

English 241

John Ernest, ENGL 241, Fall 2006, American Literature: Beginnings to 1865

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ENGL 241: American Literature, Beginnings to 1865

Course Description and Goals

Why study literature in a national context? How does a nation's conception and ongoing development shape the conception, production, and reception of literature? Does it make sense to talk of American literature if we simply mean literature that anticipated or was written in the United States? In this course, we'll address these questions and more—and our short answer to these questions will be that the ideals, mythology, and practice of national identity and social life exert considerable influence on literature, and that American literature was essential to the conception of the United States; the development of the nation's mythology; the conception, revisions, violations, and protection of national ideals; and the practice of national, communal, and individual identity. To get at this complex role of literature in America (both before and after the establishment of the United States), we will read a wide range of writings, including fiction, poetry, essays, sermons, official documents, and more than a couple of manifestos representing a range of ideological and political positions. Our goal will be to examine at least a sampling of the broad diversity of "American literature" so as to come to an understanding of what makes American literature American and why this should matter to us.

To meet this goal, we will be guided by the following questions:

1. What conceptual, narrative, or stylistic features emerge and develop during this period of American literary history?
2. What contesting or mutually-supportive visions of nationality become evident in this diverse collection of writings, and what roles do religion, politics, race, gender, or economics play in those visions?
3. What role has literature played in the nation's greatest challenges, successes, and failures (the promotion of representative governance, the construction of race, the system of slavery, or the realization of women's rights, to name only a few of the concerns we will consider)?
4. What role has literature played in the realization or strategic revisions of national ideals?
5. If there is such a thing as American literature, then what challenges and responsibilities follow for American and international readers?

By the end of the semester, you might not have any firm answers to these questions—though if you do, it would be a great help to me if you could let me know what they are. However, you should have the background, the conceptual frameworks, and the practical skills you need to approach these questions in your scholarship and in your lives.

Specifically:

1. you should have a good bit of information about American literary and social history;
2. you should have some experience in applying this information to analyses of specific issues or historical events;
3. you should be comfortable and even adept at close readings and contextualized considerations of literary texts; and
4. you should be comfortable writing in a range of different settings and styles—from informal to formal, from making compelling assertions to presenting persuasive arguments.

Arguably, meeting these goals would be the best and most “American” answer to the above questions that you could hope for.

You will have a variety of forums for demonstrating your proficiency of these course goals, including class discussion, individual conferences, informal writing assignments, exams, and a formal academic essay.

Words of Wisdom to Guide Our Journey This Semester:

- We begin with stating what we mean by national literature. We mean the expression of a nation's mind in writing. We mean the production among a people, of important works in philosophy, and in the departments of imagination and taste. We mean the contributions of new truths to the stock of human knowledge. We mean the thoughts of profound and original minds, elaborated by the toil of composition, and fixed and made immortal in books. We mean the manifestation of a nation's intellect in the only forms by which it can multiply itself at home, and send itself abroad. We mean that a nation shall take a place, by its authors, among the lights of the world. It will be seen, that we include under literature all the writings of superior minds, be the subjects what they may.

—William Ellery Channing, “Remarks on A National Literature” (1830)

- But a more potent influence than any yet noticed, is that of our national literature. Or rather we have no national literature. We depend almost wholly on Europe, and particularly England, to think and write for us, or at least to furnish materials and models after which we shall mould our own humble attempts. We have a considerable number of writers; but not in that consists a national literature. The vital principle of an American national literature must be democracy. Our mind is enslaved to the past and present literature of England. Rich and glorious as is that vast collection of intellectual treasure, it would have been far better for us had we been separated from it by the ocean of a difference of language, as we are from the country itself by our sublime Atlantic. Our

mind would than have been compelled to think for itself and to express itself, and its animating spirit would have been our democracy. As it now is, we are cowed by the mind of England. We follow feebly and afar in the splendid track of a literature moulded on the whole (notwithstanding a number of noble exceptions) by the ideas and feelings of an utterly anti-democratic social system. We give back but a dim reflection—a faint echo of the expression of the English mind. . . . In the spirit of her literature we can never hope to rival England. She is immeasurably in advance of us, and is rich with ever active energies, and resources of literary habits and capital (so to speak) which mock our humble attempts at imitation. But we should not follow in her wake; a radiant path invites us forward in another direction. We have a principle—an informing soul—of our own, our democracy, though we allow it to languish uncultivated; this must be the animating spirit of our literature, if, indeed, we would have a national American literature. There is an immense field open to us, if we would but enter it boldly and cultivate it as our own. All history has to be re-written; political science and the whole scope of all moral truth have to be considered and illustrated in the light of the democratic principle. All old subjects of thought and all new questions arising, connected more or less directly with human existence, have to be taken up again and re-examined in this point of view. We ought to exert a powerful moral influence on Europe, and yet we are entirely unfelt; and as it is only by its literature that one nation can utter itself and make itself known to the rest of the world, we are really entirely unknown.

The anti-democratic character of our literature, then, is a main cause of the evil of which we complain; and this is both a mutual cause and effect, constantly acting and re-acting. Our 'better educated classes' drink in an anti-democratic habit of feeling and thinking from the copious, and it must be confessed delicious, fountain of the literature of England; they give the same spirit to our own, in which we have little or nothing that is truly democratic and American. Hence this tone of sentiment of our literary institutions and of our learned professions, poisoning at the spring the young mind of our people.

—"Introduction." The United States Magazine and Democratic Review (1837)

- The spirit of Literature and the spirit of Democracy are one. They both cherish the feeling of man by self-reliance and an untrammelled will; they both speak to the instinctive aspirations of the human soul after liberty of thought and freedom of expression; both recognise in a wise toleration and an intelligent self-dependence the two great principles of all nobility of character and manly achievement. Letters are the best advocates of principles. Philosophy, next to religion, recognising the demands of the Divine will, and acknowledging the dictates of the conscience as the sole source of inviolable authority, forms the best defence of all creeds, human and divine. Thus Literature is not only the natural ally of freedom, political or religious; but it also affords the firmest bulwark the wit of man has yet devised, to protect the interests of freedom. It not only breathes a similar spirit,—it is imbued with the same spirit. It employs analogous means to reach the same end

—"Democracy and Literature." The United States Magazine, and Democratic Review (1842)

- Our development depends upon our faith in what we are, and in our independence of foreign judgment. A resolute will, a bold aim, and a spirit that courageously looks within for its encouragements and standards,—these are our securities for intellectual independence. To these acquisitions our labours must be addressed. To the want of these, and the necessity for them, the attention of our people must be drawn. The popular mind scarcely yet seems to perceive that there is a vast and vital difference between the self-speaking among our people, and that numerous herd, which, though born, living and walking in our midst, speak never for our hearts, and seldom from their own—whose thoughts, no less than language, are wholly English, and who, in all general characteristics—so far as the native progress and development are effected—might as well have been born, dwelling and dilating in Middlesex or London. It is but to see these things as we should—to understand the world-wide difference between writing for, and writing from one's people. This difference is the whole,—but what a difference! To write from a people, is to write a people—to make them live—to endow them with a life and a name—to preserve them with a history forever.

—William Gilmore Simms, “Americanism in Literature” (1845)

- Having already argued that literature might be considered a form of technology disguised as an attack upon it, I am additionally saying that it is a form of cultural and imaginative imperialism . . . To create an ingenious plot, to control the action, to dispatch a character who gets too big for his role in the play or the novel, all this deserves the highest literary commendation, and while I cannot be supposed to applaud the same activities in historical life, I am suggesting that there is an intriguing if limited equivalence, and that this may be a clue to the kinds of human energy excited by the prospect in life of any efficient form or system.

—Richard Poirier, *The Renewal of Literature: Emersonian Reflections*

- In my belief, few books on education published in the past ten years are ethical books. They are not ethical because they are not invocations to lived visions. They tell of challenges, refer to agonies, comment on difficulties. They do not ask an answer in the form of action from the reader. Their power begins and ends within the world of words and paragraphs alone.

If the present book does not compel transformed behavior, in the life of its own author and in that of its authentic reader too, then it does not merit the expense of labor which it now commands and has commanded for the past five years; nor can it justify the pain and anguish I would wish it to provoke within the conscience of an undefended reader.

People who are looking for “a lot of interesting ideas,” and hope to dabble here for little more, offend the author and degrade themselves. They would do well to stop right now. Those who read in order to take action on their consequent beliefs—these are the only readers I respect or look for. Atrocities, real and repeated, proliferate within this social order. The deepest of all lies in our will not to respond to what we see before us. When we declare that we are troubled by the lockstep life that has been charted for us by the

men and women who now govern and control our public schools, what we are doing is to state our disavowal of an evil and unwanted patrimony. We are not living in an ordinary time, but in an hour of intense and unrelenting pain for many human beings. It is not good enough to favor justice in high literary flourish and to feel compassion for the victims of the very system that sustains our privileged position. We must be able to disown and disavow that privileged position. If we cannot we are not ethical men and women, and do not lead lives worth living.

Prison bars do not need to be made of steel and concrete. They can be fashioned also out of words and hesitations: an “interesting seminar on hunger,” “a reasonable exchange of views about despair.” The language that we learn in public school is one of ethical antiseptics and of political decontamination. It is the language of an intellectual cease-fire while the victims are still dying. It is also a language which, by failing to concede real oppositions, denies a child or adult right or power to make strong, risk-taking choices. The student learns to step back and to steer away from moral confrontations. He learns to ascertain the quickest highway and the best approach to middle places of inert compassion and dysfunctional concern: places where choice does not reside and anger does not threaten.

If the child studies hard, if he assimilates the language well, and if he should grow up by any chance to be a writer, teacher, commentator or a critic even of such areas as social justice in this nation, he will have learned by then the proper means by which to make himself provocative, but not unsettling: fashionable and delightful, but not feared. He will have become, by grotesque sequences of North American recirculation, a perfect item in the same machine that polished him to size. At worst he will be somebody like Moynihan. At best he may be somebody like Galbraith. There is no danger he will be Thoreau.

–Jonathan Kozol. *The Night Is Dark and I Am Far from Home*

- Society has other uses for us than those we have generally chosen. It uses schools and colleges to sort out young people for various kinds of work. English teachers must do that and use literature to help in the sorting. Society needs help from the schools to justify its present divisions, including much inequality. There is pressure—indirect but heavy—on teachers of literature to join in this effort. The ruling classes want a culture, including a literature and a criticism, that supports the social order and discourages rebellion, while it sanctions all kinds of nonthreatening nonconformity. If we want to teach literature, we had better adapt it to this task, too.

Another thing a student is supposed to be is objective. The Acorn Book says that his Advanced Placement English course will teach him how to read and respond to works of literature, but if the descriptive material and the examinations are any indication, the Advanced Placement Program actually teaches the students not to respond to literature, not with his feelings. His concern must be with “organization of the elements of the poem,” with “particular uses of language” that express a contrast, with the function of minor characters, with the way structure, imagery, and sound contribute to the whole

meaning of a poem—"Your feeling about the poem is important," he is implicitly told, "only as the outcome of careful reading." His role is that of the neutral instrument, recording and correlating the facts and drawing conclusions. If any need or interest other than the formalistic drove him to read the work, he will quickly learn to suppress these unwelcome responses. They are not among the competencies that will move him a step up the ladder. To his reading of a poem he is supposed to bring the techniques he has mastered, and only those. He is, in other words, alienated in very nearly the Marxian sense. And, of course, the ideal student is of the middle class. Docility, care, tidiness, professional ambition, the wish for objectivity, these are all qualities valued particularly by the middle class and encouraged in its young.

Quite aside from the use of the humanities—of high culture—within universities to harden class lines and teach the skills and habits of mind that will serve the industrial system, the humanities have a flourishing existence outside the universities. When Exxon, Mobil, Chevron, and Amoco spend millions of dollars in television advertising to cash in on their altruistic leadership in the war on pollution and the search for new forms of energy, they are using rhetoric, drama, and visual design to maintain their power over the future and proclaim the health of the free enterprise economy. Given the stakes, it seems fair to say that the oil companies' use of the humanities is the reverse of liberating. Think of other parts of our humanistic culture: music, in the romantic tradition of Engelbert Humperdinck (the younger), assuring entranced listeners that their basic needs are personal and erotic rather than social; fiction, in confession magazines, pornography, and many other profitable forms of literature, maintaining sexual and social stereotypes; history, available publicly in the form of myths about the white man's sovereign rights over darker people and their land, and of traditional American freedom threatened by the cold war enemy; architecture and design, in a thousand suburban developments, creating the illusion of independence (home, the electronic castle), denying the existence of the other half of society, and forcing complete dependence on cars, appliances, and other profit-yielding artifacts. "Teaching literature in a discredited civilization," to repeat Grossman's title, we either teach politically with revolution as our end or we contribute to the mystification that so often in universities diverts and deadens the critical power of literature and encysts it in our safe corner of society.

—Richard Ohmann. *English in America*

- Academic institutions offer myriad ways to protect ourselves from the threat of a live encounter. To avoid a live encounter with teachers, students can hide behind their notebooks and their silence. To avoid a live encounter with students, teachers can hide behind their podiums, their credentials, their power. To avoid a live encounter with one another, faculty can hide behind their academic specialties.

To avoid a live encounter with subjects of study, teachers and students alike can hide behind the pretense of objectivity: students can say, "Don't ask me to think about this stuff—just give me the facts," and faculty can say, "Here are the facts—don't think about them, just get them straight." To avoid a live encounter with ourselves, we can learn the art of self-alienation, of living a divided life.

This fear of the live encounter is actually a sequence of fears that begins in the fear of diversity. As long as we inhabit a universe made homogeneous by our refusal to admit otherness, we can maintain the illusion that we possess the truth about ourselves and the world—after all, there is no “other” to challenge us! But as soon as we admit pluralism, we are forced to admit that ours is not the only standpoint, the only experience, the only way, and the truths we have built our lives on begin to feel fragile.

If we embrace diversity, we find ourselves on the doorstep of our next fear: fear of the conflict that will ensue when divergent truths meet. Because academic culture knows only one form of conflict, the win-lose form called competition, we fear the live encounter as a contest from which one party emerges victorious while the other leaves defeated and ashamed. To evade public engagement over our dangerous differences, we privatize them, only to find them growing larger and more diverse.

If we peel back our fear of conflict, we find a third layer of fear, the fear of losing identity. Many of us are so deeply identified with our ideas that when we have a competitive encounter, we risk losing more than the debate: we risk losing our sense of self.

Of course, there are forms of conflict more creative than the win-lose form called competition, forms that are vital if the self is to grow. But academic culture knows little of these alternative forms—such as consensual decision making—in which all can win and none need lose, in which “winning” means emerging from the encounter with a larger sense of self than one brought into it, in which we learn that the self is not a scrap of turf to be defended but a capacity to be enlarged.

If we embrace the promise of diversity, of creative conflict, and of “losing” in order to “win,” we still face one final fear—the fear that a live encounter with otherness will challenge or even compel us to change our lives. This is not paranoia: the world really is out to get us! Otherness, taken seriously, always invites transformation, calling us not only to new facts and theories and values but also to new ways of living our lives—and that is the most daunting threat of all.

—Parker J. Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher’s Life*

- The woman’s place of power within each of us is neither white nor surface; it is dark, it is ancient, and it is deep.

When we view living in the European mode only as a problem to be solved, we rely solely upon our ideas to make us free, for these were what our white fathers told us were precious. . . . But as we come more into touch with our own ancient, noneuropean consciousness of living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of our power from where true knowledge and, therefore, lasting action comes.

I speak here of poetry as a revelatory distillation of experience, not the sterile word play that, too often, the white fathers distorted the word poetry to mean—in order to cover a desperate wish for imagination without insight.

For women, then, poetry is not a luxury. It is a vital necessity of our existence. It forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action. Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought.

The white fathers told us: I think, therefore I am. The Black mother within each of us—the poet—whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free. Poetry coins the language to express and charter this revolutionary demand, the implementation of that freedom.

Sometimes we drug ourselves with dreams of new ideas. The head will save us. The brain alone will set us free. But there are no ideas still waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within ourselves—along with the renewed courage to try them out.

In the forefront of our move toward change, there is only poetry to hint at possibility made real. Our poems formulate the implications of ourselves, what we feel within and dare make real (or bring action into accord with), our fears, our hopes, our most cherished terrors.

For within living structures defined by profit, by linear power, by institutional dehumanization, our feelings were not meant to survive.

If what we need to dream, to move our spirits most deeply and directly toward and through promise, is discounted as a luxury, then we give up the core—the fountain—of our power, our womanness; we give up the future of our worlds.

—Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”

- I used to think that I talked to the reader and in a sense perhaps that was true but it is really the work that talks to the reader as it was the work that talked to the writer. The work and the artist say each other as I think lovers do and, in later contact, it is the work and the reader that say each other. Or the work may be mute and the reader stone deaf.

Insofar as there can be anything about me worth writing about it would have to be the work and the importance of the work can only be to the reader who has entered into a relation with it. This is at variance with the generally—not only academically—held idea that works of art can be examined, described and assessed as though they were precious stones. Or houses. But the importance of houses is lost in their selling price. We live in them. Or we don't. —William Bronk

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. This is poetry as illumination, for it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are—until the poem—nameless and formless, about to be birthed, but already felt. That distillation of experience from which true poetry springs births thought as dream births concept, as feeling births idea, as knowledge births (precedes) understanding.

As we learn to bear the intimacy of scrutiny and to flourish within it, as we learn to use the products of that scrutiny for power within our living, those fears which rule our lives and form our silences begin to lose their control over us.

—Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury”

Required Texts

(Note: it is important that you have the 5th edition)

- Lauter, Paul, ed. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Volume A: Colonial Period to 1800*. 5th ed. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.
- Lauter, Paul, ed. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Volume B: Early Nineteenth Century: 1800-1865*. 5th ed. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006.

Policies

1. If you fail to fulfill any of the course requirements, you will fail the course.
2. **Social Justice.** West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans 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.

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 the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

3. If your writing suffers from serious grammatical errors, the best grade I will be able to give to you for the paper, exams, and for the course is a “C-”. If you would like help with grammar or with your writing in general, or if you want to build on your strengths, please visit the WVU Writing Center in 44 Stansbury Hall. For an appointment, call 293-3107 ext. 33400, or stop by 44 Stansbury to see if tutors are available.

Please note that for your course paper you are also required to read and follow the guidance of the “Guide for Papers” attached to this syllabus.

4. Revisions: You are allowed to revise your course essay. If you decide to revise, your grade will be the average of the two versions of the paper. You must hand in the original with the revision. Please note that I will be happy to help you plan, revise, and refine your paper before the original due date, making significant revisions unnecessary.
5. I will subtract one-third of a grade for each calendar day that your paper is late.
6. Expectations Concerning Plagiarism: You are required to read the following statement on plagiarism—but here's the short version:

If you claim (explicitly or implicitly, intentionally or unintentionally) as your own something written in whole or in part by someone else, or if you claim as your own someone else's ideas or observations, or if you claim as your own someone else's line of thought or of argument, then you are guilty of plagiarism. If you have been influenced by someone else's ideas, cite your source. If you present information—biographical, historical, scientific, etc., cite your sources. If you discuss the work of another scholar or writer, be sure to use quotation marks to identify significant words and phrases taken from that source—and, of course, cite the source. If you draw any information, ideas, phrases, or inspiration from the internet, cite your sources. In short, identify the authorities you are drawing from at all times—and when in doubt, cite your source. It is always better to be overly cautious in this regard.

Multiple submissions will be treated as plagiarized papers. That is, you cannot submit work in this course that you have submitted in another course.

Confirmed plagiarists will fail this course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of passing off someone else's work as your own. Sometimes plagiarism is simple dishonesty. People who buy, borrow, or steal a paper to turn in as their own work know they are plagiarizing. Those who copy word-for-word—or who change a word here and there while copying—without enclosing the copied passage in quotation marks and identifying the author should know that they are plagiarizing.

But plagiarism can be more complicated in act and intent. Paraphrasing, which is stating someone else's ideas, can be a useful way to support your own ideas, but it can lead to unintentional plagiarism. Jotting down notes and ideas from sources and thoughtlessly using them without proper attributions to the authors or titles of those sources may result in a paper that is only a mosaic of your words and those of others that appear, nonetheless, to be yours.

Another innocent way to plagiarize is to allow your fellow students and friends—those outside your peer-review group—to give you too much rhetorical help or do too much editing and proofreading of your work. If you think you have received substantial help in any way from people whose names will not appear as authors of the paper, acknowledge that help in a short sentence at the end of the paper or in your list of works cited. If you are not sure how much help is too much, talk with me, so that we can decide what kind of outside-of-class help (and how much) is proper, and how to give credit where credit is due.

As they are drafting their work, conscientious writers keep careful track of when they use ideas and or words from sources. They diligently try to distinguish between their own ideas, those of others, and common knowledge. They try to identify which part of their work comes from an identifiable source and then document their use of that source in accordance with established academic or professional conventions, such as a parenthetical citation and a works cited list. If you are in doubt about what needs documenting, talk with your instructor.

When thinking about plagiarism, it is hard to avoid talking about ideas as if they were objects like tables and chairs. Of course they are not. You should not feel that you are under pressure to invent new ideas—which is probably impossible. So-called original writing consists of thinking through ideas and expressing them in your own way. The result may not be new, but if honestly done, it may well be interesting and worthwhile reading. Print or electronic sources, as well as other people, may add good ideas to your own thoughts. When they do so in identifiable and specific ways, give them the credit they deserve.

The following examples should clarify the difference between dishonest and proper uses of sources:

Original Source:

It is not generally recognized that at the same time when women are making their way into every corner of our work world, only one percent of the professional engineers in the nation are female. A generation ago this statistic would have raised no eyebrows, but today it is hard to believe. The engineering schools, reacting to social and governmental pressures, have opened wide their gates and are recruiting women with zeal. The major corporations, reacting to even more intense pressures, are offering attractive employment opportunities to practically all women engineering graduates.

From Samuel C. Florman, "Engineering and the Female Mind" Copyright by Harper's Magazine

Word-for-Word Plagiarizing:

In the following example, the writer devises part of the first sentence in hopes the reader won't notice that the rest of the paragraph is simply copied from the source. The plagiarized words are italicized. Because women seem to be taking jobs of all kinds, few people realize that only 1 percent of the professional engineers in the nation are female. A generation ago this statistic would have raised no eyebrows, but today it is hard to believe. The engineering schools, reacting to social and governmental pressures, have opened wide their gates and are recruiting women with zeal. The major corporations, reacting to even more intense pressures, are offering attractive employment opportunities to practically all women engineering graduates.

Quotation marks around all the copied text, followed by a parenthetical citation, would avoid plagiarism. But even if that were done, a reader might well wonder why so much was quoted from Florman. Beyond that, a reader will wonder why the writer chose to quote instead of paraphrase this passage (which would then require an endnote or footnote, citing Florman as the

source of this information). Furthermore, a paper consisting largely of quoted passages would be relatively worthless.

Plagiarizing by Paraphrasing:

In this case the writer follows the progression of ideas in the source very closely-too closely-by substituting his or her own words and sentences for those of the original.

Original

It is not generally recognized that at the same time when women are making their way into every corner of our work-world, only 1 percent of the professional engineers in the nation are female.

A generation ago this statistic would have raised no eyebrows, but today it is hard to believe.

The engineering schools, reacting to societal and governmental pressures, have opened wide their gates and are recruiting women with zeal. The major corporations, reacting to even more intense pressure, are offering attractive employment opportunities to practically all women engineering graduates. Paraphrase

Few people realize, now that women are finding jobs in all fields, that a tiny percentage of the country's engineers are women

Years ago this would have surprised no one but no it seems incredible.

Under great pressure, engineering schools are searching out women, and big companies are offering good jobs to practically all women who graduate with engineering degrees.

The writer appears to be generating his or her own ideas. In fact, they are Florman's ideas presented in the writer's words without acknowledgment. The writer could avoid plagiarism here by introducing the paraphrase with an attribution to Florman and following them with a parenthetical citation. Such an introduction is underlined here: Samuel Florman points out that few people realize...(page number).

Properly used, paraphrase is a valuable technique. You should use it to simplify or summarize so that the ideas or information, properly attributed in the introduction and documented in a parenthetical citation, may be woven into the pattern of your own ideas. You should not use paraphrase simply to avoid quotation; you should use it to express another's ideas in your own words when those ideas are not worth quoting verbatim.

Mosaic Plagiarism:

With this more sophisticated kind of plagiarism, the writer lifts phrases and terms from the source and embeds them into his or her own prose. Words and phrases that the writer lifts verbatim or with slight changes are italicized: The pressure is on to get more women into engineering. The engineering schools and major corporations have opened wide their gates and

are recruiting women zealously. Practically all women engineering graduates can find attractive jobs. Nevertheless, at the moment, only 1 percent of the professional engineers in the country are female.

Even though mosaic plagiarism may be caused by sloppy note taking, it always looks thoroughly dishonest and will be judged as such. In the example above, just adding an introduction and a parenthetical citation will not eliminate the plagiarism since quotation marks are not used where required. But adding them would raise the question of why the writer thinks those short phrases and basic statements of fact and opinion are worth quoting. The best solution, then, is to paraphrase everything: recast the plagiarized parts in your own words, introduce the passage properly, and add a parenthetical citation.

Summary

Using quotation marks around original wording avoids the charge of plagiarism, but when overdone, makes for a patchwork paper. When most of what you want to say comes from a source, either quote directly or paraphrase. In both cases, introduce your borrowed words or ideas by attributing them to the author and follow them with a parenthetical citation.

The secret to using sources productively is to make them work to support and amplify your ideas. If you find, as you work at paraphrasing, quoting, and citing, that you are only pasting sources together with a few of your own words and ideas—that too much of your paper comes from your sources and not enough from your own mind—then go back to the drawing board. Try redrafting the paper without looking at your sources, using your own ideas. Only after completing a draft should you add the specific words and ideas from your sources to support what you want to say. If you have any doubts, talk with me asap.

Requirements

1. Oral Presentation: Keeping It Real (5% of final grade)

We cannot afford to allow literary history to be locked in the past, and it is important to think about how this literature can help us read and understand our world today—both how the world got this way (good and bad) and where we can go from here. Moreover, literature is a dynamic art, one that requires your active participation in mind, heart, and spirit. Through the dynamic activities of literary expression, artistic creation, and social observation—activities both private and social, both individual and communal—one learns how to envision and negotiate one's way through a complex world in which identity is always a work in progress, and in which hope for the future depends upon a liberating but difficult understanding of the past and present. Culture shapes our lives; art is an attempt to define and reconstitute the forces of culture so as to assert control over our lives.

Your assignment for the oral presentation is to bring your own perspective, your own voice, and perhaps even your own creative spirit to class. You can read a poem (your own or someone else's); you can testify to the truth as you see it; you can simply state your

views on current events; you can even sing, act, or dance if you feel so moved. There are many ways to respond to and apply what you've learned to see and understand through literature, and all are welcome for this assignment. Regardless of what you do, though, your presentation should deal with issues related to our readings and/or discussions, and you should be prepared to explain how your presentation deals with those issues, and what the issues are.

Because your voice is important in this process, I do not want you to play recorded music or show films or videos for this presentation—that is, unless the recorded music or the film is your own creation.

Your presentation should last no more than 5-10 minutes. As with other things in life, timing is essential, and you should practice your presentation to be sure that you stay within the allotted time.

The grading for this assignment is simple. If you do it, you will receive an A. If you don't do it, you will receive an F.

2. Daily Responses . . .

OR, Literary Analysis on the Installment Plan: the Lay-Away “A” OR, How to Dig Deeply into the Fields of Literature and Culture in the Comfort of Your Own Home (10% of final grade)

Before each class (or right after you read the assignment), jot down your observations and reflections about that day's readings. I will collect these observations at the beginning of each class and read them before the next class.

Your responses should be at least 1 page long, handwritten (assuming that your handwriting is not as large as the page or is not spaced too generously). This is only the minimum requirement, though; you are welcome to write very long responses if you like.

Place the due date (as listed on the syllabus) at the top of each response, and note the title of the text or texts to which you are responding. I need to keep an accurate record of the responses, and you can help me on this by being clear about the assignment date at the top of each response.

What if you get it wrong? That's the beauty of this assignment: You can't get it wrong! You do not have to worry about whether you are “right” or “wrong” in these observations. Just pay attention to detail and write down what you observe. In fact, you do not have to worry about grammar or style or argumentation or anything. Just jot things down in the grammar-free zone of your choice. Just notice things, notice more things, play with ideas, speculate, and respond. Don't spend too much time on this; just get it down. Intellectual, ethical, and cultural exploration is the point here.

I will read all the responses carefully. Unfortunately, I will not be able to comment on them, though I wish I could—and I would sincerely welcome the opportunity to talk with you about your responses. I will read all the responses and take general notes on what everyone in the class has to say, and I'll report on the responses at the beginning of each class. The responses can also provide the basis for your papers, for you will find yourself writing your way into ideas and insights that you will want to explore more fully in an essay.

This assignment is particularly important to me, as I hope will be clear throughout the semester. I recommend that you come to talk with me about your responses every now and again (perhaps at least once each month?). If this is inconvenient for you, you can also check in with me on e-mail or on the phone (at my office or at home—I'd love to hear from you, and I'd welcome the opportunity to talk with you).

Evaluation of Daily Responses

If you turn in all of the responses, you will receive an "A" for this portion of the course (10% of the final grade). Responses are not due on exam days or on the day when your essay is due.

You must be in class when you turn in your response. If you enter the course late, you must make up the responses you've missed. You are allowed to miss only 3 responses over the course of the semester. For each missing response beyond those three, your grade for the responses will be lowered slightly, from an "A" to an "A-" to a "B+," etc. (depending on the quality of the responses), up to 6 responses; beyond that (if you miss 7 or more responses), you will receive an "F" for this assignment.

3. Three in-class exams: Friday, September 8; Monday, October 2; and Monday, October 23. Each exam will count for 10% of your final grade.

For the in-class exams, you will demonstrate your knowledge of and facility with the information and concepts we have covered in our readings and/or class discussions. The exams will be divided into two parts: (1) identifications of significant historical or cultural information, authors, or concepts; and (2) short-answer comparative analyses of various texts. The first exam will focus on literary history up to 1700, the second on the eighteenth century, and the third on different cultural traditions in the early nineteenth century. You can bring in one standard (8 ½ x 11) sheet of paper with quotations from the primary texts, and you are required to turn in this sheet with your blue book.

4. Final Examination (25% of final grade). Monday, December 11, 1500-1700 in our regular classroom (48 Stansbury).

The Final Exam will follow the format of the other exams, with one addition: there will be an essay question, in response to which you will be expected to write and support a structured, focused, and coherent essay. The identification and short-answer portions of the exam will be limited to our readings and discussions following the third exam; the

essay question will be comprehensive, addressing texts and issues we've examined throughout the semester.

5. One 5-Page Meditative essay (30% of the grade). Due on Monday, November 13

I am asking you to enter into a complex field of study, and one with which you might not be familiar, so I want use this writing assignment to facilitate your development as scholars in this field. Accordingly, we will have two essay-writing workshops (October 16 and November 6) to attend to the process of investigating ideas, analyzing texts within the context of a larger argument, preparing an argument, accounting for one's audience, accounting for the conventions of formal presentation, and holding on to one's intellectual integrity and independence. You should be prepared to discuss your plans for the paper in the first workshop (a topic and working thesis), and you should have a draft of your paper completed by the second.

I want you to use this essay to think about the material we have discussed, our approach to that material, and what this means in terms of literary, cultural, and historical understanding. Too often, in my view, young scholars are asked to write an essay that simply repeats the views presented in class. Too often, too, young scholars are asked to present an argument in which they claim authority over the subject—in the form of a definite thesis and absolute conclusions. In my view, this practice encourages intellectual dishonesty, for you are asked to be certain about something that you might feel very uncertain about. There is much to learn about American history, literature and culture—and there is a great deal of misinformation that you will need to sort through. It is simply good scholarship to note as much, and to recognize that although you can do some preliminary research this semester, you will hardly be in a position to claim ultimate authority over this subject. If all goes well, you will be in a position by the end of the semester to know the kind of information you need to question, the kinds of questions you need to ask, and the kind of conceptual frameworks you will need to develop over time. It is good scholarly practice, in short, to recognize that you are involved in a process of understanding that will develop over time. In your essay, you should present a working hypothesis and a persuasive argument, but you should feel free to note that you are dealing with uncertainties and that you are still working your way through this material.

You might devote your essay to a single text. What is the author trying to achieve, and how does she or he craft the text so as to work towards those goals? Are there significant contradictions or other tensions in the text that undermine the coherence of the author's argument? What is the author's central point, and how is the text designed to get readers to understand that point?

You might devote your essay to a larger cultural concern. What is race, for example, and why do our definitions of this concept matter? How does a careful study of American literary history change our understanding of U.S. history? How does literature guide us (or misguide us) as citizens in a republic? What is American about American literature, history, or culture, and what are the problems and possibilities of thinking in these terms?

I want you to bring things together, identify patterns and concerns, or take things apart, looking for the underlying questions that we need to ask. Look for recurring concerns, for persistent questions, and then use the essay to try to put together a basic framework for addressing those questions. What should we think about? What information do we need? What methods should we use? Is there, say, a cultural habit of thought that keeps us from addressing this question adequately? How do various writers help us to adopt a different cultural perspective on the issues we face?

You should think of this essay as a focused and organized set of scholarly reflections—the stage of research in which the scholar steps back, examines and integrates the material, and plans for the next step . . . often in search of a thesis that, to this point, resists expression and defies one’s attempts to achieve clarity and coherence. This is not to say, however, that you should not present an argument of some sort in this essay, or that your essay shouldn’t have a thesis. But your argument needn’t be conclusive. Instead of a conclusive thesis, think in terms of a working hypothesis—and you can present it and discuss it in this way in your essay.

As you explore literary and cultural history, it is good to remember that what and how you see can depend significantly on what you know. You will need some historical and cultural background. I do not require deep research for this essay, but I do expect you to support any assertion you make about people, about culture, and about history. Most of what you will need for this assignment can be found in the introductions to our texts and in specialized reference sources in the library. I’m simply looking for the conventional wisdom on important historical events and related concerns.

The essay must be at least 5 full pages long, not counting the title or the Works Cited pages. Shorter papers will receive lower grades, since those papers will either lack a sufficiently ambitious thesis or will lack the support and explanation required for a persuasive argument. For specific requirements concerning your presentation of this essay, see the Guide for Papers included in this syllabus.

Reading Assignments

Note: I’ve tried to keep the reading assignments manageable—usually, between 20 and 50 pages, and more often closer to 20 than to 50. However, in an anthology, even 20 pages can be a fair amount of reading between a Monday or a Wednesday or a Wednesday and a Friday. Do not allow yourself to fall behind on the readings. You are responsible for all of these assignments, including the historical and biographical introductions to major periods, issues, and authors.

M 8/21: Introductions

W 8/23: Lecture. The Fast and the Furious, The Past and the Curious: The Problems, Politics, and Possibilities of a Survey of American Literature

F 8/25: Heath A

1. Introduction: Colonial Period: To 1700 (pp. 1-15)
2. Introduction: Native American Oral Literatures (pp. 16-22)
3. Introduction: Native American Oral Poetry (pp. 66-68)

M 8/28:

1. "The Origins of Stories" (Seneca) (pp. 51-53)
2. "Iroquois or Confederacy of the Five Nations" (Iroquois) (pp. 54-57)
3. "Creation of the Whites" (Yuchi) (pp. 65-66)
4. "The Singer's Art" (Aztec) (p. 89)
5. Introduction to The Bay Psalm Book and The New England Primer (pp. 423-425)
6. Excerpt from the Preface to The Bay Psalm Book, by John Cotton (pp. 425-427)
7. "A Psalm of David" (pp. 431-432)

W 8/30:

1. Cluster: America in the European Imagination (pp. 106-112)
2. Cluster: Cultural Encounters—A Critical Survey (pp. 132-138)
3. Introduction to John Winthrop (pp. 307-309)
4. Excerpt from "A Modell of Christian Charity" (pp. 309-317)

F 9/1:

1. Introduction to Anne Bradstreet (pp. 394-395)
2. "The Prologue" (pp. 396-397)
3. "The Author to Her Book" (p. 402)
4. "Before the Birth of One of Her Children" (p. 406)
5. "To My Dear and Loving Husband" (pp. 406-407)
6. "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment" (p. 407)
7. Introduction to Edward Taylor (pp. 468-471)
8. "Huswifery" (pp. 479-480)
9. "Upon Wedlock, & Death of Children" (pp. 480-481)
10. "8, Meditation. Joh. 6.51. I am the Living Bread" (pp. 484-485)

M 9/4: Labor Day Recess

W 9/6:

1. Introduction to Mary White Rowlandson (pp. 437-439)
2. Excerpt from A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (pp. 440-468)
3. Introduction to Samuel Sewall (pp. 496-497)
4. The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial (pp. 501-506)

F 9/8: First Exam

M 9/11:

1. Introduction: Eighteenth Century (pp. 565-581)
2. Cluster: On Nature and Nature's God (pp. 633-644)
3. Introduction to Handsome Lake (Seneca) (pp. 802-803)

W 9/13:

1. Introduction to Jonathan Edwards (pp. 645-647)
2. "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (pp. 666-677)
3. Introduction to John Woolman (pp. 689-691)
4. Excerpt from Some Considerations on the Keeping of Negroes (pp. 703-708)
5. Benjamin Franklin, "Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" (pp. 821-824)

F 9/15:

1. Introduction to Benjamin Franklin (pp. 804-807)
2. "The Way to Wealth" (pp. 808-813)
3. Part One of The Autobiography (pp. 828-876)

M 9/18:

1. Introduction to St. John de Crèvecoeur (pp. 921-922)
2. Excerpts from Letters from an American Farmer (pp. 922-957)

W 9/20:

1. Introduction to Thomas Paine (pp. 957-959)
2. Excerpt from Common Sense (pp. 959-965)
3. Excerpt from The American Crisis (pp. 965-970)
4. Introduction to Thomas Jefferson (pp. 990-993)
5. Excerpts from Notes on the State of Virginia (pp. 994-1010)

F 9/22:

1. Introduction to Federalist and Anti-Federalist Contentions (pp. 1028-1029)
2. The Federalist No. 6 (Alexander Hamilton) (pp. 1029-1033)
3. The Federalist No. 10 (James Madison) (pp. 1034-1038)
4. An Anti-Federalist Paper, To the Massachusetts Convention (pp. 1039-1041)
5. Introduction to Toussaint L'Ouverture (pp. 1042-1044)
6. Proclamations and Letters (pp. 1044-1048)
7. Cluster: On the Discourse of Liberty (pp. 1049-1066)

M 9/25:

1. Introduction to Samson Occom (Mohegan) (pp. 1115-1116)

2. A Short Narrative of My Life (pp. 1116-1121)
3. Introduction to Prince Hall (pp. 1143-1145)
4. A Charge, Delivered to the African Lodge, June 24, 1797, at Menotomy (pp. 1145-1151)
5. Introduction to Philip Freneau (pp. 1211-1212)
6. "A Political Litany" (pp. 1216-1217)
7. "To Sir Toby" (pp. 1217-1219)
8. Introduction to Phillis Wheatley (pp. 1238-1240)
9. "To the Right Honourable William, Earl of Dartmouth, His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for North-America, &c" (pp. 1243-1244)
10. "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (p. 1247)
11. "To the University of Cambridge, in New England" (pp. 1249-1250)

W 9/27:

1. Introduction to Lemuel Haynes (pp. 1255-1257)
2. "Liberty Further Extended: Or Free Thoughts on the Illegality of Slave-keeping" (pp. 1258-1267)
3. Introduction to Joel Barlow (pp. 1272-1273)
4. "The Prospect of Peace" (pp. 1274-1279)

F 9/29:

1. Introduction to Hannah Webster Foster (pp. 1340-1341)
2. All excerpts from *The Coquette; or, the History of Eliza Wharton* (pp. 1341-1359)
3. Introduction to Susanna Haswell Rowson (pp. 1360-1361)
4. All excerpts from *Charlotte Temple* (pp. 1361-1373)

M 10/2: Second Exam

W 10/4: Heath B

1. Introduction: Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1865 (pp. 1389-1419)
2. Introduction: Native America (pp. 1420-1422)
3. Introduction: Spanish America (pp. 1499-1500)
4. Introduction: The Cultures of New England (pp. 1560-1561)

F 10/6:

1. Introduction to Elias Boudinot (Cherokee) (pp. 1442-1444)
2. "An Address to the Whites" (pp. 1445-1452)
3. Introduction to William Apess (Pequot) (pp. 1459-1460)
4. "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man" (pp. 1460-1465)
5. Introduction to John Rollin Ridge (Cherokee) (pp. 1490-1491)
6. "The Atlantic Cable" (pp. 1492-1495)
7. "The Stolen White Girl" (pp. 1495-1496)

M 10/9:

1. Introduction to Tales from the Hispanic Southwest (pp. 1501-1502)
2. “La comadre Sebastiana / Doña Sebastiana” (pp. 1502-1504)
3. “Los tres hermanos / The Three Brothers” (pp. 1504-1508)
4. “El obispo / The New Bishop” (pp. 1508-1509)
5. “El indito de las cien vacas / The Indian and the Hundred Cows” (pp. 1509-1510)
6. Introduction to Lorenzo de Zavala (pp. 1514-1515)
7. Viage a los Estados-Unidos del Norte America / Journey to the United States of America (pp. 1515-1523)
8. Introduction: Narratives from the Mexican and Early American Southwest (pp. 1524-1527)
9. Introduction to Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (pp. 1531-1541)

W 10/11: Guest Instructor: Mr. James Greene

1. Introduction to Ralph Waldo Emerson (pp. 1578-1581)
2. “The American Scholar” (pp. 1609-1621)
3. “Self-Reliance” (pp. 1621-1638)
4. “The Poet” (pp. 1638-1653)

F 10/13: Guest Instructor: Ms. Rebecca Skidmore Biggio

1. Introduction to Sarah Margaret Fuller (pp. 1692-1694)
2. Excerpt from *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (pp. 1697-1719)
3. Excerpt from “American Literature” (pp. 1719-1726)

M 10/16:

Workshop: Conceiving, Designing, and Writing Academic Essays. To prepare for the workshop, read the Guide for Papers included in the syllabus.

W 10/18:

1. Introduction to Henry David Thoreau (pp. 1735-1738)
2. “Resistance to Civil Government” (pp. 1738-1752)
3. “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For” (from *Walden*) (pp. 1753-1762)
4. “Conclusion” (from *Walden*) (pp. 1779-1787)

F 10/20:

1. Introduction to Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney (pp. 1561-1563)
2. “The Indian’s Welcome to the Pilgrim Fathers” (pp. 1571-1572)
3. “Indian Names” (pp. 1572-1573)
4. “To a Shred of Linen” (pp. 1575-1577)
5. “The Indian Summer” (pp. 1577-1578)

6. "Concord Hymn" (Emerson) (p. 1669)
7. "The Snow-Storm" (Emerson) (pp. 1670-1671)
8. Introduction to John Greenleaf Whittier (pp. 1679-1681)
9. "The Hunters of Men" (pp. 1681-1682)
10. "The Farewell" (pp. 1683-1684)

M 10/23: Third Exam

W 10/25:

1. Introduction: Race, Slavery, and the Invention of the "South" (pp. 1825-1826)
2. Introduction to David Walker (pp. 1826-1827)
3. Excerpt from Appeal . . . to the Coloured Citizens of the World (pp. 1828-1837)
4. Introduction to William Lloyd Garrison (pp. 1838-1839)
5. Editorial from the First Issue of The Liberator (pp. 1840-1841)
6. Introduction to Lydia Maria Child (pp. 1842-1843)
7. All Excerpts from Letters from New York (pp. 1846-1862)

F 10/27:

1. Introduction to Angelina Grimké (pp. 1862-1863)
2. Excerpt from Appeal to the Christian Women of the South (pp. 1863-1871)
3. Introduction to Henry Highland Garnet (pp. 1871-1872)
4. "An Address to the Slaves of the United States of America, Buffalo, N.Y., 1843" (pp. 1873-1878)
5. Introduction to Caroline Lee Hentz (pp. 1976-1977)
6. Excerpt from The Planter's Northern Bride (pp. 1978-1985)
7. Introduction to George Fitzhugh (pp. 1986-1987)
8. Excerpt from "Southern Thought" (pp. 1987-1996)

M 10/30:

1. Introduction to Frederick Douglass (pp. 1879-1881)
2. "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (pp. 1946-1964)
3. Introduction to Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (pp. 1997-1998)
4. "The Slave Mother" (pp. 1999-2000)
5. "Speech: On the Twenty-Fourth Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society" (pp. 2005-2007)
6. Introduction to Abraham Lincoln (pp. 2076-2078)
7. "Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery" (pp. 2078-2079)
8. "Second Inaugural Address" (p. 2079)

W 11/1:

1. Introduction: Literature and the "Woman Question" (p. 2081)

2. Both excerpts from Letters on the Equality of the Sexes, and the Condition of Woman (Sarah Moore Grimké) (pp. 2082-2088)
3. Introduction to Sojourner Truth (pp. 2092-2094)
4. Reminiscences by Frances D. Gage of Sojourner Truth, for May 28-29, 1851 (pp. 2094-2096)
5. Sojourner Truth's Speech at the Akron, Ohio, Women's Rights Meeting (p. 2096)
6. Introduction to Fanny Fern (pp. 2100-2101)
7. "Hints to Young Wives" (pp. 2101-2102)
8. "Critics" (p. 2104)
9. "A Law More Nice Than Just" (pp. 2105-2107)
10. "Independence" (p. 2107)
11. "Declaration of Sentiments" (pp. 2113-2115)

F 11/3:

1. Introduction: The Development of Narrative (pp. 2116-2119)
2. Introduction to Washington Irving (pp. 2143-2144)
3. Excerpt from A History of New York (pp. 2145-2153)
4. Introduction to James Fenimore Cooper (pp. 2185-2187)
5. All excerpts from The Pioneers, or the Sources of the Susquehanna (pp. 2187-2207)
6. Introduction to Catharine Maria Sedgwick (pp. 2207-2208)
7. All excerpts from Hope Leslie (pp. 2209-2223)

M 11/6: Second Writing Workshop: Reading, Questioning, Revising and Proofreading Academic Essays

W 11/8: Guest Instructor: Ms. Luminita Dragulescu

1. Introduction to Nathaniel Hawthorne (pp. 2242-2245)
2. "Young Goodman Brown" (pp. 2258-2267)
3. "The Minister's Black Veil" (pp. 2267-2275)
4. Preface to The House of the Seven Gables (pp. 2444-2445)

F 11/10: Guest Instructor: Mr. James Greene

1. Introduction to Herman Melville (pp. 2621-2624)
2. "Bartleby, the Scrivener; A Story of Wall-Street" (pp. 2625-2651)
3. "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (pp. 2785-2797)

M 11/13: Essay Due

1. Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe (pp. 2459-2461)
2. "Sonnet-To Science" (p. 2529)
3. "The Raven" (pp. 2539-2542)
4. Introduction to William Cullen Bryant (pp. 2886-2888)
5. "Thanatopsis" (pp. 2888-2890)

6. Introduction to Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (pp. 2897-2898)
7. "A Psalm of Life" (pp. 2898-1899)
8. "The Warning" (p. 2900)
9. "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport" (pp. 2900-2902)
10. Introduction to Frances Sargent Locke Osgood (pp. 2904-2905)
11. "The Maiden's Mistake" (p. 2908)
12. "Oh! Hasten to My Side" (pp. 2908-2909)
13. "A Reply" (p. 2910)

W 11/15:

1. Introduction to Edgar Allan Poe (pp. 2459-2461)
2. "The Man of the Crowd" (pp. 2486-2492)
3. "The Purloined Letter" (pp. 2502-2514)

F 11/17:

1. Introduction to Harriet Beecher Stowe (pp. 2547-2549)
2. All excerpts from Uncle Tom's Cabin (pp. 2549-2593)
3. Introduction to William Wells Brown (pp. 2610-2611)
4. All excerpts from Clotel; or, The Colored Heroine (pp. 2612-2621)

M 11/20 through F 11/24: Thanksgiving Recess

M 11/27: "Benito Cereno" (Melville) (pp. 2669-2726)

W 11/29:

1. Introduction to Rebecca Harding Davis (pp. 2836-2837)
2. Life in the Iron Mills (pp. 2838-2863)

F 12/1:

1. Introduction: The Emergence of American Poetic Voices (pp. 2864-2866)
2. Introduction to Walt Whitman (pp. 2920-2923)
3. Preface to the 1855 Edition of Leaves of Grass (pp. 2923-2937)

M 12/4:

1. "Song of Myself" (Whitman) (pp. 2937-2982)
2. All excerpts from Calamus (pp. 2992-2994)

W 12/6:

1. Introduction to Emily Dickinson (pp. 3042-3046)
2. "There's a certain Slant of Night" (pp. 3050-3051)

3. "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" (p. 3051)
4. "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" (p. 305)
5. "The Soul selects her own Society" (p. 3053)
6. "There came a Day at Summer's full" (p. 3055-3056)
7. "After great pain, a formal feeling comes" (pp. 3057-3058)
8. "Much Madness is divinest Sense" (p. 3059)
9. "This is my letter to the World" (p. 3059)
10. "This was a Poet—It is That" (p. 3061)
11. "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died" (pp. 3061-3062)
12. "This World is not Conclusion" (p. 3062)
13. "I reckon—when I count at all" (pp. 3064-3065)
14. "They shut me up in Prose" (p. 3066)
15. "The Brain—is wider than the Sky" (p. 3067)
16. "I dwell in Possibility" (pp. 3068-3069)
17. "Because I could not stop for Death" (pp. 3071-3072)
18. "The Poets light but Lamps" (p. 3074)
19. "'Heavenly Father' take to thee" (p. 3079)
20. "The Bible is an antique Volume" (pp. 3079-3080)
21. "Rearrange a 'Wife's' affection!" (pp. 3080-3081)

F 12/8:

1. "The Portent" (Melville) (p. 2798)
2. "A Utilitarian View of the Monitor's Fight" (Melville) (pp. 2798-2799)
3. All excerpts from Drum-Taps (Whitman) (pp. 3008-3013)
4. "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (pp. 3013-3020)

Final Exam: Monday, December 11, 1500-1700, in our regular classroom.

Professor John Ernest's Handy GUIDE FOR PAPERS

Part 1: Evaluation

I will evaluate your performance in three basic categories of concern: structure, content, and presentation. Each category will count for approximately one third of your grade for the paper—though, of course, poor performance in one category inevitably will affect the success of the others. That is, don't assume that I can or will "just read for the ideas" in a poorly presented or illogically constructed essay. I am particularly dismayed when I see errors that are repeated from one draft to the next, so make a special effort to apply criticisms of earlier drafts to later writing assignments in the class. Please remember that I would love to talk with you about your paper at any and all stages of its development.

I've indicated throughout this Guide my standards for evaluation, but I will summarize a few points here, which I've adapted from similar summaries put together by friends and colleagues.

An "A" essay:

1. has a clearly indicated thesis (or working hypothesis) to which all elements of the essay are relevant;
2. has focused topic sentences that announce the central argument of each paragraph, connecting this new stage of the analysis to that of the previous paragraph;
3. supports its argumentative claim with evidence from the text, and avoids being simply mechanical in citing evidence;
4. attends to the implications of the central argument;
5. is thoughtful and deliberate in its use of language, essay structure, and evidence;
6. considers, if only implicitly, the evidence and arguments that might undermine or challenge the essay's argument, and doesn't ignore important evidence or complications;
7. is free of recurring surface errors or errors of fact;
8. is professional in its presentation—including the title of the essay, page numbers, works-cited format, and other issues of manuscript form;
9. makes no unsupported claims about history, and demonstrates that the essay's author is aware of larger cultural and ideological concerns that might distort her or his judgment;
10. is equally attentive to detail and to the big picture;
11. is compelling in its intellectual and ethical commitment to the essay's subject.

Here is another way to think about these concerns—this time with greater emphasis on your responsibilities as a scholar:

12. Focus. You should narrow down your concerns to a reasonably focused set of questions and/or concerns, and then use the essay to explore those concerns.
13. Specificity. You should be as specific as you can about the questions you have. If you have questions about religion, for example, you should focus on specific historical periods, specific situations, and perhaps even specific denominations or manifestations of religion. If you have questions about the system of slavery, push yourself to look beyond the abstract level and at specific issues within the system.
14. Literary Skill. You should include in your paper a discussion of at least one (and, depending on the length and complexity of the work, perhaps more) work of literature. We are reading literature as part of our effort to "read" U.S. history and culture. Present examples of literature that pertain to questions you raise about history and culture, and think about how the author's handling of the work of literature provides insights into, for example, how to interpret the workings of culture.
15. Use of Information. The various texts we are reading provide a great deal of useful information. I expect you to make use of this information in your papers. Moreover, when you raise questions that can be answered by a quick look at an encyclopedia (especially specialized ones—for example, the Encyclopedia of African American Culture and History), I expect you to look at that encyclopedia. In other words, I expect you to do basic research on matters of simple information (people and events in history, for example).

16. Complexity. These papers should be challenging, for we are reading about and discussing challenging issues. I expect to encounter a certain intensity of thought in your essays, and I will be critical of any tendency to simplify the issues.
17. Grammar and Style. Your writing should be clear and correct, and I should be able to follow your line of thought without using a map.
18. Presentation. Remember to cite your sources, both in the body of the essay and in the bibliography or “works cited” page. For essays on literature, scholars generally use the Modern Language Association (MLA) or the Chicago format for citing sources.

Part 2: Manuscript Form and Presentation (and other important details)

Your paper must meet the grammatical and formal standards of academic prose. Leave yourself time to revise, and revise with a grammar handbook close by. Type carefully, and double-space the lines. For conventions concerning the proper handling of quotations, the presentation of titles of works, and the documentation of sources, see the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. A copy should be available in the library, or you could borrow mine. If you are an English major (or planning to be one) and do not yet own a copy of this book, buy one.

Remember also that academic conventions of clarity and formality are important. Avoid hazy generalizations and other forms of vagueness. A good way to check for this problem is to look at the main verbs and nouns in your sentences: do they tend to be abstract and general, or specific? If the former, change the noun or verb to something more specific rather than adding adjectives or adverbs. One source of ambiguity can be pronouns: make sure that your reader clearly knows what “this” and “that” refer to or, better yet, include clarifying nouns along with the pronouns (“this idea,” “that action”). “This” or “that” should not be the subject of any sentence in your essay.

Avoid also clichés, jargon, reductive expressions, and hollow modifiers like “interesting,” “positive,” “negative,” or “successful.” Please use gender-neutral language: he or she, hers or his, etc. Remember that there is nothing that warms a professor’s heart so much as the carefully, memorably turned phrase or well-written passage. Good writing simply gives your argument more authority and weight and demonstrates your care as a scholar (as well as stylist). All the elements that make for good creative writing also make for good academic writing, so show some creativity and care in your prose. Working within the formal conventions of academic writing does not need to be restrictive; working with and against those conventions—fulfilling them, following the rules (and knowing when, how, and why to break the rules at times), while also speaking with an individual voice—can be a very creative process.

You are required to follow MLA format for citing your sources. I have used this format in this guide so that you will have a model to follow. At the end of this guide is a sample “Works Cited” page.

The following are special instructions or reminders—which means that ignoring them might have a special effect on your grade. If you do not follow these guidelines concerning spacing, citation, and/or page numbering, then the best grade you can get on your paper is an “A-”.

19. Your essay must be typed, and double-spaced. You should have standard 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides.
20. Note the proper form of parenthetical citation demonstrated in this guide. Remember to indent long quotations. Remember also to provide page numbers for all quotations.
21. Your essay should have a title. An intriguing title can actually add to the power of an argument.
22. Number the pages of your paper (upper right-hand corner; include your last name).
23. Please do not present your paper in a plastic cover. Simply staple the pages once, on the upper left-hand corner.
24. Keep a copy of your paper. I’ve never lost a paper, but you are required keep a copy just in case. Even if I lose your paper, you are still responsible for it.
25. Proofread your paper before you submit it. Correct errors before you hand in the paper. If you spot some at the last minute, when it is too late to print a new copy of the paper, please correct the errors neatly with a pen. Spelling and grammar count.
26. Use brackets when you insert something into or change something in a quotation. Example: At first, Douglass seems optimistic, for his “new mistress [proves] to be all she appeared when [he] first met her at the door . . .” (77). In this case, I use brackets to indicate changes I have made to fit the quotation to the grammatical structure of my sentence.

Part 3: Assignment

You are required to write an analytical essay, not an informal discussion of or response to literature. An analytical essay presents an argument about how and why an author does certain things in his or her work; it examines the work’s thematic, conceptual, or rhetorical infrastructure (infrastructure means “the basic, underlying framework or features of a system”). Textual analysis is not limited to discovering “what the author intended”; often, the purpose of textual analysis is to explore the cultural, historical, and/or philosophical implications of the text’s apparent or implicit design—the patterns of ideas, images, language, and/or themes in the text, and the gaps or breaks in those patterns. In this way, reading a text is a way to learn how to be a better reader of one’s world, of the cultural forces that shape one’s thinking, one’s personality, even one’s adopted role in life. Textual analysis can make one conscious of all those things that one sees and does unconsciously on a daily basis; it can help us defamiliarize and thereby see and think about our familiar customs and surroundings.

I expect you to write a formal analytical essay even if you have not done so before. If you have never written this kind of paper, and if you have no experience reading texts

analytically, I recommend that you look at Mortimer J. Adler's and Charles Van Doren's *How to Read a Book*, an excellent book (and not as simplistic as its title suggests). If you are an experienced analytical reader, and if you would like to develop your skills by thinking about theoretical approaches to literary criticism, I recommend that you look at *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Finally, if you would like to increase your critical vocabulary, develop your understanding of terms that I mention in class, familiarize yourself with literary genres and periods, and read introductions to various critical theories, look through M. H. Abrams's *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (especially the sixth edition). All of these books are listed in the Works Cited at the end of this guide, and all should be available at our library, or you could order your own copies.

Remember that textual analysis is a formal academic discipline and that every paper you write will test your mastery of its principles. Let me stress that point: the papers are tests. When you write, then, your task is to demonstrate your ability to present a persuasive analysis, as well as to present your analysis in a coherent and grammatically correct format.

If you are not sure that you know how to write the kind of paper I am requiring, please don't hesitate to ask for advice or help. I will be happy to help you with each stage of the writing process.

Part 4: The Introduction

Your introductory paragraph should have three stages (three stages but only one paragraph). In a longer essay (20 pages or more), you would cover these same stages but in three or more paragraphs. The three stages are as follows:

27. **Subject.** In the first stage, you introduce your subject—the text itself. In a few (2-4) sentences, you should present the author and title of the work, along with a general overview of the work's plot, outstanding themes, or general achievement. The shorter the paper, the shorter this introductory passage should be; and in a very long essay (25-30 pages), the first few pages might well be devoted to this introductory passage.
28. **Topic.** In the next stage, you present your topic—the interpretive issue to which your paper is devoted. In a sense, you need to show that there is cause for confusion and misunderstanding, or that there is a dimension of the work that is not clear unless one looks at it a certain way (for example, by viewing it within its historical context). You might establish the interpretive problem or issue in a number of ways:
 - explain the problem or issue for the reader.
 - open with a question which you develop in the opening paragraph.
 - use a passage from the work to illustrate the problem or issue.
29. In the third stage, you present your thesis—your answer to the questions or issues you raise in stage 2. Your thesis should be explicit and specific. Consider carefully the following discussion of the thesis.

Do not begin your essay from the beginning of time. Postpone your comments about your personal feelings or response to the work, and postpone also your comments on the twentieth century when writing on literature from previous centuries. Usually, you can present material like this in your concluding paragraph, as you indicate the implications of the argument you have just presented. Get to the point elegantly, gracefully, directly, and quickly.

Part 5: The Thesis

An argument demonstrates the justice, value, and logical coherence of a thesis. Remember that a thesis is different from a subject or topic. The subject is the text you are analyzing. The topic is the interpretive issue you are trying to address. The thesis is the stand you take on that issue. A subject is what you are talking about; a topic is why you are talking about it; a thesis is what you are trying to say about that topic. A thesis is debatable; a topic is not, for a topic simply identifies—notes the existence of—grounds for debate or cause for confusion. A topic is something you can mention to a professor without feeling nervous; a thesis keeps you up at night.

This is not a thesis: “Melville uses symbolism in *Moby-Dick*.” What kind of symbolism? How does he use it? To what purpose? Will you examine all examples of symbolism in the novel? Again, this is not a thesis: “Hawthorne examines history in *The Marble Faun*.” You might develop this observation into a thesis by establishing the specific issue and taking a clear stand. Consider, for example, this statement from a published essay: When Hawthorne says that those who object to the unresolved mysteries of *The Marble Faun*’s ending do “not know how to read a Romance,” he means, as his work itself shows, that insofar as they expect definite answers to their questions or an unambiguous moral to the story, they do not know how to read history either. (Michael 150) True, this is a long thesis; and, true, it makes the idea behind it sound more complicated than it actually is. Still, this scholar’s purpose is clear, and one can anticipate what he will argue in the rest of the essay, and why.

- If you present your topic in the form of a question, your topic and thesis might look like this: What are we to make of Melville’s emphasis on “The Whiteness of the Whale” in *Moby-Dick*; or, *The Whale*? Although it is tempting to assert that this “whiteness” has nothing to do the complex and contested racial landscape of the nineteenth-century United States, the novel offers significant evidence that race is indeed the issue to which all other concerns in this novel must be related.
- If you present your topic by quoting a sentence from the text, your topic and thesis might look like this: In his appendix to *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*, Douglass seems to worry about the implications of his comments on religion throughout the body of this text. “I have,” he notes, “in several instances, spoken in such a tone and manner, respecting religion, as may possibly lead those unacquainted with my religious views to suppose me an opponent of all religion.” But as he explains his distinction between “the Christianity of this land” and “the Christianity of Christ,” Douglass reapplies his

concerns and suggests that the white Christian reader is actually the one who should worry about being considered an opponent of all religion.

Part 6: Structure

Academic writing is very basic and straightforward. It is designed to allow one to read subtle arguments quickly. Accordingly, the structure of your argument is very important. Each paragraph should present a unified block of thought, a clear and significant stage of your argument. You should therefore avoid paragraphs that are too long (in a short essay, page-long paragraphs are too long, often a sign of unfocused thinking) or too short. As a general rule, each paragraph should have at least five sentences. Paragraphs with fewer sentences often indicate undeveloped or unsubstantiated thought. Each paragraph should build on what you have done in the previous paragraph, and should prepare your reader for what you will argue in the next paragraph. If you can move your paragraphs around without disturbing the nature of your argument, then you have not paid sufficient attention to the structure of your argument or have simply repeated yourself in the course of your paper.

My term for the structure of an academic essay is the “intellectual matrix” of the essay. The “intellectual matrix” is what you get when you read only the thesis statement and the topic sentence of each of your paragraphs (normally the first sentence of the paragraph). Just as your thesis indicates clearly the argumentative purpose of your paper, so should the first sentence of each paragraph, the topic sentence, indicate the argumentative purpose of that paragraph. I should be able to read only these sentences to determine the logical design of your argument. In other words, I should be able to summarize your argument from those sentences alone. Roughly one third of your grade will be based on the extent to which the “intellectual matrix” of your paper provides me with an accurate overview of your argument, and also on your ability to construct a systematic, unified argument that builds from one stage (one paragraph) to the next.

Part 7: Content

Remember that your assignment is textual, historical, and/or cultural analysis, not plot summary, and not simply general or subjective historical commentary. In textual analysis, your task is to show the connections between what the author says and how she or he says it—in other words, to identify and examine the implications of the author’s strategies (style, themes, images, patterns of thought and of argument, etc.).

Remember that your reader has read and thought about the text to which your paper is devoted, and therefore does not need to be reminded of the plot. Do not simply summarize the plot.

Historical commentary is useful, usually even necessary (in small doses), but use it wisely, make sure you know what you are talking about, and do not allow it to distract you from your main task: informed analysis. Typically, the more general and abstract the historical context, the less useful it will be. Keep in mind that all people in a given time

period did not think the same way, even if there are issues and ideas that did preoccupy many. Be attentive, in other words, to conflicts, differences, and changes among groups within a period, and never claim that “nineteenth-century Americans believed that . . .”. Even more important, if you introduce historical commentary, you must take care that you provide some evidence for your historical claims and that you establish your historical context efficiently and succinctly. If you are using elements from an author’s biography, for example, choose those elements that are relevant to your thesis and make sure that you establish why those elements are important for understanding the work.

Grades for papers based primarily on plot summary or on general historical commentary will begin somewhere in the area of a “C”—and they will go down from there.

You must present your argument carefully, methodically. In the early part of your paper, explain carefully the interpretive problem you intend to solve, and then proceed to solve it in stages. At each point of your paper, think about what your reader needs to know if he or she is to understand what is coming up in the next stage of your paper. At each stage, quote from your sources or from your primary text to show the basis for your interpretation. Show your reader that you are analyzing your topic or text and not just talking about it.

Focus is the key to success. You cannot hope to analyze an entire book, an entire century, or an entire social movement in a short paper. Therefore, you must isolate a representative portion of your topic. If you are writing about a literary text, for example, you might focus on a character, a scene, a rhetorical or ideological pattern, a pattern of allusions, or some other aspect of the author’s techniques and strategies. Find something you can examine in detail and explain your interpretation carefully. Justify your choice at the beginning of your essay; at the end of your essay, indicate how your conclusions can enable readers to understand other aspects of the work.

Part 8: Research and Support—A Reminder

It is important to remember that you must support your claims, and that you must not make any claims that you are unable or unwilling to support. When you present an interpretation of a sentence or passage or episode in a text, you must explain carefully how the text supports that interpretation. If you make a point about history, then you must do the necessary historical research, and you must refer to that research in your essay (see me on how to do this if you have not done this before). If you say something about an author, then you must support that point with biographical research. If you say something about how critics have viewed a certain text, then you must support that with research. Avoid making claims about how readers respond to a certain text, for you cannot support such claims.

Part 9: Using Quotations

To present a persuasive argument, you must quote from the text you are analyzing, and you must explain carefully how the evidence you present leads to and supports your

interpretation of the work. This is not to say that you should be blatant about this. That is, you shouldn't lead into a quotation by saying, "This interpretation is supported by the following quotation." Consider the following guidelines:

32. I should be convinced of the significance of the textual evidence (quotations from and allusions to the works) you present. In other words, don't just quote. Prepare your reader for the textual evidence you will present; present that evidence briefly (avoid long quotations); and then explicate, analyze, or otherwise explain the significance of that evidence. Never assume that a passage is self-explanatory.
33. Don't just present a quotation without introduction. I shouldn't suddenly encounter a quotation at the beginning of a new sentence, and you should never present a free-standing quotation (that is, a sentence that contains nothing but a quotation); always lead into the quotation in your own words, and then follow it with commentary.
34. Never end a paragraph with a quotation. Always follow with commentary, so that you conclude each of your paragraphs with your own words.
35. Avoid long quotations. Whenever possible, integrate (with quotation marks) significant phrases from the text in your own sentences as you present and explain your interpretation.
36. Whenever you use a significant word or phrase from the text, use quotation marks to indicate that you are in fact using someone else's words.

The following is taken from one of my essays, "From Mysteries to Histories: Cultural Pedagogy in Frances E. W. Harper's *Iola Leroy*." I present this so that you can have a model for using quotations, but I do not expect you to simply imitate my style. Indeed, I wish you the good fortune of avoiding my overly complex style. Still, I hope you will find it useful to examine (and, perhaps, question) my use of textual evidence.

From the essay:

Harper establishes the terms of this argument, and begins the novel, by confronting her white readers with their inability to interpret culturally-familiar discourse. In the first pages of the first chapter, Harper draws readers into a "shadow" culture—that of the slaves—and introduces her readers to the discursive network of that culture, the "mystery of market speech." Her depiction of slaves talking enthusiastically about "splendid" fish, and about butter "just as fresh, as fresh can be" (7-8) invokes images of the stereotypical Black characters who inhabited the pages of white supremacist fiction gaining popularity at the time. On the novel's second page, though, the narrator wonders at this "unusual interest manifested by these men in the state of the produce market," and raises the question that many readers might well have forgotten to ask: "What did it mean?" (8). The answer is that, during the war, "when the bondman was turning his eyes to the American flag," "some of the shrewder slaves . . . invented a phraseology to convey in the most unsuspected manner news to each other from the battle-field" (8-9). The "mystery of market speech" is thus solved by learning this phraseology, this cultural discourse that appropriates authorized, and in that sense, legal language for illegal but moral ends.

The primary point here is not that this particular mystery is now clear, nor is it merely that the slaves had to formulate their own language to circumvent the will of the dominant race; rather, the point lies in the discursive nature of the mystery itself, the extent to which one's ability to understand is controlled by one's cultural training. As one reads, one encounters other such mysteries, each of which reveals the cognitive and moral limitations inherent in and enforced by the dominant cultural system. Consider, for example, Dr. Gresham, whom the reader first meets in a field hospital, and who is clearly attracted to Iola Leroy, whom he believes to be a white lady generously lowering herself to serve the needs of the Northern soldiers. Initially, Dr. Gresham cannot understand how Iola can bring herself to kiss a black patient; and as he explains this to Col. Robinson, the reader discovers the terms of his confusion: I cannot understand how a Southern lady, whose education and manners stamp her as a woman of fine culture and good breeding, could consent to occupy the position she so faithfully holds. It is a mystery I cannot solve. (57) This description is essentially a circular equation of cultural identity. If one is a Southern lady, then one must have the advantages of education and good breeding which provide the manners and fine culture that are, by definition, the qualities of a Southern lady. The perfect circle of definition represents the cognitive closure that is the *raison d'être* of any culture system. When this closure leads to culturally exotic behavior, those within the cultural circle are faced with a mystery they cannot solve. When Col. Robinson provides the essential information, that "Miss Leroy was a slave," Dr. Gresham can relocate her in the cultural formula, and he says revealingly, "What you tell me changes the whole complexion of affairs" (58). Dr. Gresham, in other words, is able to relocate Iola according to existing cultural categories and stereotypes.

Note on using quotations: In the example from my own writing, note how the material from the work is integrated with my own words, and how I combine both block quotations and in-text quotations to incorporate the evidence into the prose. The idea is to make sure that yours is the dominant voice in your writing, that you prepare your reader for the quotations, and that your essay is as smooth as possible. Try these techniques in your own work.

Part 10: A Sample Works Cited Page (MLA format)

Note: Different academic disciplines (Literature, History, etc.) require different approaches to documentation; most do not use the MLA format. Always check your syllabus, or check with your professor, to determine what form you should use.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M. H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 6th ed. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1993.
- Adler, Mortimer J., and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. Revised and Updated Edition. A Touchstone Book. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972.
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- Lentricchia, Frank, and Thomas McLaughlin, eds. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1990.
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