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Palmer 313
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Fall 2011
Clough 300
TTh 9:30-10:45 a.m.

English 360: American Romanticism

Yet America is a poem in our eyes; its ample geography dazzles the imagination,
and it will not wait long for its metres.
-- Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet"

American literature written before the U.S. Civil War is fundamentally concerned with "imagining" not only the future, but the present and past of the fledgling country. In many ways, the debate over what defines an "American" and who qualifies to be one is at the heart of all the readings this semester. We often think of this literature as being forward-looking, projecting what the country and its inhabitants should and will become, and this is true for writers like J. Hector de Crèvecoeur, who was convinced we were "the most perfect society now existing in the world," and Ralph Waldo Emerson, who declared, "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds." However, even at an early moment in the nation's history, there were just as many writers looking backward, interrogating the country's past, like Catharine Maria Sedgwick, who re-imagined the Puritan version of the Indian wars in *Hope Leslie*. Even as the nation became increasingly consumed with the present conflict over slavery, writers continued to look both to the future for hope and to the past for understanding. Harriet Beecher Stowe ends *Uncle Tom's Cabin* with a prophetic vision of freed slaves, while Herman Melville in *Benito Cereno* and William Wells Brown in *Clotel* re-tell events from the previous century to explore the origins and complexities of the slave's situation. Thus, we will explore how antebellum American authors were able to create a literary tradition that is rich, varied, and often contradictory as they grappled with an incredibly dynamic, contentious, and rapidly developing national landscape.

Required Texts

(Please note: I prefer that you use these editions. If you choose to use another edition, be aware that differences in pagination could make following class discussion difficult.)

Brown, William Wells. *Clotel*. Bedford/St. Martin's.
Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. W. & W. Norton.
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Blithedale Romance*. W. & W. Norton.
Myerson, Joel, ed. *Transcendentalism: A Reader*. Oxford UP.
Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie*. Rutgers UP.
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. W. & W. Norton.

Several electronic documents will also be required readings. These documents will be in my Public Folder.

Assignments

Essay #1 (5-7 pages)	15%
Essay #2 (5-7 pages)	20%
Final Essay (12 pages)*	35%
Short response papers	20%
Participation	10%

*As part of your final essay, you will submit a paper proposal and annotated bibliography. Failure to complete either adequately will lower your final essay grade 10 pts. Failure to complete both adequately will lower your final essay grade 20 pts.

Attendance Policy

Because this is a 300-level English class, you are expected to perform like majors and be serious about your work. I will have little patience, therefore, with lax attendance or inattention during class. You are to be here on-time, well-prepared, and well-rested. If you miss more than 3 classes, your final grade will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per absence. If you miss more than 6 classes, you may fail the course. Furthermore, a failure to participate can adversely affect your attendance. Coming to class without the assigned reading text for the day may be counted as an absence.

Assignment Submission Policy

Essays are due on the day and time specified in the syllabus. You will lose 2/3 of a letter grade per day (including weekends) whenever an assignment is late. (For example, if the essay receives an A- but is one day late, the final grade is a B, and so on.) After an essay is a week late, you will receive an "F" on the assignment. If you fail to turn in any of the major assignments, you will fail the course.

Also, please note that essays must be typed, double-spaced with an inch margin, stapled, and adhere to MLA standards in both layout and documentation. See me if you have questions about MLA or need further information.

Academic Honesty

If you plagiarize an essay or other assignment, in part or whole, you will fail the course in addition to any punishment meted out by the Honor Council. Please see the attached list of English department policies and read carefully the section on academic honesty. This policy governs our class. Please note particularly that work written for another class – even if revised – cannot be handed in as original work in this class. Doing so is considered intellectual dishonesty.

Reading Schedule

August

Thur, 25 Introductions

Tues, 30 FOLDER: John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity"
FOLDER: J. Hector de Crevecoeur, "Letters from an American Farmer"

September

Thur, 1 Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*: Author's Preface (5-6), Vol. I, Chapters I-V (7-65)
FOLDER: Bradford, From *On Plymouth Plantation*

Tues, 6 Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, Vol. I, Chapters VI-XII (66-169)
FOLDER: Mary Rowlandson, "Narrative of the Captivity of Mary Rowlandson"
Group 1

Thur, 8 Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, Vol. II, Chapters I-VI (173-246)
Group 2

Tues, 13 Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, Vol. II, Chapters VII-end (247-350)
Group 3

Thur, 15 FOLDER: Benjamin Franklin, from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*
FOLDER: Thomas Jefferson, from *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson* ("The Declaration of Independence")

Fri, 16: Essay # 1 Due outside my office door by 5:00 p.m.

Tues, 20 FOLDER: Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle," "Legend of Sleepy Hollow"
Joel Myerson, *Transcendentalism: A Reader*, Introduction (xxv-xxxvii)
Group 4

Thur, 22 *Transcendentalism*: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (124-60)

Tues, 27 *Transcendentalism*: Emerson, "Divinity School Address" (230-45), "Self-Reliance" (318-328)
Group 1

Thur, 29 *Transcendentalism*: Emerson, "Self-Reliance" (329-40)
FOLDER: Henry David Thoreau, Excerpts from *Walden*
Group 2

October

- Tues, 4 *Transcendentalism*: Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" (546-65)
Group 3
- Thur, 6 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (3-80)
NOTE: Please be sure to read the preface and letter at the beginning of the text.
Group 4
- Tues, 11 *Transcendentalism*: Margaret Fuller, "The Great Lawsuit: Man *versus* Men. Woman *versus* Women" (383-414)
- Thur, 13 *Transcendentalism*: Fuller, "The Great Lawsuit" (415-427); Elizabeth Peabody, "[Woman], from 'The Conversations of Margaret Fuller,'" (280-88); Sophia Ripley, "Woman" (314-18)
Group 1
- Tues, 18 FALL BREAK
- Wed, 19 Essay #2 due outside my office door by 5:00 p.m.**
- Thur, 20 *Transcendentalism*: Charles Lane, "Brook Farm" 456-60; "Brook Farm Association for Industry and Education, *Constitution*" (original and excerpts from the 2nd edition) 461-72; "George Ripley, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Brook Farm" (307-313)

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*: Preface, Chapters I-VII (1-45)
- Tues, 25 Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*: Chapters VIII-XIII (46-108)
Group 2
- Thur, 27 Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*: Chapters XIV-XXII (108-78)
Group 3

November

- Tues, 1 Hawthorne, *The Blithedale Romance*: Chapters XXIII-end (179-228)
Group 4
- Thur, 3 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Chapters I-IX (1-80)
- Tues, 8 Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Chapters X-XVIII (81-189)
Group 1

Thur, 10 Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Chapters XIX-XXIX (190-281)

Tues, 15 Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*: Chapters XXX-end (282-388)
Group 2

Thur, 17 William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or the President's Daughter*: Chapters I-XII (81-139)

Fri, 18 Final Essay Proposal Due

Tues, 22 Brown, *Clotel; or the President's Daughter*: Chapters XIII-end (140-227)
Group 3

Thur, 24 THANKSGIVING BREAK

Tues, 29 FOLDER: Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*
Group 4

December

Thur, 1 FOLDER: Walt Whitman, Selections from *Leaves of Grass*

Tues, 6 Last Day of Class
Annotated Bibliography Due

Final Essay due outside my office door on Saturday, Dec. 10 at noon