

# English 646

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Timothy Sweet, ENGL 646, Spring 2004, American Literature to 1865

## ENGL 646, American Literature to 1865

Spring 2003 W 4:00-6:50 46C Stansbury

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Office Hours W 3:00-4:00 and by appointment

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**OVERVIEW.** ENGL 646 is in effect two "core" courses, covering two periods of literary history. This provides a unique opportunity to consider the emergence of "American" literature as a disciplinary object. The readings are organized as follows.

*Part I, Early.* Transnational or comparatist approaches are becoming increasingly prominent in early American studies. Recent anthologies (e.g., Blackwell, ed. Castillo and Schweitzer; Oxford, ed. Mulford et al.) provide translations of Spanish, French, and other colonial literatures from the Americas in addition to Anglophone literature. Anthology readings and selections from scholarship (e.g., reports from the May 2002 Tuscon summit of scholars of Anglo- and Ibero American colonial literatures) will enable us to reflect on current theory and practice.

*Part II, National and antebellum.* Here "American literature" still seems to be defined as "literature of the United States"—even in the expanded-canon or multicultural approaches inaugurated by the Heath Anthology (ed. Lauter, et al., 1990) and similar projects. A comparison with emergent directions in early American studies thus invites us to reflect on questions of canon formation, periodization, national identity, global engagement, and the disciplin(ing) of "American" literature.

## TEXTS

### Ordered through the book store:

Susan Castillo and Ivy Schweitzer, eds., *The Literatures of Colonial America* (Blackwell)

Peter Mancali, ed., *Envisioning America* (Bedford-St. Martin's)

James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans* (Penguin)

Seaver/Namais ed., *Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* (Oklahoma)

Jackson ed., *Black Hawk: An Autobiography* (Illinois)

Herman Melville, *Typee* (Penguin)

Herman Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (Penguin)

**Also required (find these on your own at the library, on the web, etc.):**

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* . . . (1682)

Joel Barlow, *The Vision of Columbus* (1787) or *The Columbiad* (1807)

Lenora Sansay, *Secret History*; or, *The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808)—I'll circulate this for you to photocopy

Recent scholarly articles from *Early American Literature*, *American Literary History*, *Journal of American History* (available in Wise Library or via Project Muse)

**ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING.** Your final grade will be determined from a possible total of 100 points accumulated during the semester, distributed as follows:

**Reading Reflections.** In 2-3 pp., sketch an analysis of a text in literary-historical context. Begin with a passage from one of the texts (2-3 sentences, no more); quote the passage at the top of your first page. From this passage, trace a significant theme, topic, trope, or image through the text and out to the other readings for the week; and/o to readings from other weeks; and/or to a larger literary-historical context. Use at least one scholarly source to help unpack the theme/topic/trope/image and to reflect on its significance. Make sure to document the source(s) appropriately. Be efficient: do not exceed 3 pages, double-spaced (750 words). Each reflection is worth 10 points. Five are due over the course of the semester (total = 50 points). Each reflection is due at the class meeting in which we discuss the relevant text. Late papers will not be accepted. At least one reflection must work primarily with non-Anglophone texts.

**Anthology selection plus supporting materials.** Prepare a primary text as if it were to be included an anthology such as the Castillo and Schweitzer, and provide a rationale for your choice. Components:

1. Excerpt from a pre-1800 text by an author not included in the C&S or Mancall anthologies, appropriately edited (i.e., a clean text plus any necessary footnotes, etc. Include a brief report on your source for the text.)
2. Headnote contextualizing the selection for placement in an anthology, modeled C&S's headnotes. 750 words (can be longer if necessary).
3. Rationale as to why the selection ought to be anthologized. This rationale should locate the selection within the relevant literary-historical contexts and engage with the appropriate scholarship. 5-6 pp., double-spaced, plus works cited page (MLA style). The intended audience for 1 and 2 is readers of the C&S or a similar anthology. The audience for 3 is me and other students in ENGL 646. The selection you prepare cannot be one that is commonly included in other anthologies of American literature such as the Heath or Norton. The idea here is for you to find an early text that is not very well known and to make a

case that it should be better known, while demonstrating your mastery of the course materials through your choice of selection and through your argument for how the selection fits within, resonates with, or expands the scope of those materials. This project is worth 40 points.

**A turn at leading class discussion.** Set an interesting agenda and raise questions to stimulate discussion on the assigned readings for the week. Prepare two handouts to distribute to the class: an outline (1 p.) and an annotated bibliography of at least four secondary sources (2+ pp.). The session, including handouts, will be worth 10 points.

**ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION.** You are expected to come class having read the assigned readings thoroughly (ideally, having read some relevant scholarship as well) and to contribute productively to class discussion. Absence or lack of participation will negatively affect your final grade.

## **SCHEDULE**

Part I, "Early"

1/21 Gould, "The New Early American Anthology," *Early American Literature* 38.2 (2003): 305-16

Spanish and Portuguese colonization: C&S 1-9, 18-22, 23-92

Discussion Leader

1/28 English colonization: C&S 13-18, 92-99

Mancall, *Envisioning America*

Discussion Leader

2/4 New Spain 17th century: C&S 10-13, 103-177, 353-55

Discussion Leader

2/11 New England 17th century: C&S 236-337, 350-51

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* . . . [1682 captivity narrative]—find a copy of this on your own

Discussion Leader

2/18 New France 17th century: C&S 99-102, 178-96, 352-53

Chesapeake and West Indies 17th century: C&S 197-235, 348-49

Middle Atlantic 17th century: 338-47

Discussion Leader

2/25 18th century English, Spanish, French: C&S 357-463

Discussion Leader

3/3 Revolution and early U.S. national era: C&S 465-595

Joel Barlow, *The Vision of Co/umbus* (1787) or *The Co/umbiad* (1807)—find a copy on your own;  
concentrate on Books I, II, and III

Discussion Leader

3/10 Reflections on the Tucson Summit of Early Ibero- and Anglo-Americanists by Bauer, Gustafson,  
Figuerola, Nelson, Tennenhouse, *Ear/yAmerican Literature* 38.1 (2003): 123-38

Bauer, "Notes . . . Further Reflections on the Tucson Summit," *Ear/yAmerican Literature* 38.2 (2003): 281-  
304

Call for papers for the second Summit of Early Ibero- and Anglo-Americanists <http://www.mith2.umd.edu/summiVhome.html>

Nelson, "From Manitoba to Patagonia," *American Literary History* 15.2 (summer 2003): 367-94

Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond," *Journal of American History* 86.3 (Dec. 1999) 965-75

3/17 spring break

3/24 workshop on anthology project: bring 4 copies of text, headnote, and rationale

*Part II: "National and Antebellum"*

3/31 Sansay, *Secret History* (photocopy)

Discussion Leader

4/7 Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*

view film of *Last of the Mohicans*

Discussion Leader

4/14 Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison

*Black Hawk: An Autobiography*

Discussion Leader

4/21 Melville, *Typee*

Discussion Leader

4/28 Melville, "Benito Cereno," "The Encantadas"

Discussion Leader

**Anthology project due Monday, May 3**