ENG 4300-4390-003-097: Movement and migration in American Literature

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In this seminar, we’ll look at the motifs of movement and migration as they play out in American cultural and literary history, from the earliest days of a human presence here on the North American continent to our present moment. What has it meant that we have always been a nation of migrants, people who move and then move again? What have people looked for? What have they found? How do questions of race, gender, class, and the psychology of individual personality play into this? Why do artists, American ones in particular, regularly tell stories of journeys, quests, odysseys, and such to get at the personal experience of Americans? Why does “the road” loom so large in the American imagination? Where does that road seem to lead, as artists understand it?

Course work will include a take home midterm and final, some other modes of writing and presentation, and for honors students, a few other chores to be determined. Regular attendance and participation are required, as befits a senior seminar.

Paper #1 due 1/15 with copies for everybody (16) to be read out loud

2 single spaced pages touching on the following topics:
--take an inventory/overview of the books issued to you by Textbook Rental. Read a few pages and collect some impressions. What do they look like to you? What’s the range? What looks interesting? What doesn’t? Note what you might have read before or have heard of, if that proves true.

--What does the film, The New World, suggest to you about the themes of movement and migration? What questions do you have about the film and the story it tells?

--how does the film make use of movement in its style and mode of presentation?