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ENGL 359-01, Early American Literature, Fall 2012

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Early American Literature

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Course: ENGL 359.01
 Semester: Fall 2012
 Time: 10-10:50 MWF
 Room: 304 Clough

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

The Norton Anthology of American Literature (8th Edition, Vol. A)
Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (2nd Edition)
 Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple and Lucy Temple* (Penguin)
 James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers* (Penguin)

Grading

Participation/Professionalism	15%
Mini-Papers (1 page max.)	2x5%
Short Paper 1 (4-5 pages)	20%
Short Paper 2 (4-5 pages)	20%
Research Paper (10 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.** 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, etc. allowed. **Texting is expressly forbidden.**

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.**

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: Mini-papers are designed to prepare you for the larger 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. **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 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. 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)

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 22: Introduction to Course

Aug 24: “Discourse” and “Eurocentrism” (KC); Christopher Columbus, All Selections (NA)

Week 2

Aug 27: “Cannibal” and “Savage/Civilized” (KC); Bartolomé De Las Casas, All Selections (NA)

Aug 29: “Contact Zone” and “Going Native” (KC); Álvaro Núñez Cabeza De Vaca, All Selections (NA)

Aug 31: “Colonial Desire” and “Manicheanism” (KC); John Smith, All Selections (NA)

Week 3

Sept 3: **Labor Day**

Sept 5: “Exile” and “Settler Colony” (KC); William Bradford, 121-27, 138-50, 154-55 (NA)

Sept 7: “Palimpsest” (KC); Thomas Morton, All Selections (NA)

Week 4

Sept 10: “Agency” and “Double Colonization” (KC); John Winthrop, from *The Journal of John Winthrop* (NA)

Sept 12: “Ambivalence” (KC); Mary Rowlandson, 256-71 (NA)

Sept 14: “Hybridity” (KC); Rowlandson, 271-88 (NA); **Mini-Paper 1 Due**

Week 5

Sept 17: Anne Bradstreet, “The Author to Her Book,” “Before the Birth of One of Her Children,” “Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House” (NA); Edward Taylor, “Meditation 8,” (First Series) and “Meditation 26” (Second Series) (NA)

Sept 19: “Other” (KC); Cotton Mather, from *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (NA)

Sept 21: “Mimicry” (KC); Native Americans: Contact and Conflict (NA)

Week 6

Sept 24: “Exploration and Travel” (KC); Sarah Kemble Knight, All Selections (NA)

Sept 26: **Essay 1 Due**; Presentations

Sept 28: Teresa Goddu, from *Gothic America* (handout)

Week 7

Oct 1: Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (NA)

Oct 3: “Frontier” (KC); J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur, 604-614 (NA)

Oct 5: “Slave/Slavery” (KC); Crèvecoeur, 614-25 (NA)

Week 8

Oct 8: Benjamin Franklin, “The Way to Wealth” and *The Autobiography* Part Two (NA)

Oct 10: “Hegemony” (KC); John Adams and Abigail Adams, All Selections (NA)

Oct 12: “Anti-Colonialism” (KC); Thomas Paine, All Selections (NA)

Week 9

Oct 15: **Fall Recess**

Oct 17: Thomas Jefferson, All Selections (NA)

Oct 19: “Diaspora” (KC); Olaudah Equiano, 687-701 (NA)

Week 10

Oct 22: Equiano, 702-721 (NA)

Oct 24: “Decolonization” (KC); Royall Tyler, *The Contrast*, 775-94 (NA)

Oct 26: Tyler, *The Contrast* 794-816 (NA); **Mini-Paper 2 Due**

Week 11

Oct 29: Philip Freneau, “The Indian Burying Ground” and “To Sir Toby” (NA); Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America” and “To His Excellency General Washington” (NA)

Oct 31: Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, 1-44 (Chapters 1-11)

Nov 2: *Charlotte Temple*, 45-90 (Chapters 12-23)

Week 12

Nov 5: *Charlotte Temple*, 91-132 (Chapters 24-35)

Nov 7: **Essay 2 Due**; Presentations

Nov 9: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*, (817-51 NA)

Week 13

Nov 12: *The Coquette*, (852-83 NA)

Nov 14: *The Coquette*, (883-916 NA)

Nov 16: Toni Morrison, from *Playing in the Dark* (handout); Philip Deloria, from *Playing Indian* (handout)

Week 14

Nov 19: James Fenimore Cooper, *The Pioneers*, 15-82 (Chapters 1-6)

Nov 21: **Thanksgiving**

Nov 23: **Thanksgiving**

Week 15

Nov 26: *The Pioneers*, 83-156 (Chapters 7-13)

Nov 28: *The Pioneers*, 157-230 (Chapters 14-20)

Nov 30: *The Pioneers*, 231-315 (Chapters 21-28)

Week 16

Dec 3: *The Pioneers*, 316-95 (Chapters 29-35)

Dec 5: *The Pioneers*, 396-456 (Chapters 36-41)

Dec 7: **Final Paper Due**