

**Carleton University
Fall 2013
Department of English**

**Course and Section No: ENGL 2700B
Course Title: American Literatures I
Time: Tues & Thurs, 08:35-09:55
Location: SP 303**

Please confirm location on Carleton Central

**Instructor: Prof. M. Hewson
Office Hours: Tues & Thurs 10:30-11:30
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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) **Late papers:** 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.

3) Posted Grades: All assignment grades will be posted on the course's WebCT 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.

4) 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>.

5) 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 WebCT). 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).

6) Communication: I will use email and the WebCT 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).

7) 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.

8) **Disabilities Accommodation:** Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodation in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad_accom.html

9) **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/accommodation/student_guide.htm

10) **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/accommodation/student_guide.htm

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. 5th - Introduction

Sept. 10th - Bradford: From *Of Plymouth Plantation*—Ch. IX-XII, XIX, XXIII

Sept. 12th - Winthrop: “A Model of Christian Charity”

Sept. 17th - Bradstreet: “Prologue,” “In Honor...,” “Contemplations,” “The Author...,” “To My Dear Children”

Sept. 19th - Rowlandson: *A Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*

Sept. 24th - Taylor, “Preparatory Meditations: Prologue, 8,” “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold”

- Edwards, “Personal Narrative”

Sept. 26th - Franklin, “The Way to Wealth”

Oct. 1st - De Crevecoeur: From *Letters from an American Farmer*—Ch. III & IX

Oct. 3rd - Jefferson: “The Declaration of Independence” **CRITICAL RESPONSE NUMBER 1 DUE**

Oct. 8th - Equiano: From *The Interesting Narrative...*

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

Oct. 10th - Irving: “Rip Van Winkle”

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

Oct. 17th - Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Oct. 22nd - Cooper: *The Last of the Mohicans*

Oct. 24th - Emerson: “Nature,” “Self-Reliance”

Oct. 29th - READING WEEK

Oct. 31st - NO CLASSES

Nov. 5th - Thoreau: *Walden*—Ch. 1-2, 18

Nov. 7th - Poe: “Ligeia”

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

Nov. 14th - Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*

Nov. 19th - Hawthorne: *The Scarlet Letter*

Nov. 21st - Whitman: Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, “Song of Myself”

Nov. 26th - Douglass: From *Narrative of the Life*—Ch. 1, 5-7, 9-10 **RESEARCH ESSAY DUE**

Nov. 28th - Jacobs: From *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Dec. 3rd - Melville: “Benito Cereno”

Dec. 5th - 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.

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. **Papers of fewer than 3 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.**

To comply with University regulations regarding early course feedback, students must submit their first response NO LATER THAN Oct. 3rd.

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. 10 th :	Attitudes Towards the New World in Bradford
Sept. 17 th :	Bradstreet's Self-View as Puritan Poet
Sept. 19 th :	Colonial Attitudes to Natives in Rowlandson
Sept. 24 th :	God & Nature in Edwards
Oct. 1 st :	De Crevecoeur & American Identity
Oct. 3 rd :	Jefferson's Vision of America
Oct. 8 th :	Equiano on the Slave Experience
Oct. 10 th :	Irving's Views on the Revolution
Oct. 15 th :	Cooper on Nature
Oct. 24 th :	Emerson as Practical Philosopher
Nov. 5 th :	Thoreau & Self-Reliance
Nov. 7 th :	Poe & the Gothic
Nov. 12 th :	Hawthorne's Attitude towards Puritanism
Nov. 21 st :	Whitman & Nationalism
Nov. 28 th :	Jacobs & the Female Slave Experience
Dec. 3 rd :	Symbolism in "Benito Cereno"
Dec. 5 th :	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: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_mla.html. Essays of fewer than 5 FULL pages (excluding title pages, etc) 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. 26th

VALUE: 30%

TOPICS

1. How close are Thoreau's and Emerson's visions of Transcendentalism in your estimation?
2. Using *The Last of the Mohicans* as a guide, define and explain Cooper's attitude toward relations between whites and Natives.
3. 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. Does this mean he has little to say about the goings on in his own country? What *are* his thoughts about enslavement in the United States in a story written only a decade before the end of the Civil War and Abolition?
4. Using Rowlandson's work as an example, discuss the ways in which the captivity narratives written by European Americans (often women) contribute to the formation of Native representation(s) in American literature and culture.
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. 7th.)