Early American Literature

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Course: ENGL 359.01  
Semester: Fall 2010  
Time: 11-11:50am MWF  
Room: 103 Buckman

Course Description

This course examines a variety of texts written in and about America from initial contact to 1800, a more than three-hundred-year period that witnessed a series of colonial and postcolonial struggles in the new world. We'll begin with narratives of discovery, exploration, and settlement, using the way colonization opened up contact zones--that is, shifting spaces wherein Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans encountered each other--as a framework for reading early America as a multilayered text, woven out of various cultural histories and centers. We'll also interrogate the inherent contradictions of Anglo-American settler culture, which, growing increasingly hostile to British dominance while developing its own imperial ambitions, became colonized and colonizing at once. More intimately, we'll examine classic writings of the Great Awakening, the Revolution, and the establishment of the early republic, with an eye to how the Puritan legacy and Enlightenment thinking shaped the nation's character and destiny. Then we'll turn to early American fiction, which began budding in the wake of the Revolution. As we explore the rise of the American novel alongside the birth of the nation, we'll notice how early republican authors competed against British cultural hegemony; how American literary nationalism went hand in hand with nation building; and how the novel's generic overlaps (sentimental, epistolary, historical, Gothic, autobiographical, picaresque) reflected the political instability and cultural hybridity of America in the postcolonial moment.

Required Texts

*Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (2nd Edition)  
Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple and Lucy Temple* (Penguin)  

Grading

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation/Professionalism</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini-Papers (1 page max.)</td>
<td>2x5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper 1 (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Short Paper 2 (4-5 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper (10 pages)</td>
<td>35%</td>
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\[ A = 100-94; \text{A}\* = 93-90; \text{B}+ = 89-87; \text{B} = 86-84; \text{B}\* = 83-80; \text{C}\* = 79-77; \text{C} = 76-74; \text{C}\* = 73-70; \text{D}+ = 69-67; \text{D} = 66-64; \text{D}\* = 63-60; F < 60 \]
Participation/Professionalism: While I will often begin class with a lecture, this course relies heavily on discussion. You are expected to have all the readings done for the day they are assigned and come prepared to discuss them, and you must always bring the text(s) we are discussing to class. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Part of your participation grade includes quizzes, which are unannounced and given at the beginning of class. If you are late or absent on a quiz day, you cannot make up the quiz. I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Quizzes must be done on paper with clean edges. Finally, a lack of professionalism (e.g., not following course policies, rude behavior, and so on) will negatively affect this portion of your grade.

Electronic Devices: No laptops, cell phones, texting, etc. allowed.

Email Policy: The best way to address questions about our class is by meeting in person. I am always happy to talk with you during my office hours, by appointment, or after class. That said, I am available by email for simple and succinct queries. I typically respond to email once a day between 9am-5pm Monday-Friday. If you do need to email, here are some rules to follow:

- Email correspondence should be treated as formal communication
- Email is not the place to discuss grade concerns or negotiate any kind of special request
- Email is not the place to seek feedback on your writing or ideas; that must be done in person
- Do not email at the last minute (e.g., the night before an assignment is due) asking for help
- Do not email if you plan to visit during office hours; I'll be there, unless otherwise stated
- Do not email about your absences, unless you are missing two or more classes in a row

Appointments: If you cannot meet with me during my office hours or after class, we can set up an appointment at a time that is mutually convenient. If you need to make an appointment, please plan to do so at least 24 hours in advance.

Attendance: While I expect you to attend every class, you are allowed three absences during the semester. After three absences, every additional absence will lower your final grade by one percentage point (e.g., 80% becomes 79%, and so on). If you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. Note: If you miss class, please don't contact me to ask what you missed. Instead, you should exchange contact information with other classmates and ask them what we covered in class.

Tardiness: Please do not come late to class. Tardiness disrupts the flow of class and distracts other students. If you have a scheduling conflict, you are advised to drop the class. Tardiness will lower your participation/professionalism grade.

Mini-Papers: For these brief assignments, you will use a concept from Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts to analyze some aspect of one of our texts. The mini-papers, like the other papers, must follow the mode-of-submission guidelines. Note: You will lose points for exceeding the 1-page limit.
Short Papers: For these two papers, you will use a concept or concepts from *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* to critically analyze one or more of our texts. You will receive a handout for each paper.

Research Paper: The final assignment asks you to compose a 10-page paper (consisting of an argument, original analysis, and research) on one or more of the texts we have read this semester. Remember, this is a research paper, which means you must assemble a variety of scholarly perspectives to help build an original, argumentative analysis. You will receive a handout for this paper.

Mode of Submission: Papers are due at the beginning of class. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with 1-inch margins on the top and bottom and 1.25-inch margins on the sides. Please use printer ink that produces a copy dark enough to be easily legible. Place your name, instructor's name, course number, and date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Your last name and page number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of all pages. Do not include a title page. Place your title above the text on page one and double space above and beneath it. Your title should not be underlined. Be sure to staple your paper. You may lose points for not following these guidelines. Note: I do not accept papers by email.

Late Work: All work must be turned in on time. If you will not be in class when a paper is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. A late paper will lose one percentage point for each weekday it is late and two percentage points over the weekend.

Submission of All Work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual Honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult me.

Disability Issues: Students with documented disabilities should meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In all cases, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.
Schedule (subject to change)

NA = Norton Anthology of American Literature
KC = Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts

Note: Read the headnote for each reading in our anthology

Week 1
Aug 25: Introduction to Course
Aug 27: "Discourse" and "Eurocentrism" (KC); Christopher Columbus, All Selections (NA)

Week 2
Aug 30: "Cannibal" and "Savage/Civilized" (KC); Bartolomé De Las Casas, All Selections (NA)
Sept 1: "Contact Zone" and "Going Native" (KC); Álvar Núñez Cabeza De Vaca, All Selections (NA)
Sept 3: "Colonial Desire" and "Manicheanism" (KC); John Smith, All Selections (NA)

Week 3
Sept 6: Labor Day
Sept 8: "Exile" and "Settler Colony" (KC); William Bradford, 104-09, 120-32, 136-37 (NA)
Sept 10: "Palimpsest" (KC); Thomas Morton, All Selections (NA)

Week 4
Sept 13: "Ambivalence" (KC); Mary Rowlandson, 235-50 (NA)
Sept 15: "Hybridity" (KC); Rowlandson, 250-67 (NA)
Sept 17: Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book," "Before the Birth of One of Her Children," "A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment," "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House" (NA); Mini-Paper 1 Due

Week 5
Sept 20: Michael Wigglesworth, All Selections (NA); Edward Taylor, "Psalms," "Meditation 8," and "Meditation 26" (NA)
Sept 22: "Other" and "Othering" (KC); Cotton Mather, from The Wonders of the Invisible World (NA); Robert Calef, All Selections (NA)
Sept 24: "Agency" and "Double Colonization" (KC); "A Notable Exploit": Hannah Dustan's Captivity and Revenge (NA)

Week 6
Sept 27: "Mimicry" (KC); Native Americans: Contact and Conflict (NA)
Sept 29: "Exploration and Travel" (KC); Sarah Kemble Knight, All Selections (NA)
Oct 1: Paper 1 Due; Presentations

Week 7
Oct 4: Teresa Goddu, from Gothic America (handout)
Oct 6: Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (NA)
Oct 8: "Frontier" (KC); J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur, 595-605 (NA)

Week 8
Oct 11: "Slave/Slavery" (KC); Crèvecoeur, 605-16 (NA)
Oct 15: "Hegemony" (KC); John Adams and Abigail Adams, All Selections (NA)
Week 9
Oct 18: **Fall Recess**
Oct 20: "Anti-Colonialism" (KC); Thomas Paine, All Selections (NA)
Oct 22: Thomas Jefferson, All Selections (NA)

**Week 10**
Oct 25: "Diaspora" (KC); Olaudah Equiano, 674-89 (NA)
Oct 27: Equiano, 689-709 (NA)
Oct 29: Philip Freneau, "On the Emigration to America" and "The Indian Burying Ground" (NA); Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" and "To His Excellency General Washington" (NA); **Mini-Paper 2 Due**

**Week 11**
Nov 1: Royall Tyler, *The Contrast*, 764-84 (NA)
Nov 3: Tyler, *The Contrast* 784-805 (NA)
Nov 5: **No Class**

**Week 12**
Nov 8: Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, 1-44 (Chapters 1-11)
Nov 10: *Charlotte Temple*, 45-90 (Chapters 12-23)
Nov 12: *Charlotte Temple*, 91-132 (Chapters 24-35)

**Week 13**
Nov 15: **Paper 2 Due**; Presentations
Nov 17: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*, 806-40 (NA)
Nov 19: *The Coquette*, 841-72 (NA)

**Week 14**
Nov 22: *The Coquette*, 872-904 (NA)
Nov 24: **Thanksgiving**
Nov 26: **Thanksgiving**

**Week 15**
Nov 29: "Decolonization" (KC); Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 1-85 (Chapters 1-8)
Dec 1: "Nativism" (KC); Brown, *Edgar Huntly*, 86-123 (Chapters 9-12)

**Week 16**
Dec 10: **Final Paper Due**