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

Friday December 2:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

Monday December 5:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

Wednesday December 7:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

Friday December 9:

Class: Group presentations

Reading: Group materials

FINAL EXAM: Monday December 12

Assignments

We have a busy and rewarding semester in front of us. The course will require intensive reading of both primary and secondary texts, active class participation, regular writing tasks, group presentations, and a final collaborative project. The website will act as the hub of all course-related traffic. It contains the syllabus, schedule, readings, and a wealth of secondary source information. All assignments will be

posted there with descriptions, rubrics, and due dates. As an overview, the following are thumbnail assignment descriptions:

Homework and Participation (50% of the final grade)

Our course will be guided by collective participation and dialogue, not me lecturing. Participation means attending class prepared. To be ready for the seminar you must read the assigned texts, videos, or images completely, carefully, and critically. Take notes, develop questions, and select passages for discussion.

In-class writing: Each student will be required to keep a record of notes in the form of live annotations, Google Doc notes, Tweets, or on handwritten notecards. Students will also write entrance and exit tickets in the final minutes of each class. Students will evaluate their own notes by survey at the end of the term.

Reading Guides: Over the course of the semester, students are required to complete reading engagement worksheets for homework. These are designed to guide the classroom discussion.

Midterm evaluation: Short answer survey.

Final evaluation: Critical reflection on the course.

Writing Assignments (20%)

Critical Analysis: Write a 2-page (1000 word) essay comparing 2-3 texts.

Group Projects (30%)

Anthology Edition: Groups of three to four students will contribute a new chapter to the Open Early American Literature Anthology using Pressbooks. This collaborative contribution to public knowledge will include selecting and editing an “Early American” text and creating various “paratextual” materials like an author biography, textual introduction, and multimedia supplementary materials. Groups will negotiate a contract with the instructor that addresses the scope of the project, the group members’ roles and workload, and methods for evaluation and grading.

Group Presentation: Groups of three to four students will design a classroom lesson based on the text they have elected to edit for the anthology.