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English 360  
Spring 2008  
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American Literature Survey: Beginnings to 1865

***Texts:***

*The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volumes A & B, Seventh Edition.*

***Course Description:***

This course is a survey of literary production in the U.S. from its beginnings (exactly what constitutes the “beginning” of American Literature is under debate), through the end of the U.S. Civil War in 1865. Major literary periods that will be studied thus include the Colonial Period (historically, the period before the American Revolutionary War); the eighteenth century, or the “Age of Enlightenment” as it is called; and the American Romantic period, or the American Renaissance (1800-1865). In addition to surveying the major characteristics of each period or movements, we will study the continuities between them, the influence of writer upon writer, and the origin and development of various genres in American literature (the novel, the short story, the slave narrative, poetry, the prose essay). Credit hours: 3.

***Course Objectives:***

This course has several primary objectives:

- 1) To broaden students’ understanding and appreciation of the intellectual activity we call literature.
- 2) To develop specific skills and competencies needed by professionals in the field.
- 3) To strengthen critical and analytical reading skills, and oral and written expression.
- 4) To increase factual knowledge of American literature of this period.

***Class Policies and Requirements:***

1) **Attendance** is required in this class (please refer also to university attendance policies). You are allowed 3 absences in the class without penalty. These absences may be excused or unexcused; I do not need to know the circumstances. After 3 absences, additional absences will affect your final grade. **With more than 8 absences, you may fail the class.**

**If you arrive in class after I have called roll, it is your responsibility to ensure that I do not have you marked absent.** Please see me at the end of the class for this.

2) **Tardiness** sometimes becomes an issue in classes. Please be aware that consistent tardiness is disrespectful both to the professor and to your fellow classmates, as it is disruptive. **Should tardiness become an issue in the class, I will count tardy arrivals as absences.**

3) This course is **unplugged**. No electronic devices, please.

4) **Exams and papers.** You will take **three exams and write one paper** for this course. The exams will be short answer and essay. The paper will be 4 pages long, or approximately 1200 words. Your final grade will be composed of a straight average of these 4 grades.

5) In order to **make up an exam without penalty**, you must present documentation of the reason for your absence, such as a doctor's note. Otherwise, your grade will be penalized one-half to one full letter grade, according to the circumstances.

6) **Papers** are due at the beginning of class on the due date. If they are not turned in at that time, they will be considered **late**. Late papers will be penalized one-half letter grade or more, according to the circumstances (that is, how late they are), **unless** you have obtained an extension from me beforehand.

7) **Extensions on papers** may be granted in case of true emergency, such as illness, or family emergency. If you suspect that you may need an extension, **do not wait till the last minute to talk to me about it**. The sooner, the better.

8) **Plagiarism** is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own. It can take many forms, such as turning in another person's work as your own, copying from someone else's test or paper, or lifting too exactly from sources when you are doing research. It is a particularly serious academic offense, because it amounts to academic theft. **Plagiarism can result in failure of the assignment or the course.**

***Assignments:***

Jan. 17: Introduction to the course; review of policies; assignment

***Literature to 1700: The Literature of Discovery and of Colonial America***

Jan. 22: Thomas Harriot: from *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*

William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, pp. 105-116

Jan. 24: Bradford, p. 116-126  
Intro: Bradstreet

Jan. 29: Anne Bradstreet, “The Prologue,” “The Author to Her Book,” “Before the Birth of one of Her Children,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “A Letter to Husband”

Jan. 31: Edward Taylor, from *Preparatory Meditations*, Meditation #8, “Huswifery,” “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold”  
Intro: Rowlandson

Feb. 5: Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, pp. 308-323, 332-340.

***1700-1800: The Age of Enlightenment***

Feb. 7: Ben Franklin, from *The Autobiography*, 472-488  
Crèvecoeur, from *Letters from an American Farmer*,  
Letter III: What Is An American?

Feb. 12: Crèvecoeur, Letter IX. Description of Charles-Town  
Native American writers and speakers:  
Samson Occom  
Red Jacket  
Tecumseh

Feb. 14: Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”  
“To the University of Cambridge, in New England”  
**Review for exam.**

Feb. 19: **Exam 1.**

Feb. 21: Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*,”

Feb. 26: Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*

Feb. 28: *Charlotte Temple*

***1800-1865: The American Renaissance, or the American Romantic Period***

Mar. 4: Washington Irving, “Rip Van Winkle”  
Intro., Edgar Allan Poe

Mar. 6: “The Fall of the House of Usher,” “The Tell-Tale Heart”

**Mar. 10-14: Spring Break**

Mar. 18: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*  
(Please read 6 chapters per class period)

Mar. 20: *The Scarlet Letter*

Mar. 25: *The Scarlet Letter*

Mar. 27: *The Scarlet Letter*

Apr. 1: **Review for exam.**

Apr. 3: **Exam 2.**

Apr. 8: Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance"

Apr. 10: Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government"

Apr. 15: Video: Frederick Douglass  
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Apr. 17: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Apr. 22: Herman Melville, "Bartleby the Scrivener"

Apr. 24: Walt Whitman, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking"

Apr. 29: Whitman, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"  
"Vigil Strange"

May 1: Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills"

May 6: Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills"

May 8: **Last class day.**  
**Review.**

## May 10-15: **Final Exams**

### **University Policies:**

**1. Student evaluations.** Each student will be asked to evaluate the course at the end of the semester.

### **2. Student Absences on Religious Holy Days**

Section 51.911b of the Texas Education Code requires that an institution of higher education excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. University policy 86101 provides the procedures to be followed by the student and instructor. Students desiring to absent themselves from a scheduled class in order to observe a religious holy day shall present to each instructor a written statement concerning the religious holy day. The instructor will complete a form notifying the student of a reasonable timeframe in which the missed assignments and/or examinations are to be completed.

“Religious holy day” means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property taxation under Section 11.20, Tax Code.

### **3 Americans with Disabilities Act.**

It is the policy of SHSU that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination.

SHSU adheres to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have a disability that may affect adversely your work in this class, I encourage you to register with the “SHSU Counseling Center and to talk with me about how I can best help you. All disclosure of disabilities will be kept strictly confidential. **Please note:** No accommodation can be made until the student registers with the Counseling Center.