

ENGL 3360: Survey of American Literature, Beginnings to 1865
Spring 2018, Three Credit Hours

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Course Overview:

This course takes a thematic approach to early American literature. Through readings on Discovery and Conquest, Gender and Sexuality, Religion and Society, and Race and Nation, we will examine how writers from the colonial to the early national period 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.

Teaching Philosophy:

This course is designed to foster active learning. I believe that the most transformative educational experiences occur when students articulate for themselves and reflect regularly on the significance of course material through dialogue. I enter this course as your partner in this process of discovery and dialogue. I will serve the class as a guide familiar with the terrain of early America. I expect that you will learn from me, and I expect to learn from you. This course depends for its success on teacher and student alike reading carefully, thinking deeply, and engaging substantively with the texts and with each other.

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)

Course Structure:

This course is divided into four thematic units:

1. Discovery, Conquest & Settlement
2. Gender & Sexuality
3. Religion & Society
4. Race & Nation

Each unit explores a set of readings related to its thematic focus. These readings will explore a range of perspectives on the central theme from writers spanning the colonial and early national period. The thematic units are designed to focus our study on key issues in early American studies by grouping related texts together. Part of your work will be to discern connections between the texts in each unit, and part of your work will be to discern connections between units, as many texts speak to several of the thematic issues explored in the course.

Required Texts:

1. Baym, Nina, gen. ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*. 9th ed. Vol. A. New York: Norton, 2016.
2. León-Portilla, Miguel, ed. *The Broken Spears*. Expanded and Updated Ed. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006.

Assignments:

Reading Journal:

You will be asked to reflect on core texts and themes at regular intervals throughout the course. Your journals are your private space to reflect on your reading; only Dr. Payton and Kristina Lewis will read them. Your reflections will demonstrate the thoroughness of your preparation and the depth of your engagement with course themes. The length and scope of your entries will vary according to the prompt.

Discussion Board:

You will be asked to engage the whole class in discussion via the discussion board. The discussion board will offer you an opportunity to express the most important ideas from your reading journals and to foster intellectual community by responding to the ideas of your peers. Discussion prompts will be provided by Dr. Payton.

Synchronous Meetings:

Synchronous meetings will offer an opportunity to engage the class in live discussion. Prompts will be provided by Dr. Payton and dates will be announced at least two weeks in advance, once student schedules have been assessed, so students can make appropriate scheduling arrangements. Multiple time slots for each meeting will be offered to accommodate students with different types of schedules. Students with work or personal obligations that render synchronous meetings impossible will be offered alternate accommodations.

Annotation Exercise:

You will read, annotate, and summarize a scholarly article chosen by Dr. Payton. A sample annotation is provided in the Resources section for your reference.

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. The term paper will utilize the research skills honed during the Research Tutorial Assignment and the analytical skills honed during the Short Essay Assignment. 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.

Grading Plan:

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

The grading plan is as follows:

Annotation Exercise: 5%

Short Essay: 10%

Reading Journals: 20%

Discussion Posts: 20%

Synchronous Discussions: 20%

Term Paper: 25%

Grading Scale:

A: 90-100

B: 80-89

C: 70-79

D: 60-69

F: 0-59

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, except in the following cases: 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.

Exceptions will also be made for students who experience a major life event. Such students should approach me as soon as possible to devise an alternate work plan. Exceptions of this sort will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

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.

University Policies:

Academic Honesty: <https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/728eec25-f780-4dcf-932c-03d68cade002.pdf>

Students with Disabilities: <https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/187f9029-a4c6-4fb4-aea9-2d501f2a60f3.pdf>

Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: <https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/0953c7d0-7c04-4b29-a3fc-3bf0738e87d8.pdf>

Academic Grievance Procedures for Students: <https://www.shsu.edu/dotAsset/bb0d849d-6af2-4128-a9fa-f8c989138491.pdf>

Visitors in the Classroom: 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.

Note: All readings are from the Norton Anthology of American Literature unless otherwise noted. Readings not found in the NAAL are marked "supplementary" and can be located in the Resources content area under the "Supplementary Readings" heading.

Course Schedule:

The following is a brief outline of the theme schedule for this course. 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.

Theme One: Discovery, Conquest, and Settlement

Dates: 1.17.18-2.2.18.

Readings:

- Columbus: Letter of First Discovery, Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage.
- Zinn: Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress (supplementary).
- Cortés: Second Letter to the Spanish Crown.
- León-Portilla: *The Broken Spears*.
- Las Casas: *An Account, Much Abbreviated, of the Destruction of the Indies*.
- Cabeza de Vaca: *The Relation of Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*.
- Harriot: *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*.
- Smith: *The General History of Virginia, New England and the Summer Isles*.

Assignments:

- Introductory Video: Due 1.19.18.
- Reading Journal Entry 1: Due 1.26.18.
- Reading Journal Entry 2 (Annotation Exercise): Due 1.31.18.
- Synchronous Meeting One: 2.2.18.

Theme Two: Gender and Sexuality

Dates: 2.5.18-3.2.18.

Readings:

- Sor Juana: "Love Opened a Mortal Wound," "Suspend, Singer Swan," "You Foolish Men" (supplementary).
- Bradstreet: "The Prologue," "The Flesh and the Spirit," "The Author to Her Book," "To My Dear and Loving Husband," "For Deliverance from a Fever," "A Weary Pilgrim," "To my Dear Children."
- Wheatley: "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To the University of Cambridge, in New England," "Thoughts on the Works of Providence," "To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing his Works," "To His Excellency General Washington."
- Foster: *The Coquette*.
- Murray: "On the Equality of the Sexes."

Assignments:

- Reading Journal Entry 1: Due 2.16.18
- Reading Journal Entry 2: Due 3.2.18

Synthesis: Discussion Boards and Short Essay

Dates: 3.5.18-3.9.18.

Assignments:

- Discussion Board 1 Initial Posts: Due 3.5.18.
- Discussion Board 1 Responses: Due 3.9.18.
- Short Essay: Due 3.9.18.

Spring Break – 3.12.18-3.16.18

Theme Three: Religion and Society

Dates: 3.19.18-4.6.18

Readings:

- Winthrop: "A Model of Christian Charity."
- Mather: "The Wonders of the Invisible World."
- Sewall: "The Selling of Joseph: A Memorial."
- Rowlandson: *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*.
- Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."
- Paine: *The Age of Reason*.

Assignments:

- Reading Journal Entry 1: Due 3.23.
- Reading Journal Entry 2: Due 3.30.
- Discussion Board 2 Initial Posts: Due 4.2.18.
- Discussion Board 2 Responses: Due 4.6.

Theme Four: Race and Nation

Dates: 4.9.18-4.27.18

Readings:

- Equiano: *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*.
- Jefferson: *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Query XIV [Laws].
- Crèvecoeur: *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter III, Letter IX.
- "The Speech of Moses Bon Sàam" (supplementary).
- "The Speech of Mr. John Talbot-Campo-bell" (supplementary).
- Canassatego: "Speech at Lancaster."
- Pontiac: "Speech at Detroit."
- Logan: "Chief Logan's Speech."
- Tecumseh: "Speech to the Osages."
- Cherokee Women: "To Governor Benjamin Franklin."

Assignments:

- Reading Journal Entry 1: Due 4.20.18.
- Reading Journal Entry 2: Due 4.27.18

Synthesis: Synchronous Meeting and Term Paper

Dates: 4.30.18-5.4.18

Assignments:

- Synchronous Meeting Two: 4.30.18.
- Term Paper: Due 5.4.18.