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ENG 5008-001: The Age of Revolutions in Early American Literature

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ENGLISH 5008, SPRING 2004

The Age of Revolutions in Early American Literature

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Office: 3345 Coleman Hall

Office hours: MW 10-11:30, R 12-2 and by appointment

Class web site: <http://www.ux1.eiu.edu/~cfarv/5008.html>

In a period of less than fifty years (1770-1810), the American consciousness was dramatically altered by three revolutions: American, French, and Haitian. These violent upheavals introduced new modes of government and sparked intensive rethinking of important social and cultural categories. Ideas about class and citizenship, theories of race, notions of masculinity and femininity, and understandings of the nature and meaning of authorship—all were scrutinized and, in greater or lesser degrees, changed. In this course we will study the ways in which early American literature represented and responded to these political and cultural revolutions.

TextsCharles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker*Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland, or the Transformation*J. Hector St. Jean de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*Mulford, ed., *The Power of Sympathy and The Coquette*Thomas Paine, *Thomas Paine Reader*

Course packet, available from Copy-X (Lincoln Ave.) (about \$10)

Leonora Sansay, *Secret History, or the Horrors of Santo Domingo* (to be distributed in class)**Grading**

Participation	10%
Book review	10%
Reports on critical articles	20% (2, each 10%)
Papers	50% (either option)
Final exam/presentation	10%

Academic Honesty

Dishonesty of any kind in this course can result in a failing grade for the course and a report to Judicial Affairs. For the record, the English Department's Statement on Plagiarism follows: "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."

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.

Attendance

Because this is a seminar, your regular attendance and participation are essential. I expect that you will let me know ahead of class time if illness or an emergency will prevent you from attending class. Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade.

Book Review

Write a review of a scholarly book that could assist you with your paper(s) for this course. You may choose a work of literary criticism, history, or theory. You will also need to identify a scholarly journal that would be likely to publish a review of the book you've selected and prepare your review following the conventions and format used by that journal. (Conventions include length, typical amount of summary versus evaluation, etc.) I will distribute a list of books you might find useful, but you may also choose a book not on that list.

Reports on Secondary Literature

During our first class meeting I will ask you to select two dates on which you will present a brief (no more than five minutes) summary and discussion of a scholarly article related to a primary text we will be discussing in class. I will provide the scholarly article well in advance of the date of your presentation; your job will be to read it in advance, consult with me if there's anything about the article that you need assistance with, and to prepare an oral presentation that is succinct and clear, outlining the main argument of the article you've read, and suggesting questions you think the article might raise for consideration by the rest of the group.

Papers

You must select one of the following two options for papers for this course.

Note for both options: The dominant interpretive framework we'll be using in class is historically oriented, but you are NOT limited to this approach in your papers. Please feel free to take any approach to the materials that interests you and will allow you to do your best work.

Paper Option A: One Article-Length Paper

Develop an article-length (at least 20 pages) paper dealing with some primary text or set of primary texts from the period under discussion. The primary text(s) may include but are not limited to texts read in class, and I can offer suggestions for primary texts that might interest you. This should be a well-argued analysis that could conceivably be submitted for publication to a scholarly journal. This essay must cite and situate itself in relationship to relevant scholarly work, using correct MLA format, but what's most important is that the essay develop a clear and persuasive argument of your own. If you select this option, you will need to turn in a proposal and bibliography (including both primary and secondary texts) by March 8; the final paper will be due on May 3. I will be happy to read and comment on drafts, outlines, etc., but the latest I will accept a draft for review is April 26.

Paper Option B: Two Conference-Length Papers

Develop two conference-length papers (at least 10 pages each) dealing with some primary text or set of primary texts from the period under discussion. The primary text(s) may include but are not limited to texts read in class, and I can offer suggestions for primary texts that might interest you. These should be well-argued analyses that could be presented at a professional conference. The essays must cite and situate themselves in relationship to relevant scholarly work, using correct MLA format, but what's most important is that each essay develop a clear and persuasive argument of your own. If you select this option, your first paper will be due on March 8 and the second paper will be due on May 3. I will be happy to read and comment on drafts, outlines, etc., but the latest I will accept a draft for review for the first paper deadline is March 1, and for the second paper deadline April 26.

Schedule

(subject to change)

TPR = Thomas Paine Reader

January 12—Introductions; sign up for a conference this week; sign up for secondary lit reports

January 19—No class (MLK, Jr. Birthday Observed)

January 26— Foucault, “What Is Enlightenment?” (packet 74-82); Hulme & Jordanova, “Introduction” (packet 40-47); Ferguson, “What Is Enlightenment? Some American Answers” (packet 83-93); Adams, “Dissertation on the Canon and the Feudal Law” (1765; packet 3-7), Paine, “African Slavery in America,” (1775; TPR, pp. 52-56)

January 31—Proposals due for IPA

February 2— Paine, *Common Sense* and *The American Crisis* No. 1 (1776; TPR, pp. 65-123), Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence” (packet 16-23)

February 9— Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer* (1782, 35-227), Paine, “Letter to the Abbé Raynal” (1782, TPR, 147-166)

February 16—Banneker and Jefferson, “Copy of a Letter from Benjamin Banneker to the Secretary of State, with His Answer” (1791 packet 8-12) Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1787 packet 23-30); Hannaford, from *Race: The History of an Idea in the West* (packet 94-137)

February 23— Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative* (1789; 1-236)

****Book review due**

March 1—William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789; in Mulford, 1-103)

March 8—Paine, *The Rights of Man* (1791, TPR, 201-364)

****First paper deadline**

March 15 – No class (Spring Break)

March 22—Paine, “Reasons for Preserving the Life of Louis Capet” (1793; TPR, 394-398), *The Age of Reason* (1794, TPR, 399-452)

March 29—Foster, *The Coquette* (1797; in Mulford, 105-242); Charles Brockden Brown, from *Alcuin* (1798, packet 12-16); Davis and Farge, from *A History of Women* (packet 138-155)

April 5—Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1798)

April 12— Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly* (1799)

April 16-17 – IPA Conference, Lewis University

April 19—L’Overture, *Proclamations and Letters* (packet 30-39); Dayan, from *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (packet 184-219)

April 24 – English Student Conference

April 26—Sansay, *Secret History, or, The Horrors of Santo Domingo* (1808)

May 3—Final exam/conference, 7:30 p.m.

****Second paper deadline**