

ENG 143: Nineteenth-Century American Literature
Winter 2013

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Time & Meeting Place
TBA

Office Hours
TBA

Course Description:

This course offers a survey of significant works and voices from the diverse traditions that contributed to the creation and consolidation of a U.S. national literature in the century following the formation of the Republic. Throughout the course, we will investigate evolving constructions of “American identity” using concepts of religion, race, gender, and ethnicity as touchstones in our discussion. We will also investigate the relationships among the evolution of American identities, the evolution of America as a nation, and the evolution of an American or national literature.

Course Goals:

By the end of the semester students should have an understanding of the major themes and forms of 19th century American literature. Students should be able to situate texts in relation to social, historical, cultural, and literary events and movements. Students should be able to discuss how aesthetic forms contribute to the content of works and to compare the form and content of various works with one another. Students should be able to write clear, thesis driven responses to course readings, supporting their claims with evidence from the texts. Students should also be able to present clear, well-supported arguments in oral form.

Course Requirements:

1) Class Participation:

The main requirement for the class is an intense engagement with the readings, not only in writing but in class discussion as well. Because class discussion is an opportunity to practice the critical skills that we will be developing in the course, attendance and active participation at every class session are expected. Active participation entails doing the reading and being able to refer to the reading in class, as well as both listening and responding to myself and to one another. In grading your participation over the course of the semester, I will be looking for signs of initiative, involvement, collaboration, intellectual growth, and impact on the class. If you do not speak of your own volition **at least once a week**, you can expect to be called on. If **any** member of the class demonstrates that he or she has not done the reading, **pop quizzes** will be instituted and will form a significant portion of **every** class member’s participation grade. If you cannot attend a particular class, you must let me know in advance and make arrangements for another student to take notes and collect handouts on your behalf. Missing or being late to more than two classes will negatively affect your participation grade. Finally, because you must be able to support the claims they make about the texts with evidence from those texts, you must bring the reading to class every day **in printed form**—this means **printing the short stories** on Lyceum and **buying the books** on the syllabus. **No laptops or cell phones in class, please.**

2) Weekly Writing and Discussion Questions:

By midnight each Monday (starting in **Week 3**), you will have the opportunity to post a one-to-three paragraph informal response to Tuesday’s reading on the lyceum forum for that week.

There will be ten opportunities to submit forum posts throughout the quarter, but you are only **required to submit five**. The key guideline for these posts is that they make a significant and contestable argumentative claim about the text that is supported by evidence from the text. You will receive written feedback on all of your posts, so they are an excellent opportunity to practice the skills required for longer writing assignments. All posts that engage thoughtfully with the reading will receive a check (the equivalent of a “B”), but check-plusses (the equivalent of an “A”) will be given to posts that also demonstrate proficiency in the above criteria. Check-minuses (the equivalent of a “C”) will be given to underdeveloped posts. Late postings will not be accepted. If you post more than five weekly writing assignments, I will count the top five grades.

In preparation for class on Thursday (starting in **Week 2**), you are also required to prepare one discussion question based on the day’s reading. Each question should refer to, and demand responses that refer to, specific moments in the texts (citing page numbers!). You should post your question on the lyceum discussion question forum for that week **by midnight on Wednesday night**. There will be eleven opportunities to submit discussion questions throughout the quarter, but you are only **required to submit ten**. **Before class on Thursday**, you must also select one question from among those posted that you would like to talk about in class that day. Do this by replying to the post of your choice and briefly explaining your reasons for wanting to discuss it in class. Part of our time on Thursdays will be spent in small groups or as a whole discussing one another’s questions.

You are **never to consult the internet or other secondary sources** for ideas in devising your weekly writing responses and discussion questions. I am interested in seeing your ideas, not someone else’s. Presenting someone else’s ideas as if they are your own constitutes **plagiarism**.

3) Group Presentation

In the next couple weeks, groups of around three will be assigned to a particular day during the semester. These groups will be asked to present a 10 minute presentation on the texts that are part of that day’s reading, and to lead class discussion on that reading for a further 10-15 minutes. Much like your most polished weekly writing assignments, these presentations should advance a contestable and significant argument about the text that is supported by evidence from the text. However, they should also push further by opening up questions or problems for whole class discussion, questions that follow from your initial claim. To support your questions, it is essential that you have relevant places in the text ready to help direct class discussion. Each group must prepare a clear and visually appealing **handout OR PowerPoint** to go along with their oral presentation (more on this later), and **must email this to me** as an attachment by **9pm** the night before their presentation.

4) Paper Assignments:

There are two paper assignments: a midterm (4-5 pages) and a final paper (4-5 pages). Although prompts for both papers will be provided, you are welcome to use ideas developed in weekly writing assignments as the basis for these papers provided that those ideas help you address the prompt. All papers must be posted on lyceum. Late papers will be penalized by up to 1/3 of a letter grade for each day they are late.

5) Academic Honesty:

Intellectual honesty is fundamental to scholarship. Accordingly, the College views plagiarism or cheating of any kind in academic work as among the most serious offenses that a student can commit. Plagiarism occurs when one presents work—ideas and/or specific language—which is taken from another person who is not given due credit. If you are uncertain in any specific situation as to whether plagiarism may be involved, you should discuss the matter with me. **All students are responsible for reading the College's statement on plagiarism**, found here:

<http://abacus.bates.edu/pubs/Plagiarism/plagiarism.html#0>

For all members of the academic community, citing sources not only protects them and their ideas, but it helps them to know when they do have a new idea, or whether they have achieved a meaningful synthesis of other people's ideas. It also helps their readers, by providing means whereby he or she can verify their account, seek further knowledge on their topic, and understand how they arrived at their conclusions. To cite sources in your own work, please **follow carefully the MLA guidelines**, found here:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

6) Email:

You are required to check your Bates email regularly, as I will be emailing the class with information, updates, and reminders throughout the semester. In the event of an emergency class cancellation, I will also notify students via email.

Course Evaluation:

- 20% Attendance & participation
- 20% 5 weekly writing posts & 10 discussion questions
- 20% Group presentation
- 20% Midterm paper (4-5 pages)
- 20% Final paper (4-5 pages)

Required Texts (available in the Bates College bookstore):

The Heath Anthology of American Literature (Sixth Edition), Paul Lauter, General Ed. (Volume B: 1800–1865)

The Heath Anthology of American Literature (Sixth Edition), Paul Lauter, General Ed. (Volume C: 1865–1910)

Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (Penguin, 1962)

Abraham Cahan, *Yekl and the Imported Bridegroom and Other Stories of Yiddish New York* (Dover, 1970)

All additional readings (marked with an *) can be found on Lyceum in the "Course Readings" folder.

Reading Schedule:

You are responsible for completing the reading by the date specified.

Week 1

Tues, 1/10: Introduction

Thurs, 1/12: Washington Irving, from *A History of New York* (1809)
“Rip Van Winkle” (1819/20)
Recommended: “Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1865,” 1443-1473

Week 2

Tues, 1/17: “Cluster: Expansion and Removal,” 1587-1597
James Fenimore Cooper, from *The Pioneers, or the Sources of the Susquehanna; A Descriptive Tale* (1823)
Catherine Maria Sedgwick, from *Hope Leslie* (1827)
William Apess, from *Eulogy on King Philip* (1836)

Thurs, 1/19: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Letter to Martin Van Buren (1838), *Nature* (1836), “The American Scholar” (1837), “Self-Reliance” (1841)

Week 3

Tues, 1/24: Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Birth-mark” (1843) and “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (1844)

Thurs, 1/26: Edgar Allen Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839), “The Purloined Letter” (1844), “The Raven” (1845) and “The Philosophy of Composition” (1846)

Week 4

Tues, 1/31: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (1855)
Emily Dickinson, selected poems (TBA)

Thurs, 2/2: David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government” (1849)
Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1853)

Week 5

Tues, 2/7: Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno” (1855)

Thurs, 2/9: David Walker, from “Appeal...to the Coloured Citizens of the World” (1829)
William Lloyd Garrison, “Editorial from the First Issue of the Liberator” (1831)
Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” (1852)

Week 6

Tues, 2/14: Frederick Douglass, selection from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas* (1845)

Thurs, 2/16: Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)*
Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

Week 7

2/18-2/26: **Winter Recess**

Week 8

Tues, 2/28: "African American Folktales: Animal Tales"
Joel Chandler Harris, from *Uncle Remus: His Songs and His Sayings* (1880) and
"Free Joe and the Rest of the World" (1887)
Charles Chesnutt, "The Passing of Grandison" (1899)

Thurs, 3/1: Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask" (1896), "Sympathy" (1899), "The
Haunted Oak" (1900)*, "The Lynching of Jube Benson" (1905)
Ida B. Wells-Barnett, from *A Red Record* (1895)
U.S. Supreme Court, *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896)

Fri, 3/2: Midterm Paper Due

Week 9

Tues, 3/6: Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894)*

Thurs, 3/8: Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894)*

Week 10

Tues, 3/13: Charles Chesnutt, "The Wife of His Youth" (1899)
William Dean Howells, "Mr. Charles W. Chesnutt's Stories" (1900)
Pauline Elizabeth Hopkins, "Talma Gordon" (1900), Preface to *Contending
Forces* (1901)

Thurs, 3/15: Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" (1884)
Henry James, "The Real Thing" (1892)*

Week 11

Tues, 3/20: William Dean Howells, "Editha" (1905)
Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892)

Thurs, 3/22: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)

Week 12

Tues, 3/27: Edith Wharton, "Souls Belated" (1899)*, "The Other Two" (1904)*

Thurs, 3/29: Stephen Crane, "An Experiment in Misery" (1894)*
Theodore Dreiser, "Curious Shifts of the Poor" (1889)*
Frank Norris, "A Deal in Wheat" (1903)*

Week 13

Tues, 4/3: Abraham Cahan, *Yekl* (1896)*

Thurs, 4/5: United States Congress, from Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)
Onoto Watanna (Winnifred Eaton), "The Half Caste" (1899)
Edith Maude Eaton (Sui Sin Far), "In the Land of the Free" (1909)

Week 14

Wed, 4/11: **Final Paper Due**