

English 241.002: American Literature I  
TR 10:00-11:15 (CRN 11217)  
102 Chitwood Hall  
Spring 2013

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### Course Description

This course is a survey of American literature from its beginnings to 1865. The readings will highlight the ways in which particular views of early America are formed through literature, especially how conflicts between different cultures and ways of life affected the formation of “American” identity. Our studies will involve ideas of nation-building, cultural encounters, race, citizenship, theology, and politics. We will study a wide variety of genres such as fiction, poetry, essays, speeches, and journals, focusing on how genres are formed and function within particular historical and social contexts. The texts we read will be traditional as well as nontraditional; the authors will include explorers, ministers, politicians, housewives, journalists, Native American chiefs, and slaves. We will study the American frontier as a site of cultural conflict. We will also discuss the separation between the public and the private spheres, focusing on the formation of American ideals in the courthouse as well as the domestic space.

### Course Goals

- ❖ Learn how to read literature critically and respond actively
- ❖ Develop intelligent and thoughtful questions and comments based on your reading
- ❖ Gain the ability to construct an original argument or thesis with support
- ❖ Understand the ways that genres develop in response to social contexts
- ❖ Gain an understanding of the ways gender, class, race, and culture contributed to the development of American ideals

### Preparation and Reading

Because this is a survey of literature course, you will have reading assigned for homework nearly every day. The readings are not optional, and to ensure that you are reading you will be quizzed and asked to respond to the readings regularly. You should read critically and actively, marking important passages and developing questions and comments to share in class. A large part of this class is based on class discussion and exploration, which cannot happen if students are not reading actively. Make sure you bring your book to class everyday.

### Required Texts

\*Baym, Nina ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature. Shorter 8<sup>th</sup> edition. volume 1.* ISBN: 9780393918861

\*Brown, Charles Brockden. *Wieland and Memoirs of Carvin the Biloquist. A Norton Critical Edition.* ISBN: 9780393932539

\*Mandatory readings will periodically be posted on Ecampus.

### Policies and Procedures

*Attendance:* I will keep track of daily attendance. You have four free absences—I don’t need to know where you were. At five absences you will lose participation points and **at six absences you will fail the course.** If there is a legitimate emergency please see me or email me before the start of class that day to receive an excused absence. Three tardes will result in an absence. If you arrive late to class after I have taken attendance you have already been marked absent and you must see me after class so I can mark you tardee. However, if you are 15 or more minutes late to class you will be marked absent for that day. If you leave class early you will also be marked absent. **Finally, you are responsible for**

**any work assigned/turned in on the days you are absent, as well as for finding out what deviations from the syllabus we may have taken.**

*Personal technology policy:* The use of cell phones, IPODs, headphones, and other electronic devices is prohibited during class time. You must have cell phones silenced and all devices put away. If I see you with a device out during class time, expect a significant drop in your participation grade. If you have any devices out during a quiz or exam, you will receive an “F” on that assignment.

*Personal Issues:* If you have any disabilities that may impact your performance in this class, please speak to me within the first week of classes. Also, contact the WVU Office of Disability Services at G-30 Mountainlair. Phone: (304) 293-6700 Voice/TDD: (304) 293-7740 Email: [access2@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:access2@mail.wvu.edu)

*Social Justice Policy:* In class discussion, please remember to be sensitive and to respect the various viewpoints of your peers and offer your own views respectfully. We may be discussing controversial subjects in this class, and it is important that we maintain an atmosphere of respect and openness. If you are uncomfortable at any time with topics of class discussion, please see me privately.

*Student Athletes:* If you participate in a university-sponsored sport that will cause you to miss this class, please speak to me during the first week of classes. You must also provide me with a schedule from your supervisor.

*Office Hours:* I encourage you to come see me during my scheduled office hours if you have any questions or concerns about the course. I will hold office hours on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 1:00-2:30 in G25 Colson Hall at the downtown campus. If possible, let me know ahead of time approximately when you are planning to come in. If you want to meet with me but cannot come during my office hours, either see me after class or email me to set up an appointment.

### **Standard of Work**

All of the writing you turn in for this course, whether it be reading responses, quizzes, or essay exams, should reflect college-level work. Students should be sure that the content is appropriate and that they employ grammatically correct standard written English. For questions on syntax, punctuation, and grammar, refer to the *Easy Writer* handbook or visit the Writing Center.

### **Academic Dishonesty**

I take this very seriously, and if you are caught plagiarizing on a writing assignment or cheating on a quiz/exam the lightest penalty you can expect is a zero on the assignment. Depending on the severity of the offense you could also fail the course. You will be referred to my supervisor and the Student Judicial Affairs office. You can find the WVU Academic Integrity Statement on the website of the Office of Student Judicial Affairs.

### **Response and Evaluation**

*Discussion Question:* To ensure that you are doing the readings, you will be required to submit a substantial thematic discussion question on the class’s Google Groups message board by 8:00 pm on Monday evenings before class on Tuesday. You may post your own question about the literature, or you may respond to a question someone else has posted. I will provide sample questions to get you started. You will receive either full credit or no credit for the question/response. If you submit a 3-4-sentence question/response that demonstrates active engagement with the readings you will receive full credit. If you fail to submit the question or your question suggests that you have not read thoroughly (yes/no question, one-word or simple answer) you will receive no credit.

*Quizzes:* On every other Thursday we will have a quiz on material covered that week. These are to assure that you are reading and understanding the material. The content will be based on the readings as well as themes and concepts we discuss in class. This means that you should be taking notes daily in class, and if you are absent you will need to contact me or another student to find out what you missed. You will not be able to make quizzes up if you are absent, but I will drop the lowest quiz grade at the end of the semester. **Note: If I notice that students are not participating in class I assume they are not reading, and I reserve the right to give unannounced reading quizzes as necessary in addition to the scheduled quizzes.**

*Participation:* Your participation grade will be based on whether you arrive to class on time, participate regularly, and demonstrate active engagement in reading and writing assignments. This is a discussion-based class that requires active participation. To receive full credit for participation, you must participate regularly (at least once a week). Any group work we do throughout the semester will also be included in your participation grade. Your participation grade will drop one full letter if I see you with a cell phone or other device out during class time.

*Written Responses:* I will assign 4 written responses to be submitted on Ecampus. For each one you will be required to develop an original argument or thesis and provide several supporting examples from the literature. These should be 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages long and should respond to a piece of literature we read that week. You can incorporate ideas we discussed in class, but you must add original ideas as well. If you turn in a response 1 class period late, you will receive half credit. Beyond that, it will be a zero.

*Exams 1 and 2:* Exam 1 will be taken in class, and exam 2 will be one part in class and one part take-home. Together, they are worth 50% of your final grade in the course. We will have review sessions preceding each exam. The exams will be a combination of passage identification and essay questions. Any material that we discuss in class is fair game for the exams, so make sure you take good notes on the concepts, terms, and readings that we cover in class. You must be in class on exam days. **There will be no make-up exams given except in emergency situations (death in the family, serious illness). In these cases you must contact me before the exam is administered in class.**

*Grade breakdown:*

Discussion Questions	10%
Quizzes	10%
Participation	10%
Written Responses (4)	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	30%

93-100 A	80-82 B
90-92 A-	77-79 C+
87-89 B+	70-76 C
83-86 B	63-69 D
	0-62 F

Course Schedule  
(Subject to change as needed)

<b>Unit 1</b>	<b>Beginnings to 1700: Voyages of Discovery</b>  <i>"I had often before this said that if the Indians should come, I should choose rather to be killed by them than taken alive, but when it came to that trial my mind changed..." –Mary Rowlandson (1682)</i>
Tues. Jan. 15	Introductions, syllabus, course goals, course themes
Thurs. Jan. 17	Introduction p. 3-17: Introduction to Unit 1, developing original responses and questions <b>*Meet in library room 104</b>
Tues. Jan. 22	Iroquois Creation Story p. 20-23, handout: Oral tradition, creation stories, history vs. myth <b>Preliminary writing assignment due on Ecampus, Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. Jan. 24	Columbus and De Vaca p. 24-38, handout: Discovery and colonization, <b>Quiz 1</b>
Tues. Jan. 29	Bradford "Of Plymouth Plantation" p. 72-90, Winthrop "A Model of Christian Charity" p. 90-102 <b>Response 1 due on Ecampus</b>
Thurs. Jan. 31	Bradstreet p. 110, 119-123: American poetics by women
Tues. Feb. 5	Rowlandson p. 126-143, handout: Captivity narrative <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. Feb. 7	Mather "The Wonders of the Invisible World" p. 149-155: Witchcraft trials, <b>Quiz 2</b> Video: "The Church and the State" <b>*Meet in library room 104</b>

<b>Unit II</b>	<b>1700-1820: Founding a Nation</b>  <i>“These are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.” –Thomas Paine (1776)</i>
Tues. Feb. 12	Introduction p. 157-167, Jonathan and Sarah Edwards p. 177-178, 189-196, 209-220 <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. Feb. 14	Franklin “The Way to Wealth” p.234-242, De Crevecoeur “Letters from an American Farmer” p. 308-323
Tues. Feb. 19	Paine “Common Sense” p. 323-336, Jefferson p. 337-344 <b>Response 2 due on Ecampus</b> Video: “Paine and Religious Skepticism” <b>*Meet in library room 104</b>
Thurs. Feb. 21	Wheatley p. 401-403, poems p. 405-411, <b>Quiz 3</b>
Tues. Feb. 26	Review for Exam 1
Thurs. Feb. 28	<b>Exam 1</b> (Mid-semester)
Tues. March 5	Preface to <i>Wieland</i> p. vii-x, Sources and contexts p. 266-270, 282-290, Brown <i>Wieland</i> p. 7-58 <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. March 7	<i>Wieland</i> p. 59-110, <b>Quiz 4</b>
Tues. March 12	<i>Wieland</i> p. 111-159 <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 Monday</b>
Thurs. March 14	<i>Wieland</i> p. 160-181, Critical readings: Schmidt p. 457-470, Korobkin p. 470-488
<b>Unit III</b>	<b>1820-1865: Renaissance, Reform, and Conflict</b>  <i>“What to the American slave is your Fourth of July? I answer, a day that reveals to him, more than all the other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim.” –Frederick Douglass (1852)</i>
Tues. March 19	Introduction p. 445-463, Irving p. 467-468, “Rip Van Winkle” p. 470-482 <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. March 21	Hawthorne p. 603-606, p. 619-628 “Young Goodman Brown” and Poe p. 683-687, p. 718-724 “The Black Cat” <b>Quiz 5</b> (Last day to drop a class—Friday, March 22)
March 23-31 Spring Break	No Class
Tues. April 2	Emerson p. 505-508, “Self-Reliance” p. 549-566 and Thoreau p. 839-842, <i>Walden</i> p. 901-916 Video: “The American Transcendentalists” <b>*Meet in library room 104</b> <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. April 4	Class Cancelled
Tues. April 9	Fuller “The Great Lawsuit” p. 749-760 <b>Response 3 due on Ecampus</b>
Thurs. April 11	Lincoln speeches p. 745-749, “Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature” p. 761-778 <b>Quiz 6</b>
Tues. April 16	Whitman p. 1005-1009, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” p. 1069-1073, “The Wound-Dresser” p. 1080-1082, “When Lilacs...” p. 1082-1088 Video: Whitman and War <b>*Meet in library room 104</b> <b>Discussion question due by 8:00 pm Monday</b>
Thurs. April 18	Jacobs “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” p. 818-839 and Douglass p. 934-938, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” p. 1002-1005
Tues. April 23	Melville “Bartleby the Scrivener” p. 1099-1128 <b>Response 4 due on Ecampus</b>
Thurs. April 25	Dickinson p. 1189-1193, poems 236, 409, 448, 479, 620, 764 <b>Quiz 7</b>
Tues. April 30	Review
Thurs. May 2	<b>Exam 2 part 1</b> (Last day to withdraw from University)

**Exam 2 part 2 due Tues. May 7 by 8:00 pm on Ecampus**