

Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English

Course and Section No: ENGL 2700 A
Course Title: American Literatures I

Time: Tues. & Thurs. 16:05-17:25

Location: TB 236

Please confirm locations on Carleton Central

Instructor: Prof. M. Hewson
Office Hours: Tues. & Thurs. 13:00-14:00
Office: DT 1913
email: marc.hewson@carleton.ca
Phone: 613-520-2600 ext 2320

DESCRIPTION: This course will explore the creation and growth of a distinctively American literary consciousness from the earliest arrival of a European presence in the New World to the cataclysmic years of the Civil War that began only eighty-five years into the young nation's history. Our focus for this exploration will be the idea that the colonies (and subsequently the nation) were meant to be "a city upon a hill"—a beacon for the rest of humanity to look toward for guidance in matters religious, political and cultural. Our approach to the literature of the period will emphasize the historical and sociological situation of texts by some of the major authors with the aim of seeing how American literature reflected the attempt to fashion an ideal society reflective of notions of freedom, acceptance and opportunity.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Nina Baym, *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, 8th ed., vols. A and B (W. W. Norton)
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (Oxford)

EVALUATION: Critical Analysis Papers: 40% (2 x 20%)
Research Paper: 30%
Final Exam: 30%

Make note of the following course regulations:

1) **Submissions:** Assignments should be submitted at the beginning of the class on the assigned due date, or dropped off at the English Department office located at 1812 Dunton Tower. When the office is closed, use the drop slot beside the office counter. Those assignments are date-stamped the next morning and put in my mailbox. Assignments should not be slipped under the professor's office door. Emailed or faxed assignments will not be accepted without prior written agreement of the professor. If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

2) **Posted Grades:** All assignment grades will be posted on the course's cuLearn site. Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

3) **Plagiarism:** The University Senate defines plagiarism as presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas, or the work of others as one's own. This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else
- using ideas, quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement in an essay or assignment
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works, and/or failing to use quotation marks
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, suspension from a program, suspension from the university, or even expulsion from the university. View the University's Academic Integrity Policy online at http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/ccms/wp-content/ccms-files/academic_integrity_policy.pdf. For detailed discussion of the issue of plagiarism and proper use of sources, consult the following website: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>.

4) **Preparation & Attendance:** While attendance will not be actively monitored, regular attendance at lectures is expected. Lecture notes or synopses will not be provided to students missing class—it is your responsibility to make up for missed work (optimally through note-sharing via cuLearn). Please note that lecture material will comprise the information students will be expected to know for exam purposes. Finally, active participation is expected; this means coming to class having read that day's text(s) and being prepared to discuss it/them (*i.e.* to ask and answer questions as well as to listen and take notes).

5) **Communication:** I will use email and the cuLearn course site to communicate with students; you are advised to check both regularly. You are encouraged to contact me through email using your connect accounts. Please indicate your concern in the subject line (*e.g.* "research question"); unidentified emails will be deleted. Excessive informality is discouraged. I check email once daily Monday to Friday (usually sometime in the morning) but NOT on weekends. This means last-minute emails concerning assignments or what-have-you will likely not be returned in time to clarify questions (particularly those sent later in the day on Fridays).

6) **Classroom Etiquette:** Students are expected to be on time for each class so as not to disrupt the lecture for other class members. Also any electronic activity is expected to be for note-taking purposes only; texting, surfing, "facebooking," "tweeting," etc. are rude and disruptive for all others in the classroom. Non-academically oriented electronics—cell-phones, i-pods, i-pads, tablets, etc—should be turned off for the duration of lecture. Additionally, while discussion is encouraged, private conversations between students are distracting to those not involved; any comments should be made openly or not at all.

ACCOMODATIONS

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www.carleton.ca/equity/>

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details visit the Equity Services website: <http://www.carleton.ca/equity/>

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The **Paul Menton Centre** for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*) at <http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/new-and-current-students/dates-and-deadlines/>

General Explanation of Grading Criteria

Below is a general summary of elements that will factor into the grade for each of the essays you submit. The list for each grade provides an idea of the “do’s and don’t’s” associated with that letter grade; students should assume that they must meet all the positive expectations and avoid all the negative ones to achieve the mark in question.

A-range Grades

(Paper exceeds standard expectations for second-year essays):

- Arguments are always clear, fully explained and completely proven
- Ideas are original and imaginative not derivative
- Style and language are sophisticated
- Grammar is free of any flaws
- Documentation is correct throughout
- Technical expectations (length etc.) are completely met

B-range Grades

(Paper meets standard expectations for second-year essays):

- Arguments are generally clear, fairly well explained & proven for the most part
- Ideas are not totally original/imaginative but derivative ideas are handled well
- Style and language are handled fairly well but with some flaws
- Some grammar errors are evident
- Documentation is almost always correct
- Technical expectations are completely met

C-range Grades

(Paper meets some but not all standard expectations for second-year essays):

- Some aspects of argument are left unclear, unexplained and/or unproven
- Ideas are usually derivative and not always handled well
- Flaws are evident in style and language use
- Many grammar errors are noticeable
- Some technical expectations are not met

D-range Grades

(Paper only meets a few of the standard expectations for second-year essays):

- Arguments are generally unclear, largely unexplained, and mostly unproven
- Ideas, if present, are generally derivative and ill-handled
- Significant flaws in style and language use exist
- Problems with grammar are evident throughout
- Many technical expectations are not met

F-range Grades

(Paper fails to meet the standard expectations for second-year essays):

- Arguments, if present, are confused and unproven
- General lack of ideas driving the paper to conclusion
- Major flaws exist in style and language use
- Systematic grammar errors are present throughout
- Majority of technical expectations are not met

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES AND READINGS

(Subject to change via cuLearn or in-class announcement)

Sept. 3rd - Introduction

Sept. 8th - Bradford: From *Of Plymouth Plantation*—Ch. IX-XII, XIX, XXIII

Sept. 10th - Winthrop: “A Model of Christian Charity”

Sept. 15th - Bradstreet: “Prologue,” “In Honor...,” “Contemplations,” “The Author...,” “To My Dear Children”

Sept. 17th - Rowlandson: *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

Sept. 22nd - Taylor, “Preparatory Meditations: Prologue, 8,” “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold”

- Edwards, “Personal Narrative”

Sept. 24th - Franklin, “The Way to Wealth”

Sept. 29th - De Crevecoeur: From *Letters From an American Farmer* (Ch. III & IX)

Oct. 1st - Jefferson: “The Declaration of Independence”

CRITICAL RESPONSE 1 DUE

Oct. 6th - Equiano: From *The Interesting Narrative...*

- Wheatley: “On Being Brought...,” “To the Right Honorable...,” “To His Excellency...”

Oct. 8th - Irving: “Rip Van Winkle”

Oct. 13th - Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Oct. 15th - Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Oct. 20th - Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Oct. 22nd - Emerson: “Nature,” “Self-Reliance”

Oct. 27th - READING WEEK

Oct. 29th - NO CLASSES

Nov. 3rd - Thoreau: *Walden*—Ch. 1-2, 18

Nov. 5th - Poe: “Ligeia”

Nov. 10th - Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*

Nov. 12th - Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*

Nov. 17th - Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*

Nov. 19th - Whitman: Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, “Song of Myself”

Nov. 24th - Douglass: From *Narrative of the Life*—Ch. 1, 5-7, 9-10 **RESEARCH ESSAY DUE**

Nov. 26th - Jacobs: From *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Dec. 1st - Melville: “Benito Cereno”

Dec. 3rd - Lincoln: All Selections

CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPERS

Twice in the term students will write a critical response paper of (3-5 double-spaced pages in an appropriate font, *e.g.* Times 12) one of the works covered in class. Papers should offer an analytical assessment of some aspect of the text in question, presenting a thesis and supporting it by reference to the work itself. Research is NOT required for this assignment which should consist of students' own thoughts on the material. However, since papers will be submitted prior to class discussion on any given work, some secondary reading might be useful in putting shape to students' understanding of the writer's text in question. That said, **biographical or plot synopses are not acceptable and will receive an F.** In essence students are to craft an argumentative opinion related to some element of the writer's message deriving from their close reading of the works. **Papers of fewer than 2 FULL pages of essay text will receive a zero without being read. Students may NOT write on the text from either response paper in their research essay.**

LATE POLICY: Critical response papers are due in class on the day the author in question is to be discussed and will NOT be accepted after he or she has been examined by the group. In case of works that span more than one class, papers are due during the first meeting on the text in question. To comply with University regulations on early course feedback, students must submit their first response **NO LATER THAN Oct. 1st**.

Below is a selected list of areas of investigation for some of the writers to be covered in the course. However, students should not feel bound by these suggestions—explore the writers and subjects that interest you most.

VALUE: 2 x 20%

Sample Topics

Sept. 8 th :	Attitudes towards the New World in Bradford
Sept. 15 th :	Bradstreet's Self-View as Puritan Poet
Sept. 17 th :	Colonial Attitudes to Natives in Rowlandson
Sept. 22 nd :	God & Nature in Edwards
Sept. 29 th :	De Crevecoeur & American Identity
Oct. 1 st :	Jefferson's Vision of America
Oct. 6 th :	Equiano on the Slave Experience
Oct. 8 th :	Irving's Views on the Revolution
Oct. 13 th :	Cooper on Nature
Oct. 22 nd :	Emerson as Practical Philosopher
Nov. 3 rd :	Thoreau & Self-Reliance
Nov. 5 th :	Poe & the Gothic
Nov. 10 th :	Hawthorne's Attitude towards Puritanism
Nov. 19 th :	Whitman & Nationalism
Nov. 26 th :	Jacobs & the Female Slave Experience
Dec. 1 st :	Symbolism in "Benito Cereno"
Dec. 3 rd :	Lincoln's Vision of America

RESEARCH ESSAY

Write a critically evaluative paper (5-7 double-spaced pages with 1” margins in an appropriate font *e.g.* Times Roman 12) on one of the following topics. Essays should make use of and refer explicitly in the paper to a MINIMUM of 3 scholarly sources (excluding the primary texts), offering proper documentation in MLA format. Consult this site for information on MLA rules and regulations: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/1/>. **Essays of fewer than 4 FULL pages of text (excluding works cited) will receive a zero. Essays not meeting the minimum research requirements will receive an F.** The essay will be evaluated on its ability to establish a claim, to support that claim using evidence from the works themselves and from academic sources relating to those works, to present the claim in proper grammar and style, and to offer information in a technically accurate way (*i.e.* to comply with the rules and limitations presented above).

As stated above, plagiarism will not be tolerated in the course. All work must be the student’s own, created for this course specifically. Any and all use of other people’s intellectual property must be accurately documented in the manner explained in the above website. Be certain you understand what constitutes plagiarism, and learn to avoid it. For detailed discussion of the issue of plagiarism and proper use of sources, consult the following website: <http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/plagsep.html>.

DUE DATE: Nov. 24th

VALUE: 30%

LATE POLICY: assignments submitted after the due date without accompanying medical or other appropriate documentation will be deducted 5% PER DAY beginning 8:30am the day after the due date to a maximum of 5 days (weekends counting as one day). After that, no undocumented late papers will be accepted. There will be no individual exemptions from or exceptions to this rule. If non-emergency situations develop, familiarize the professor with them BEFORE they occur whenever possible.

TOPICS

1. Though it is written explicitly about slavery in the Americas, Melville’s “Benito Cereno” chooses not to focus on the issue of American slavery as such. What can we extrapolate from the text, though, to explain his thoughts about enslavement in the United States in a story written only a decade before the end of the Civil War and Abolition?
2. What, if any, are the differences between Emerson’s and Thoreau’s conceptions of Transcendentalism?
3. Compare the vision for a United States of America in *The Declaration of Independence* to the ideas about Pilgrim settlement explained in *Of Plymouth Plantation*. To what degree are Jefferson and the other committee members the inheritors of Bradford’s Puritan political and religious values?
4. Using *The Last of the Mohicans* as a guide, define and explain Cooper’s attitude toward relations between whites and Natives.
5. Create a topic that appeals to you from the works and authors we are covering this term. (Topics must be approved via email NO LATER THAN Nov. 3rd.)