

American Romanticism

Professor: Jason Richards
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Course: ENGL 360.01
 Time: 11:00-12:15 TR
 Room: 300 Clough
 Semester: Fall 2014

Course Description

American Romanticism describes a period of literary and artistic expression spanning the decades leading up to the Civil War, a time defined by robust national expansion, intensifying sectional conflict, and howling cultural contradictions. Although newly liberated and founded on principles of democratic freedom, America prospered off the institution of slavery as well as the displacement and extermination of Indians. Although the nation grew more and more heterogeneous by the day, whites drew racial lines to protect their sense of homogeneity while enacting an aggressive Anglo-Saxon nationalism. Writing to Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1851, Herman Melville seemed to crystallize such contradictions through what he called “ruthless democracy.” That paradox will inform our course as we explore what is arguably the most remarkable period in American literary history, known for such authors as Emerson, Poe, Douglass, Hawthorne, Melville, Stowe, Rollin Ridge, and others. Some specific questions we’ll consider over the semester are: What do the confidence of Transcendentalism and skepticism of the Gothic, rival literary modes that form the genetic basis of American Romanticism, say about the nation’s schizophrenic identity? How does the South, the nation’s internal other and embodiment of everything America defined itself against, serve to construct and deconstruct the nation’s dearest myths? Did America really develop a distinctive national literature at this time, or was it a more complex tapestry of transatlantic intertextuality? And how do literary representations of racial performance reflect how America was, in a real sense, acted into being?

Required Texts

Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self-Reliance and Other Essays* (Dover)
 Edgar Allan Poe, *The Gold-Bug and other Tales* (Dover)
 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Dover)
 Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlett Letter* (Penguin)
 Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Penguin)
 John Rollin Ridge, *Joaquin Murieta* (Oklahoma)

Grading

Participation/Professionalism	15%
Short Paper 1 (5-6 pages)	25%
Short Paper 2 (5-6 pages)	25%
Research Paper (10-12 pages)	35%

A = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90; **B+** = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80; **C+** = 79-77; **C** = 76-74;
C- = 73-70; **D+** = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **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. If you miss or perform poorly on a quiz, you can compensate for it by participating more in class.** 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.

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 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.**

Electronic Devices: No laptops, cell phones, etc. allowed. **Texting is expressly forbidden.**

Attendance: While I expect you to attend every class, you are allowed two absences during the semester. After two 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 do 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.

Papers: You will write two short papers and one research paper for this course. You will receive a handout for each 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. **No extensions are granted.** 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 **two percentage points** for each day it is late.

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. Clear evidence of plagiarism (failure to use quotation marks around verbatim or copied language, failure to adequately paraphrase, and failure to cite the source of quoted, paraphrased, or borrowed text and ideas), regardless of the Council hearing outcome, may likewise result in failure of the course. 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)

Week 1

Aug 28: Introduction

Week 2

Sept 2: Irving, "Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (handout)

Sept 4: Emerson, "Divinity School Address"

Week 3

Sept 9: Poe, "Ligeia"

Sept 11: Emerson, "Self-Reliance"

Week 4

Sept 16: Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown" (handout)

Sept 18: Poe, "Black Cat"

Week 5

Sept 23: Poe, "Tell-Tale Heart" and "Masque of the Red Death"

Sept 25: Emerson, "Fate" (handout)

Week 6

Sept 30: Douglass, *Narrative*, Preface, Letter, and Chapters 1-9 (pages vii-34)

Oct 2: Douglass, *Narrative*, Chapters 10-11 (pages 34-69); **Paper 1 Due**

Week 7

Oct 7: Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapters 1-6 (pages 45-88)

Oct 9: Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapters 7-12 (pages 89-138)

Week 8

Oct 14: Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapters 13-19 (pages 139-86)

Oct 16: Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, Chapters 20-24 (pages 187-228)

Week 9

Oct 21: **Fall Recess**

Oct 23: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapters 1-9 (pages 41-161)

Week 10

Oct 28: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapters 10-16 (pages 162-283)

Oct 30: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapters 17-20 (pages 284-370)

Week 11

Nov 4: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapters 21-33 (pages 371-509)

Nov 6: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chapters 34-45 (pages 510-629)

Week 12

Nov 11: Melville, "Benito Cereno" (handout; pages 2372-2400)

Nov 13: Melville, "Benito Cereno" (2401-27)

Week 13

Nov 18: Rollin Ridge, *Joaquin Murieta* (pages 1-64)

Nov 20: Rollin Ridge, *Joaquin Murieta* (pages 65-100); **Paper 2 Due**

Week 14

Nov 25: Rollin Ridge, *Joaquin Murieta* (101-59)

Nov 27: **Thanksgiving Holiday**

Week 15

Dec 2: Emily Dickinson (handout)

Dec 4: Emily Dickinson (handout)

Week 16

Dec 9: Walt Whitman (handout)

Dec 11: **Research Paper Due by Noon (leave in my office mailbox: 311 Palmer)**