ENG 5008-001: Studies in Early American Literature

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The purpose of this course is to familiarize you with early American literature and to advance your ability to work with challenging texts in sophisticated ways.

This course will be conducted as a true seminar, in which you can pursue the aspects of early American literature that are of most interest to you. During our class sessions, I will ask you to share the results of your work on a weekly basis, so that we will all gain familiarity with a greater range of topics.

A detailed schedule of readings will be distributed during the second week of the semester.

Texts:

Ketcham, *The Anti-Federalist Papers and the Constitutional Convention Debates*
Madison, Hamilton and Jay, *The Federalist Papers*
Paine, *Common Sense*

Supplemental: Mulford, Vietto, Winans, *Early American Writings* (NOT being distributed by TRS but by me)

Other short readings to be distributed in class or through electronic reserves from Booth Library

Grading:

Weekly reading reports  50%
Individual research project  30%
Participation and attendance  20%

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 prevent you from attending class. Unexcused absences will affect your participation grade; more than two unexcused absences may reduce your participation grade to 0.

Academic Honesty:

Dishonesty of any kind in this course can result in a failing grade for the course and a report to Judicial Affairs.

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.
Deadlines:

Reading reports: due in class each week
Proposal for individual research project: February 7
Draft or introduction of research project: March 21
Final research project: May 2

Plan for no class on April 4

Possible Topics for Reading and Research

First contacts between Europeans and Native Americans

Literature of exploration and travel

Spanish, French, German writings about the New World

The idea of community among the Puritans

The witchcraft trials and other expulsions from the Puritan community

Slavery and the development of categories of race

Indentured servitude

The backgrounds behind the move for independence

Pro-independence writings

Biography and life writings

The debates over the constitution

Women’s rights and women’s writings

The early American novel (1780s-1800s)