

ENGL 646, Meta-survey of American Literature to 1865

Fall 2017 Mondays 4:00-6:50 G10 Colson

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Office 213 Colson. Hours 3-4 M, T, and by apt.

Overview

The course will examine how the standard survey of American literature to 1865, which originated in an uneasy alliance between the New Criticism and the old historicism, has been inflected by subsequent developments:

- Theoretical ferment of the 1970s and 1980s (structuralism, various post-structuralisms, psychoanalytic criticism, Marxism, etc.)
- Identity-based paradigms of the 1980s and 1990s (race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, multiculturalism)
- Geopolitically-oriented paradigms of the 2000s (Atlantic world, transnational American studies, hemispheric studies, empire studies, colonial and postcolonial studies)

In different ways, these developments foreground a tension between the two competing principles that organize any survey: literary history (the impulse to recover and include the totality of literary production) and canon-formation (the impulse to judge and value).

Reising will take us from the old historicism through the New Criticism and myth-and-symbol American studies up to era of identity politics that generated the *Heath Anthology*. Guillory interrogates the “exclusion” thesis that governs that many of that era’s accounts of canon formation (e.g., Lauter et al.); however, the extension of Guillory’s Anglo-centric study to American literature remains open to question. Some recent work in early American literature (surveyed in clusters of essays in *ALH* 2010 and *PMLA* 2013) has redirected the archive away from its prior nationalist telos. This redirection has introduced discontinuities between early American literature and the rest of American literary history.

Texts

Heath Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed. (2013), ed. Paul Lauter et al., vols. A and B.
Norton Anthology of American Literature, 9th ed. (2017), ed. Nina Baym et al., vols. A and B.
Russell Reising, *The Unusable Past: Theory and the Study of American Literature* (1986, rpt. 2013)

Additional readings as listed for 8/28, all available in e- format.

Selected supplemental bibliography on canon formation and the history of the discipline

Robert von Halberg, ed., *Canons* (U of Chicago P, 1984).

Gerald Graff, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (U of Chicago P, 1987).

Paul Lauter, *Canons and Contexts* (Oxford UP, 1991).

David Shumway, *Creating American Civilization: A Genealogy of American Literature as an Academic Discipline* (U of Minnesota P, 1994).

- William Spengemann, *A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature* (Yale UP, 1994).
- Elizabeth Renker, *The Origins of American Literature Studies: An Institutional History* (Cambridge UP, 2007).
- Randall Fuller, *Emerson's Ghosts: Literature, Politics, and the Making of Americanists* (Oxford UP, 2007).

Assignments and grading

- **Seven short papers**, about 400 words each. For each week of readings in primary texts, write a short essay that addresses the question, What's important in this group of texts? Focus on the significant genres, forms, themes, ideas, or trajectories indicated by this group of texts. Refer to at least a few texts from the *Heath* in each paper. Ideally, you might frame your claims with a brief reference to Reising, Guillory, one of the sources from the supplemental bibliography, or another scholarly source. Each paper will be worth 10% of the final grade.
- An oral **summary presentation with questions** for one of the articles listed for 10/16. These presentations will provide the basis for discussion for that week's meeting. 10% of the final grade.
- A **final project** consisting of a sample schedule for a survey of American literature to 1865 plus a 1000-word rationale. Using either the Norton or the Heath, design a 13-week calendar of readings, with a maximum of 50 pp. per week (not counting the anthology's general introductory sections). The rationale should explain course goals and the understanding of literary history that shapes your choices. 20% of the final grade.

Policies

Silence your phones and put them away.

Let's work to support WVU's inclusivity policy. The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (304-293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>

Notwithstanding the risk to your intellectual development, you are allowed one absence. Each subsequent absence will lower your final grade by one full letter.

Late work will not be accepted. If you have to miss class for any reason and a paper is due that day, email me the paper before class time.

ENGL 646 fall 2017 Calendar

We'll take the *Norton* as our baseline, so the readings in primary texts are listed accordingly. You also are responsible for the analogous texts (by period, genre, etc.) in the *Heath*.

8/21	Course intro
8/28	<p>John Guillory, <i>Cultural Capital</i>, Preface and chapter 1, vii-xiv, 3-82. WVU Libraries E-book</p> <p>Ronald Gottesman, et al., Table of Contents and Preface, <i>Norton Anthology of American Literature</i>, 1st ed. (1979). eCampus folder "Anthology TOCs"</p> <p>Paul Lauter, et al., "To the Reader," <i>Heath Anthology of American Literature</i>, 1st ed. (1990). eCampus folder "Readings"</p> <p>Michael Warner, General Introduction, Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, ed., <i>The English Literatures of America, 1500-1800</i> (1997). eCampus folder "Readings"</p> <p>Robert Levine, et al., Preface, "Beginnings to 1820," "American Literature 1820-1865," <i>Norton Anthology</i> 9th ed., A.xvii-xxvii, 3-25; B.3-21.</p> <p>Paul Lauter, et al., Preface, "Beginnings to 1700," "Eighteenth Century," "Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1865," <i>Heath Anthology</i> 7th ed., A.xxiii-xxx, 1-17, 613-31, B.1539-1574.</p>
9/4	Labor Day – no class
9/11	Reising, <i>Unusable Past</i>
9/18	Native American oral, non-Anglophone, encounters, Virginia, New England: <i>Norton</i> A.29-402. (Note that the <i>Heath</i> has lots more non-Anglophone than the <i>Norton</i> does. Read as much of it as you can.) Short paper due.
9/25	Reading day – no class
10/2	Religious variety, ethnography and natural history, 18 th c., Revolution: <i>Norton</i> A.403-721. Short paper due.
10/9	Early Federal, Native American resistance: <i>Norton</i> A.721-1015. Short paper due.
10/16	<p>Reports on the history of early American literature and discussion. 5-minute summary presentations on:</p> <p>Sandra Gustafson and Gordon Hutner, "Projecting Early American Literary Studies," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 245-49.</p> <p>Ralph Bauer, "Early American Literature and American Literary History at the 'Hemispheric Turn,'" <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 250-65.</p> <p>Stephanie Fitzgerald and Hillary Wyss, "Land and Literacy: The Textualities of Native Studies," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 271-79.</p> <p>(cont'd. next page)</p>

	<p>Matt Cohen, "New England, Nonesuch," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 307-19.</p> <p>Frances Smith Foster, "Genealogies of Our Concerns: Early (African) American Print Culture," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 368-80.</p> <p>Timothy Sweet, "Projecting Early American Environmental Writing," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 419-31.</p> <p>Ed White and Michael Drexler, "The Theory Gap," <i>American Literary History</i> 22.2 (2010): 480-94.</p> <p>Michelle Burnham, "Early America and the Revolutionary Pacific," <i>PMLA</i> 128.4 (2013): 953-60.</p> <p>Sandra Gustafson, "What's in a Date? Temporalities of Early American Literature," <i>PMLA</i> 128.4 (2013): 961-67.</p> <p>Jared Hickman, "Cosmic American Studies," <i>PMLA</i> 128.4 (2013): 968-75.</p> <p>Lloyd Pratt, "Early American Literature and its Exclusions," <i>PMLA</i> 128.4 (2013): 983-88.</p> <p>Sarah Rivett, "Early American Religion in a Postsecular Age," <i>PMLA</i> 128.4 (2013): 989-96.</p>
10/23	Reading day – no class
10/30	Prose, 1820s-1840s. <i>Norton B</i> : Irving, Cooper, Sedgwick, Apess, Schoolcraft, Child, Emerson, Native American removal and resistance, Poe. Short paper due.
11/6	Poetry, 1820s-1860s. <i>Norton B</i> : Sigourney, Bryant, Schoolcraft, Emerson, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, Whitman, Harper, Dickinson. Short paper due.
11/13	Prose, 1840s-1850s. <i>Norton B</i> : Hawthorne, Fuller, Slavery and Race cluster, Fern, Brown, Douglass, Melville. Short paper due.
11/20	Thanksgiving break – no class
11/27	Prose, 1850s-1860s. <i>Norton B</i> : Lincoln, Stowe, Jacobs, Thoreau, science and tech cluster, Ridge, Davis, Alcott. Short paper due.
12/4	<p>Christopher Hager and Cody Marrs, "Against 1865: Reperiodizing the Nineteenth Century," <i>J19</i> 1.2 (2013): 259-84.</p> <p>Discussion of approaches to final project Course evaluations</p>

Final project due Monday, Dec. 11