

English 241 Survey of American Literature:
Beginnings to the Civil War

Clark 317

12:30-1:30 p.m.

Instructor: Jericho Williams

Jwilli94@mix.wvu.edu

Office: Colson 307

Office Hours: 1:00-2:00 p.m. MWF

English Major Program Goals

Upon completing a B.A. in English, a student should be able to:

1. Interpret texts within diverse literary, cultural, and historical contexts.
2. Demonstrate a general knowledge of the social and structural aspects of the English language.
3. Demonstrate a range of contextually effective writing strategies.

Four aspects of Goal 1 are especially important. A student should be able to:

- Identify genre conventions and analyze their effects.
- Identify and analyze effects of complexity or ambiguity.
- Locate texts in social, economic, political, and literary history.
- Connect a text to other literary or cultural texts.

Brief Course Description: We will be reading selections of writing about the Americas and especially what became the United States, at first by Native Americans and Europeans, and later in the semester by all sorts of people who called themselves “Americans.”

Texts:

- *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Vols. A and B, 8th Edition
- Solomon Northup, *12 Years a Slave* (Penguin)
- Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Blithedale Romance* (Dover)

Course requirements:	Class Participation	20%
	Quizzes	20%
	Group Project Presentation	20%
	Midterm Exam	20%
	Final Exam	20%

Participation: includes all of the following: asking questions, answering questions, and generally being a good classroom citizen (listening to other students, helping the discussion stay on track with shared interests, not taking more than one’s share of class time). If you have a problem speaking out in class, talk to me early in the semester and I will make some suggestions. All of this depends upon active reading and preparation before coming to class.

Quizzes: Nearly every day, we will have reading quizzes. These will always occur at the beginning of class.

Group Project: You will be working with one or two of your classmates in a short research project about American life before the Civil War. More information will be forthcoming.

Mid-Term and Final Exam:

You will write in-class essays twice, once for your mid-term exam and once for your final exam.

Course Readings through February

Jan 8 Key discussion terms: *literature* and *survey*; syllabus and course goals

Volume A

- 10 F *Native American Creation Stories and Trickster Tales*: Iroquois and Navajo creation stories (pp. 21-34); Native American trickster tales (100-120)
- 13 M *The Spanish Invasion*: “Introduction: Beginnings to 1700” (3-20); Christopher Columbus, Bartolome de las Casas, Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, Hernan Cortes (34-51)
- 15 W *The Puritan Experiment*: William Bradford (121-122, 131-155); Thomas Morton (157-165)
- 17 F *The First Published American Poet*: Anne Bradstreet (207-209, 222-234)
- 22 W *The Captivity Narrative*: Mary Rowlandson (256-288)
- 24 F *American Literature 1700-1820* and *What is an American?*: “American Literature 1700-1820” (365-378) and Hector St. John de Crevecoeur (604-625)
- 27 M *The Renaissance Man*: Benjamin Franklin (455-480)
- 29 W *Early American Drama*: Royall Tyler (775-816)
- 31 F *Early American Drama Continued*: Royall Tyler (775-816)
- Feb 3 M *Origins of American Horror*: Charles Brockden Brown (916-949)

Volume B

- 5 W *Celebrity Author*: Washington Irving (25-61)
- 7 F *19th Century Poets Pt 1*: Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney (106-120); William Cullen Bryant (121-128); Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (596-607)
- 10 Native American Writing: Jane Johnston Schoolcraft (160-166) and Removal and Resistance (349-368)
- 12 *Pioneer Perspectives*: James Fenimore Cooper (62-85) and Caroline Stansbury Kirkland (167-179)
- 14 Ralph Waldo Emerson (243-268): “The American Scholar” and “The Divinity Address”
- 17 Ralph Waldo Emerson (269-285; 310-325): “Self-Reliance” and “Experience”
- 19 Henry David Thoreau (pages TBA)
- 21 Lydia Maria Child (180-210)
- 24 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, chapters 1-11
- 26 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, chapters 12-20
- 28 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*, chapters 21-end

March 3 Group Project Presentations

5 Group Project Presentations

7 Mid-Term Exam

Mid-term grades due

17 Group Project Presentations

19 *Poe and Detective Fiction: (681-686; 701-13) “William Wilson” and “The Purloined Letter”*

21 *Poe and Horror: (644-653; 695-700) “Ligeia” and “The Black Cat”*

24 Fanny Fern (905-919)

26 Emily Dickinson (1659-1682)

28 Emily Dickinson (1682-1704)

31 Walt Whitman (1314-1328)

April 2 Rebecca Harding Davis (1705-1719)

4 Rebecca Harding Davis (1719-1732)

7 Herman Melville (1483-1508) “Bartleby the Scrivener”

9 Herman Melville, (1440-1482) *Moby-Dick*

11 Solomon Northup, *12 Years a Slave*

14 Solomon Northup, *12 Years a Slave*

16 Solomon Northup, *12 Years a Slave*

18 Solomon Northup, *12 Years a Slave*

21 Group Project Presentations

23 Group Project Presentations

25 Final Exam Review

Final Exam TBA