

English 346

Timothy Sweet, ENGL 346, Fall 2005, American Literature

Dr. Timothy Sweet

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OVERVIEW

As with the other 300-level courses in American literary history, ENGL 346 examines major authors, genres, themes, and topics. This semester, we will focus on a topic of great cultural importance during the early national and antebellum eras: economics. On the eve of the American Revolution, recent immigrant J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur asked "What is an American?" His now-classic answer to that question was formulated substantially in economic terms. We will follow out some implications of or challenges to Crèvecoeur's line of thought in major works of American literature through the antebellum era, examining how the category of "economy" organizes life in terms of class, race, gender, and place. Note: this section carries "W" credit and follows the LSP guidelines for "W" courses.

TEXTS

J Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*. Oxford 0-19-283898-9

Rebecca Harding Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills*. Bedford 0-312-13360-x

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. Bedford 0-312-25737-6

Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall*. Penguin 0-14-043640-5

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*. Penguin 0-14-039005-7

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Penguin 0-14-039003-0

Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*. Princeton 0-691-09612-0

A few short pieces on e-reserve or photocopied.

GRADED ASSIGNMENTS

Group presentation and annotated bibliography, in which you set an interesting agenda to stimulate class discussion on the assigned text. You must prepare two handouts to distribute to the class: 1. an outline of your presentation (1 p.). 2. an annotated bibliography of at least four scholarly sources on the assigned text (2+ pp.). The presentation, including handouts, will count for 10% of your final grade. All group members will receive the same grade

In-class writing, short pieces in which you explore topics arising from class discussion, or write from a prompt I'll give you, or brainstorm ideas for your longer essays, etc. The grades for these combined will count for 30% of your final grade.

Two essays incorporating scholarly sources, each 6+ pp. plus works cited page. Specific assignments for each essay will be announced (see schedule). We will take each essay through a process cycle of draft-response-revision. Each essay will count for 30% of your final grade.

COURSE POLICIES

Late work. Late assignments receive a deduction of one half of a letter grade for each class period they are late.

Absences. You are allowed two absences from regular class meetings (a week's worth of class). Your course grade will drop one half of a letter grade for each absence beyond these.

Incompletes. I do not give the grade of "Incomplete" except in extreme circumstances, and then only if a substantial portion of the semester's work has already been completed. If an emergency comes up, contact the Dean of Student Life immediately (293 5611).

Academic Dishonesty. The following definitions are from the West Virginia University Undergraduate Catalog. Please see the section on Academic Integrity/Dishonesty for the full definition and discussion of procedures.

Plagiarism. "submitting, without appropriate acknowledgment . . . material that has been knowingly obtained or copied in whole or in part, from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper."

Cheating. "doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own." Cases of academic dishonesty will result in an F for the course and appropriate academic discipline. If you have questions about how to document sources, etc., please talk to me in advance of turning in the paper.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Social Justice. West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I support that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Special needs. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with Disability Services (293-6700).

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND WORK DUE

8/23 course intro. 8/25 Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*

8/30 class meets in computer lab 240 Stansbury; *Letters*

9/1 *Letters*

9/6 Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

9/8 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

9/13 class meets in computer lab 240 Stansbury; *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

9/15 Brown, *Domestic Individualism* (e-reserve); Essay 1 assigned

9/20 Douglass, *Narrative* (1-125)

9/22 *Narrative*

9/27 Bromell, *By the Sweat of the Brow* (e-reserve); Douglass, related documents (127-71)

9/29 Fern, *Ruth Hall*

10/4 *Ruth Hall*

10/6 **draft of Essay 1 due**; in-class workshop

10/11 individual conferences on revised draft: class cancelled

10/13 individual conferences on revised draft: class cancelled

10/18 **Essay 1 due**

10/20 Hawthorne, *House of the Seven Gables*

10/25 *Gables*

10/27 e-reserve readings TBA; Essay 2 assigned

11/1 Davis, *Life in the Iron Mills* (1-74)

11/3 research day: class cancelled

11/8 *Iron Mills* cultural contexts 1 (75-202)

11/11 *Iron Mills* contexts 2 (203-91); Roediger, "White Slaves, Wage Slaves" (e-reserve)

11/15 *Iron Mills* contexts 3 (293-356)

11/17 *Iron Mills* contexts 4 (357-427)

11/22-11/25 Thanksgiving recess

11/29 Thoreau, *Walden*

12/1 *Walden*

12/6 **draft of Essay 2 due**

12/8 in-class workshop on Essay 2

Essay 2 due 11:00 Thursday, Dec. 15 in my mailbox, 231 Stansbury