

Fall 8-15-2005

ENG 3700-001: American Literature, 1450-1800

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Recommended Citation

Vietto, Angela, "ENG 3700-001: American Literature, 1450-1800" (2005). *Fall 2005*. 117.
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3700-001

English 3700

American Literature, 1450-1800

Fall 2005

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Class website:
<http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfarv/3700.html>

This is a class in early American literature, spanning several hundred years from the origins of American literature (which, as we'll discuss, is a problematic question in itself) to 1800. Many American writers you might think of as "early" had not yet been born (such as Nathaniel Hawthorne and Emily Dickinson). American society and culture, too, looked very different in these earlier periods than they do today – and very different from the ways in which they are often imagined in literature and film. So prepare to be surprised – and, I hope, both entertained and informed.

Prepare, too, for a challenging course. This is a junior-level course, and I expect you to read assignments before class well enough to be prepared to make enlightening comments and to ask meaningful questions. I also expect students at the junior and senior levels to apply to our material relevant information you have learned in other classes (particularly relevant would be Intro to Literary Studies, classes in Renaissance literature, Shakespeare, Milton, seventeenth- or eighteenth-century British literature, British Romanticism, and American or other history courses related to the period from about 1450 to 1800).

A note about history: A frequent tendency for those unfamiliar with a particular period of history is to make generalizations about "back then." These generalizations usually rely on a developmental model of history, in which we assume that people in the past were less advanced than we are in most ways. In the past, it's often assumed, people were generally ill-informed, women had no rights and were always ruthlessly oppressed, no one knew that slavery was a moral and ethical abomination, sex was never discussed and occurred only within marriage, etc., etc. I ask that you cast aside any such assumptions about history and try to base any generalizations you make about the past on the specifics that you learn from your reading and our discussions.

A note about ways of reading: Given the nature of this course, it's logical that much of our discussion will take a historical approach to the literature we read. Other ways of reading are very welcome, either in class discussion or in your papers.

A note for elementary education majors: Since much of the literature of this period is written in archaic language, I doubt you will find most of these materials of use in the elementary classroom. We will, however, learn about the education and reading of children in early America. I believe you will find this course most useful if you approach it not as a course that will provide you with lessons for your own students, but as a course that will help you exercise and sharpen your analytical skills.

Texts

Brown, *Wieland or the Transformation*
Brown, *Edgar Huntly or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker*
Mulford, *Early American Writings*
Mulford, *The Power of Sympathy & The Coquette*
Paine, *Thomas Paine Reader*

Prerequisites

All students in this class must have completed English 1002 or its transfer equivalent. It is recommended that English majors take English 2205, Introduction to Literary Studies, either before taking 3000-level courses or concurrently with them.

Disability Information

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Electronic Writing Portfolio

This is a writing-intensive course, so if you are not a senior you may submit a paper from this course for the EWP. Seniors are required to make their final EWP submission from their EIU Senior Seminar. A link to the EWP submission form can be found on the class web site. The deadline to obtain my signature on an EWP submission form is the date of our final examination.

The English Department's Statement on Plagiarism

"Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work' (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

My Statement on Plagiarism and Other Forms of Academic Dishonesty

I do not tolerate plagiarism or other forms of cheating. When I detect such activities and I believe them to be intentional (as they mostly are), I usually award an F for the course. Please do not knowingly steal anyone else's ideas or words – even those from an "anonymous" source such as SparkNotes or any of the other contemptible cheating sites available on the web. If you are uncertain or confused about how to avoid plagiarism in an essay that requires the use of secondary sources, please consult with me *before* you ask me to grade the essay in question – that will avoid any undue suspicions on my part.

Grade Breakdown

Quizzes/homework/ in-class writings	300 points
Participation	200 points
Essays (3 @ 100 pts each)	300 points
Final Exam	200 points

Final Grading Scale

A	900-1000
B	800-899
C	700-799
D	600-699
F	599 and below

Quizzes and in-class writings will be frequent and unannounced; they will cover our reading as well as material presented in class. Quizzes will also be cumulative; that is to say, material from earlier in the semester may appear on later quizzes, so it is a good idea to pay attention to questions that you miss and to keep your quizzes. If you miss a quiz or in-class writing, you may make it up provided that you were absent or late due to an illness or emergency that was (1) serious, (2) unforeseeable, and (3) properly documented. It is your responsibility to see me about making up a quiz or in-class writing; please do not expect me to remind you.

Written **homework** will be assigned in class. If you miss class, please contact a classmate to learn whether or not there was an assignment but contact me if you have questions.

Participation: Discussion is more than just a way to fill class time; it is a central component of how we learn in the humanities. I expect you to come to class prepared to make meaningful contribution to discussion. Thus, 20% of your grade for the course (equal, note, to the value of the final examination) is based on the quantity and quality of your participation in class.

Quality is at least as important as quantity, if not more so. If you are concerned about your ability to participate in discussion, please speak with me.

Three essays will ask you to write analytically in response to early American literature. For each essay, you will be given several writing prompts, not all of which will require secondary research; however, you **MUST** choose a research option for at least one of your essays.

The **Final Exam** is designed genuinely to test how much you have learned over the course of the semester. You will be presented with short (less than 1 page) selections from early American literature that we will *not* be reading in class and asked to analyze those passages using what you have learned in the class.

Attendance: I do not have an attendance policy, beyond the fact that you cannot earn points for participation when you do not attend class. In addition, deadlines must be met unless an extension has been previously arranged; I will deduct 5 points per class period for late work for which no extension has been granted. No late work will be accepted after the final exam.

Schedule of Readings and Deadlines

(subject to change)

EAW = Early American Writings

M Aug 22	Introductions
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UNIT ONE: CHRONOLOGICAL SURVEY OF EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE	
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W Aug 24	Native American Origin Stories: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 1-22
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F Aug 26	Native American Contact Stories: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 140-158
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M Aug 29	Columbus: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 23-43
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W Aug 31	Radisson: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 123-139
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F Sept 2	John Smith: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 169-188
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M Sept 5	<i>No Class – Labor Day Holiday</i>
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W Sept 7	Bradford, <i>Of Plymouth Plantation</i> : <i>EAW</i> , pp. 222-237
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F Sept 9	Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 237-245
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M Sept 12	Bradstreet, introduction: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 276-277, and "Contemplations," "Before the Birth," "In Memory," and "Here Follows": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 280-284
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W Sept 14	Rowlandson, "Narrative": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 305-328
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F Sept 16	Mather, <i>Wonders of the Invisible World</i> (selections distributed in class) <u>Topic for Essay One Due</u>
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M Sept 19	Collection of New England Poetry: <i>EAW</i> pp. 349-354
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W Sept 21	Edwards, Personal Narrative and "Sinners": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 668-684
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F Sept 23	Wheatley, poems: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 889-894 <u>Essay One Due</u>
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M Sept 26	Paine, From <i>Common Sense</i> and <i>The Crisis</i> : <i>EAW</i> , pp. 836-848
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W Sept 28	Declaration of Independence: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 965-967
F Sept 30	Crevecoeur, from <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> : <i>EAW</i> , pp. 975-998
M Oct 3	Federalist No. 10: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 1002-1006, Franklin, "Speech in the Convention": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 769-770
W Oct 5	Equiano, from <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> : <i>EAW</i> , pp. 912-928
F Oct 7	No Class – Fall Break
M Oct 10	Short Fiction from the Post-Revolutionary Era: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 1084-1100

UNIT TWO: CASE STUDIES

W Oct 12	Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> , first half of Part I: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 771-780
F Oct 14	Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> , end of Part I: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 781-803
M Oct 17	Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> , Part II, pp. 803-813
W Oct 19	Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 361-372
F Oct 21	Paine, <i>The Age of Reason: Thomas Paine Reader</i> , pp. <u>Topic for Essay Two Due</u>
M Oct 24	Paine, <i>The Age of Reason: Thomas Paine Reader</i> , pp.
W Oct 26	Paine, <i>The Age of Reason: Thomas Paine Reader</i> , pp.
F Oct 28	Bradstreet, "Contemplations": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 280-283 <u>Essay Two Due</u>
M Oct 31	Judith Sargent Murray, "On the Equality of the Sexes": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 1040-1044
W Nov 2	Mather, "The Negro Christianized": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 638-645, Sewall, "The Selling of Joseph": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 649-651, Pastorius, "Petition of the Germantown Quakers": <i>EAW</i> , pp. 727-728; Banneker-Jefferson Letters: <i>EAW</i> , pp. 1104-1108
F Nov 4	Mather, Sewall, Pastorius, Banneker-Jefferson continued
M Nov 7	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>

W Nov 9	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>
F Nov 11	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>
M Nov 14	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>
W Nov 16	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>
F Nov 18	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Wieland</i>
M Nov 21-F Nov 25	No Class – Thanksgiving Break
M Nov 28	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i>
W Nov 30	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i>
F Dec 2	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> <u>Topic for Essay Three Due</u>
M Dec 5	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i>
W Dec 7	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i>
F Dec 9	Review for Final Exam <u>Essay Three Due</u>
W Dec 14, 8 am-10 am	<u>Final Exam</u>
