

ENGL 241: American Literature 1, beginnings to the mid-19th century
8:30-9:20 MWF 202 Hodges
Dr. Timothy Sweet
Office 213 Colson – Hours 9:30-10:30 MWF or by appointment
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Overview

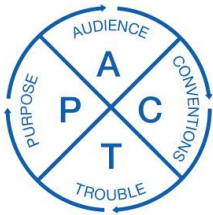
We'll approach early American literature through its various genres. We'll ask who gains voice in each genre, how, and to what ends. American literature from its beginnings *circa* 15,000 BCE or 1492 or 1585 or 1620 (depending on how you want to date it) through the Civil War era is a vast and diverse body of material—including origin and creation stories, narratives of encounters between Europeans and Indigenous Americans, sermons, political tracts and speeches, poems, histories, autobiographies and other personal writings, scientific writing, and finally the latecomers, short stories and novels. We'll sample as much as we have time for.

We'll also explore the various reasons why people read those genres. Reading for pleasure, education, information, social or political awareness, religious devotion, personal growth, etc., early American readers read for many of the same purposes we do today.

Required text

Norton Anthology of American Literature, 9th edition, volumes A & B

Graded Work



Daily responses: cumulatively 25% of your final grade. [See the assignment sheet for details.](#)

Four exams: each worth 15%. These will be an at-home, timed essay exams, turned in to the Google classroom site.

Short paper on a poem: 10%. See the assignment sheet for details.

Poetry recitation: 5%. In-class recitation of a short poem.

Learning Outcomes

This course satisfies GEC 5 (Artistic Expression) and GEF 6 (The Arts & Creativity) in WVU's general education curriculum.

This course satisfies a Historical Breadth requirement for the English major, consistent with Program Goal 1: "A student completing a BA in English should be able to interpret texts within diverse literary, cultural, and historical contexts." Program Goal 1 has four specific learning outcomes: students should be able to

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

We will work on these outcomes throughout the semester. Exams will focus on them.

Land Acknowledgement Statement (from WVU Native American Studies program)

WVU, with its statewide institutional presence, resides on land that includes ancestral territories of the Shawnee, Lenape (Delaware), Haudenosaunee (Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida, Mohawk, Tuscarora), Cherokee, and other Indigenous peoples. In acknowledging this, we recognize and appreciate those Indigenous nations whose territories we are living on and working in. Indigenous peoples have been in the land currently known as West Virginia since time immemorial. It is important that we understand both the context that has brought our university community to reside on this land, and our place within this long history. We also recognize that colonialism is a current ongoing process, and as scholars seeking truth and understanding, we need to be mindful of our present participation in this process.

Policies

Late work. If you have to miss class for quarantine, illness, etc., you are still responsible for posting your daily homework to the Google classroom site on time and you are still responsible for turning in your exams and paper on time. Late daily homework assignments will not be accepted. If you are late turning in your exam or paper, up to 24 hours late the grade will be reduced by 25%. After 24 hours, the exam or paper will not be accepted. In cases of seriously debilitating illness, we will work together to devise a schedule for the completion of your work. Let me know as soon as possible.

Academic Standards. The WVU Catalog contains the full [Undergraduate Academic Standards Policy](#) including the academic dishonesty policy.

Inclusivity. The WVU community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. More information is available at the [WVU's Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) website (304-293-5600).

Accessibility. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the [Office of Accessibility Services](#) (304-293-6700).

Sexual Misconduct. West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [[BOG Rule 1.6](#)]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](#). If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304- 292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline). For more information, please consult [WVU's Title IX Office](#).

Mental health concerns or stressful events can adversely affect your academic performance and social relationships. WVU offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns that you may be experiencing. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus at the Carruth Center for Psychological and Psychiatric Services (CCPPS) website: <https://carruth.wvu.edu/>. If you are in need of crisis services, call the CCPPS main number 24/7: 304-293-4431. Crisis services are also available through text: Text WVU to 741741 for support 24/7 from a trained Crisis Counselor.

Schedule

1/10	M	Introduction
1/12	W	<p>Orientation, beginnings to 1820: read Introduction and Timeline, A.3-28</p> <p>Creation and origin stories “Native American Oral Literature,” A.29-30 David Cusick, “Iroquois Creation Story,” A.31-35 Irvin Morris, “Navajo Creation Story,” A.35-43 Genesis chapters 1-8 (King James translation—find this on your own)</p>
1/14	F	<p>Trickster tales Sam Blowsnake, <i>Winnebago Trickster Cycle</i>, A.43-46 Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) storyteller, “Koluskap and the Giant Skunk,” http://website.nbm-mnb.ca/Koluskap/English/Stories/story4.php</p> <p>Stories of encounter Thomas Harriot, <i>Brief and True Report of Virginia</i>, A.87-93 John Smith, <i>General History of Virginia</i> A.110-22 “Powhatan’s Discourse of Peace and War,” A.52-53</p>
1/17	M	MLK holiday
1/19	W	<p>Settler-colonial histories William Bradford, from <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i>, A.154-58 (read 129-32 first) John Winthrop, from the <i>Journal</i>, A.189-98 (read 176-78 first) Thomas Morton, <i>New English Canaan</i>, A.167-76</p>
1/21	F	<p>Poetry <i>Bay Psalm Book</i>, A.198-202 Anne Bradstreet, poems, A.217-245 (Response paragraphs: do one psalm and two poems by Bradstreet)</p>
1/24	M	<p>Poetry Michael Wigglesworth, <i>Day of Doom</i>, 249-66 Edward Taylor, “Upon Wedlock,” A.306-07 “Upon a Wasp,” A.307-08</p>
1/26	W	<p>Autobiography Mary Rowlandson, <i>Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration</i>, A.267-301</p> <p>Oratory “King Philip’s Speech,” A.54</p>
1/28	F	<p>Sermons John Winthrop, “Model of Christian Charity,” A.176-89 Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” A.390-402 (read 356-57 first) Samson Occom, “Sermon at the Execution of Moses Paul,” A.595-606 (read 585-88 first)</p>
1/31	M	<p>Ethnography Samson Occom, “Account of the Montauk Indians,” A.588-89 Hendrick Aupaumut, <i>History of the Muh-he-con-nuk Indians</i>, A.629-34 Ben Franklin, “Remarks Concerning the Savages,” A.462-66 John Heckewelder, <i>History, Manners, and Customs</i>, A.103-06 Philip Freneau, “Indian Burying Ground,” A.782-83</p>
2/2	W	Oratory

		<p>Native American Eloquence, A.985-96 Sagoyewatha, "Reply to Missionary Jacob Cram," A.436-39 (Response paragraphs: choose two texts from the Native Am Eloquence cluster and Sagoyewatha's reply)</p> <p>Review for first exam</p>
2/4	F	<p>First exam will be posted to the Google classroom site by 8:00 am. Due by 1:00pm. (At-home exam: don't come to class)</p>
2/7	M	<p>Political tracts Thomas Paine, <i>Common Sense</i>, A.681-89 Paine, <i>Crisis</i>, A.689-95 Thomas Jefferson, <i>Declaration of Independence</i>, A.702-10 <i>Federalist</i>, no. 1 and no. 10, 721-31</p>
2/9	W	<p>Essay J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i>, A.634-56</p>
2/11	F	<p>Autobiography Olaudah Equiano, <i>Interesting Narrative</i>, A.731-69</p>
2/14	M	<p><i>Interesting Narrative</i>, continued "Petition of an African Slave" https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eAU4fguwyyRTgncvg7oXW5BeqkXIBioK/view?usp=sharing</p>
2/16	W	<p>Poetry Philip Freneau, poems, A.780-87 Phillis (Wheatley) Peters, poems, A. 787-97 (Response paragraphs: do at least one poem by each poet)</p>
2/18	F	<p>Essays Ben Franklin, "Speech of Polly Baker," A.449-51 Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes," A.770-79 Murray, "Desultory Thoughts," https://openamlit.pressbooks.com/chapter/desultory-thoughts-upon-the-utility-of-encouraging-a-degree-of-self-complacency-especially-in-female-bosoms/</p> <p>Letters Abigail Adams to John Adams, March 31, 1776, A.672-73</p>
2/21	M	<p>Novel Hannah Foster, <i>The Coquette</i>, A.841-941</p>
2/23	W	<p><i>Coquette</i>, continued (Response paragraph: Write an additional comment or question beyond what you wrote for 2/21, extending class discussion)</p> <p>Review for second exam</p>
2/25	F	<p>Second exam will be posted to the Google classroom site by 8:00 am. Due by 1:00pm.</p>
2/28	M	<p>Orientation, 1820 to 1865: read Introduction and Timeline, B.3-24</p> <p>Poetry William Cullen Bryant, B.116-24</p>

		Jane Johnson Schoolcraft, B.140-43 (Response: at least one poem by each poet)
3/2	W	Poetry Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, B.571-82 Edgar Allan Poe, B.604-19 (Response: at least one poem by each poet)
3/4	F	Poetry John Greenleaf Whittier, B.583-86 (and sample some of <i>Snow-Bound</i> , 587-603) Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, B.1630-37 James Russell Lowell, “The Present Crisis,” https://poets.org/poem/present-crisis (Read about Lowell here, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/james-russell-lowell)
3/7	M	Poetry Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself,” B.1312-56 “Out of the Cradle,” 1368-73 “As I Ebb’d,” 1373-75 “Live Oak with Moss,” 1402-06
3/9	W	Poetry Emily Dickinson, poems TBA (class choice)
3/11	F	Poetry paper due by 8:00 am Poetry recitations in class
3/14-18		Spring break
3/21	M	Political protest Native Americans: Removal and Resistance, B.308-28 Short fiction Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Roger Malvin’s Burial” (Read B.328-32 in our anthology first) https://www.sas.upenn.edu/~cavitch/pdf-library/Hawthorne_RogerMalvine.pdf
3/23	W	Oratory Maria W. Stewart, “Why Sit Ye Here and Die?” https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FkmY_qKtz4ADWV6Lh0zmEKO1g9iRSdza/view?usp=sharing William Apress, “Eulogy on King Philip” (read B.124-25 first) https://umvod.wordpress.com/deliberative-topics/civil-rights/william-apess-eulogy-on-king-philip-26-january-1836/ Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” B.1236-39 (read 1159-63 first)
3/25	F	Political protest/oratory Slavery and Race cluster, B.769-91 Another version of Sojourner Truth’s 1851 speech https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZYaZ00vDnmqEP_oPnfk7xiEyMvrZS86_/view?usp=sharing Comparison of versions https://www.thesojournertruthproject.com/compare-the-speeches/ (Response: Sojourner Truth plus two others of your choice)
3/28	M	Autobiography Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative</i> , B.1159-1228
3/30	W	<i>Narrative</i> , continued

		(Response: something beyond what you wrote for 3/28, extending class discussion)
4/1	F	Reading day; class does not meet
4/4	M	Political Protest Lydia Maria Child, Letter XXIV [Women's Rights], B.166-71 Margaret Fuller, "Fourth of July," B.762-64 (read 722-25 first) Fanny Fern, newspaper columns, B.892-902 Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, <i>Declaration of Sentiments</i> , https://www.virginiamemory.com/docs/SenecaConvention_trans.pdf (Response: at most one text by Fern)
4/6	W	Novel Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , selections TBA from B.792-891
4/8	F	Third exam will be posted to the Google classroom site by 8:00 am. Due by 1:00pm.
4/11	M	Essay Lydia Maria Child, Letter XXXVI [Barnum's American Museum], B.171-77 (read 147-49 first) Science and Technology cluster, B.1268-93.
4/13	W	Essay Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature," B.178-210
4/15	F	Friday before easter recess
4/18	M	Essay/Autobiography Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> , selections TBA from B.970-1144 (read 950-52 first)
4/20	W	<i>Walden</i> excerpts continued
4/22	F	Short Fiction Edgar Allan Poe, "Masque of the Red Death," B.662-66 (read 604-08 first) Poe, "Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar," B.690-96 Herman Melville, "Bartleby," B.1469-95 (read 1410-13)
4/25	M	Short Fiction Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills," B.1696-1724
4/27	W	"Iron Mills," continued (Response: something beyond what you wrote for 4/25, extending class discussion)
4/29	F	Course evaluations Review for fourth exam

Fourth exam will be posted on the Google classroom site at the time that the final exam for this course is scheduled to begin: 5:00 pm Tuesday, May 2. Due 11:00 am Wednesday, May 3.