

**ENGL 3360: Survey of American Literature, Beginnings to 1865**  
**Fall 2017, Three Credit Hours**

Instructor: Dr. Jason M. Payton  
Office: EV 455  
Phone: (936) 294-3528  
Email: [jmpayton@shsu.edu](mailto:jmpayton@shsu.edu)  
Office Hours Appointments: [calendly.com/dr-jmpayton](http://calendly.com/dr-jmpayton)

**Course Overview:**

This course surveys a wide range of literary and historical texts from the colonial period through early national period in an effort to learn how writers understood what it meant to be “American” and to write “American Literature.” We will read travel narratives, captivity narratives, sermons, sacred and secular histories, slave narratives, political treatises, speeches, poems, and novels, paying special attention to the ways in which authors used these diverse literary forms to imagine and respond to their historical circumstances. Additionally, we will consider connections between past and present in an effort to grasp the historical origins of some of the most trenchant cultural debates of our own times.

**Objectives:**

ENGL 3360 has a set of course-specific objectives. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Gain a working knowledge of key authors and texts in early American literature
2. Obtain a basic familiarity with the sociopolitical contexts of major works
3. Trace the development of key themes in early American literature across authors and genres

These objectives correspond to the following IDEA objectives:

1. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view (Essential)
2. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity (Important)
3. Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing (Important)

**Teaching Philosophy:**

My courses create an active learning environment. While I will perform mini-lectures at strategic points in the course, this course is designed to foster critical thinking through dialogue. Some of that dialogue will be directly between you and me, and some of it will be between you and your classmates. Some of it will be in writing, and some of it will be in conversation. This type of learning environment demands that students and teachers commit to thorough preparation and consistent engagement. You may expect this of me, and I expect it of you. In practical terms, this means that I expect you to read carefully, think deeply, and engage substantively with me and with your peers throughout the course. Doing so will be essential for your success in the course.

## **Required Texts:**

Baym, Nina, gen. ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 8th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2012.

León-Portilla, Miguel, ed. *The Broken Spears*. Expanded and Updated Ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

## **Grading Plan:**

This course will evaluate your progress toward our main objectives through a series of discussions, quizzes and exams, and formal writing assignments.

The grading plan is as follows:

Research Methods Tutorial Assignment: 5%

Discussion Forum Post and Comment: 20%

Synchronous Meeting: 20%

Reading Quizzes: 20%

Short Essay: 10%

Term Paper: 25%

Grading Scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

## **Explanation of Assignments:**

*Research Methods Tutorial Assignment:*

You will be asked to select and annotate a scholarly article in early American studies. Your annotation will summarize the author's thesis, critical intervention, and argument structure. The minimum length for the annotation is 200 words.

*Reading Quizzes:*

You will be quizzed regularly to ensure your completion and comprehension of required course readings. Quizzes will be timed and will focus on both broad themes and specific details from course texts. Success on them will demand close and careful reading.

*Discussion Forum Posts:*

I will pose a question or series of questions related to the current unit's material. You will be asked to offer a thoughtful and well-articulated response that demonstrates a) that you have read the required course material closely and b) that you have thought deeply about the question and

the related course texts. You will be able to view others' responses once you have published your own.

In addition to responding directly to me, you are also required to respond to two of your peers' posts. Your response posts will also need to demonstrate that you have read and considered the relevant material carefully.

**Written Option:** You may choose to submit a written response to the main post or your peers' posts. If you choose this option, please use correct spelling and grammar, and please write in full, coherent sentences.

**Video Option:** You may choose to submit a written response to the main post or your peers' posts. If you choose this option, you need not have a script, but you should have a carefully considered response planned out that articulates a coherent train of thought in clear and comprehensible terms.

#### *Short Essay:*

You will be asked to write one short essay that demonstrates your competency at academic writing. Your essay will focus on a key theme or passage in a single primary text and will articulate a reading of that passage that is conversant with contemporary criticism of your chosen author, text, or theme. The minimum length for this essay is 1,000 words. The minimum secondary source requirement for the short essay is three. You may choose to follow either MLA or Chicago style, so long as you adhere consistently to your chosen style throughout the paper.

#### *Term Paper:*

You will write a traditional academic paper that addresses a key theme from the course. You will need to address one or more of our primary texts and advance an original argument about the significance of that text that is conversant with current scholarship. The minimum length for the term paper is 2500 words. The minimum secondary source requirement for the term paper is ten. You may choose to follow either MLA or Chicago style, so long as you adhere consistently to your chosen style throughout the paper.

#### **Class Policies:**

##### *Submission of Work & Late Work:*

All major assignments must be submitted via the appropriate application following the appropriate protocols by the stipulated due date. Work may not be submitted by any other means. Late work will not be accepted.

Exceptions will be made only in the cases of university-sponsored events, documented religious observances, and documented disabilities that require specific modifications to major assignments. Students in these categories must provide me with appropriate documentation at the beginning of the term if accommodations are to be made.

##### *Email Protocols:*

I do not correspond via email about academic performance, attendance, or matters communicated

clearly via the syllabus and course announcements. For inquiries of general interest to the class, please use the Virtual Office. For queries of a personal or private nature, please schedule a meeting via the following link: [calendly.com/dr-jmpayton](https://calendly.com/dr-jmpayton).

### **University Policies:**

[Academic Honesty Policy](#)

[Students with Disabilities Policy](#)

[Student Absences on Religious Holy Days Policy](#)

[Academic Grievances Procedures Policy](#)

*Visitors in the Classroom (On-Ground Courses Only):* Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis. These must be cleared with me in advance. Visitors must not distract or disrupt the class.

### *Instructor Evaluations:*

Students will be asked to complete a course/instructor evaluation form toward the end of the semester.

### **Course Schedule:**

The following is a brief outline of the module schedule for this course. The full information regarding reading and assignment parameters and schedules can be found within the individual module pages in our Blackboard course space. Announcements about major assignment due dates will also be communicated via the Announcements and Course Calendar tools.

Note: All assignments are due at 11:59 PM CDT on the date specified below. Assignments must be submitted via Blackboard following the submission protocols outlined in the course module pages.

#### *Module 1: Research Methods Tutorial*

This module is available from 10.18.17-10.23.17.

Your major assignment for this module is the Research Methods Tutorial Assignment, due on Monday, 10.23.17.

#### *Module 2: Discovery & Conquest*

This module is available from 10.23.17-10.27.17

Your major assignment for this module is a reading quiz due on 10.27.17.

### *Module 3: Gender & Sexuality*

This module is available from 10.30.17-11.3.17.

Your major assignments for this module include a reading quiz due and a synchronous discussion on Friday, 11.3.17 (times TBD).

### *Module 4: Religion & Society*

This module is available from 11.6.17-11.11.17.

Your major assignment for this module include a reading quiz due on Friday, 11.10.17 and a Short Essay due on Saturday, 11.11.17.

### *Module 5: American Enlightenment*

This module is available from 11.13.17-11.17.17.

Your major assignments for this module include a reading quiz due on Friday, 11.17.17.

### *Module 6: Race & Nation*

This module is available from 11.20.17-11.27.17. (Note: This is the week of Thanksgiving Break, so you are given a calendar week for this module.)

Your major assignments for this module include a reading quiz due on Monday, 11.27.17.

### *Module 7: Discussion Week & Final Exam*

This module is available from 11.27.17-12.4.17.

Your major assignments for this module are your discussion board post due on Monday, 11.27.17, your discussion board comments due on Wednesday, 11.29.17, and your term paper, which serves as the final project and final examination for the course, due on Monday, 12.4.17.