

English 253
Winter 2020

SURVEY OF AMERICAN LITERATURE BEFORE 1865

Professor Elisabeth Ceppi
FMH M304
Office Hours: M 11:30-1:30 and by appointment
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This course will survey works of literature written in English from the beginnings of European settler colonialism in the Americas through the Civil War. We will focus on questions of genre and authorship and their relationships to the social, political, and intellectual histories of the geographic terrain that has become the United States. We will ask what, if anything, is distinctive about “American” versions of the themes and aesthetics associated with Protestantism, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism. We will also work to develop habits and skills of reading and writing necessary for critical analysis of literature.

REQUIRED TEXT (available at PSU Bookstore)
Norton Anthology of American Literature, 8th Edition (Package 1: Vols. A and B)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and participation, 15%; midterm exams (weeks 4 and 7), 40%; in-class writing, 15%; final exam, 30%.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance

Coming to class prepared to listen, think, write, and contribute to our collective learning process is essential to the work of the course. More than two absences will lower your final grade for the course. If you miss 3 classes, I deduct 2 points from your final grade; but for every additional absence above that, the penalty increases exponentially. There is no fair way to excuse absences or allow students to “make up” additional absences with extra credit.

Late work

Exam dates are firm. If you miss In-Class Writings, you can complete them at home and turn them in during the next class session with a slight penalty for lateness (see attached grading rubric for ICWs).

Electronics

Electronic devices can only be on during class if they are used for coursework (NOT including homework, for this or other courses).

Accommodations

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty, and the Disability Resource Center. Students with accommodations approved through the DRC should see me during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through the DRC should contact the DRC immediately. The DRC is located in 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, 503-725-4150, drc@pdx.edu, <https://www.pdx.edu/drc>.

Mandatory Reporting

One of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. As a faculty member, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual

violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find [a list](#) of those individuals or contact a confidential advocate at 503-725-5672. For more information about Title IX please complete the required student module [Creating a Safe Campus](#) in your D2L.

In addition to the assignments below, please read all of the author headnote essays.

January

- 6 M Introduction
8 W "Beginnings to 1700"; John Smith, *The General History of Virginia*
- 13 M William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (Book 1, Chs. I, IV, IX, X; Book 2, Chs. XI, XII, XIX, XXIII, XXVIII, XXXII)
15 W Anne Bradstreet, "Prologue"; "The Author to Her Book"; "To My Dear and Loving Husband"; Edward Taylor, "Upon Wedlock, and Death of Children"; "Huswifery"
- 20 M MLK BIRTHDAY—NO CLASS
22 W Mary Rowlandson, *The Captivity and Restoration...*
- 27 M "American Literature 1700-1820"; Jonathan Edwards, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*; Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*
29 W Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America"; Letter to Samson Occom; **EXAM #1**

February

- 3 M Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Life of Gustavus Vassa*
5 W Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Parts One and Two
- 10 M "American Literature 1820-1865"; Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
12 W Edgar Allan Poe, "The Cask of Amontillado"
- 17 M Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Birth-Mark"
19 W Margaret Fuller, "Fourth of July"; **EXAM #2**
- 24 M Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet"
26 W Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, Ch. 2, "Where I Lived and What I Lived For," Ch. 3, "Reading," Ch. 9, "The Ponds"

March

- 2 M Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
4 W Herman Melville, "Bartleby, The Scrivener"
- 9 M Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," sections 1-6, 11, 15, 21, 24, 33, 51, 52
11 W Emily Dickinson, #269/249; #339/241, #340/280, #372/341, #477/315; #598/632; #656/520; #788/709, #764/754

THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18 FROM 12:30-2:20.

Grading Rubric for In-Class Writings

2 points	Your answer is exceptional. It is careful, thoughtful, complex, and pays sustained attention to the terms of the prompt. Your claims are specific and insightful. Your answer is clearly written and coherent.
1.7	Your answer is very good. You make interesting observations, but you could press a bit harder to develop your interpretation by focusing on specific details and explaining how they relate to your ideas. It is clearly written and coherent.
1.5	Your answer is solid. It is clearly written and coherent. It attends to the terms of the prompt and shows a fine grasp of the main issues, but you tend to describe or comment on the text instead of working toward interpreting it. Press harder to refer consistently to specific details to support your ideas and explain how they do so.
1 or below	Your answer shows a lack of attention to the prompt and/or to the text under discussion.

**If you are absent when an ICW is given, you can make it up at home and turn it in at the beginning of the next class session; the highest possible grade will be 1.7.