

English 650: 17th and 18th-century American Literature

Professor Tamara Harvey

Spring 2008, T 7:20-10 p.m., Thompson Hall 108

Office hours: T 3-4 p.m., Th 9-10 a.m. and by appointment. (I will usually be available before and after class, as well.)

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English 650: Early America and Women's Writings

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf famously ponders, “[H]ow unpleasant it is to be locked out [of the library and literary tradition] and . . . how it is worse perhaps to be locked in.” Save for a few exceptions, women have been locked out of the canon of early American literature, and to the degree that those who are included are treated as exceptions, we might say that they are locked in. We cannot hope to reform the canon significantly by simply adding women writers—much of this work has already been done in the past few decades and the paucity of surviving texts severely limits the possibility of further expansion. Rather, we need to explore other ways to contextualize early American women writers in order to reshape or reconceive the archive. In this class we will approach this problem by considering early America and women's writing in transatlantic and interamerican contexts. Critical readings will treat both approaches to early modern women writers and recent work expanding the scope of early American studies to include the transatlantic framework that crucially informed writers on both sides of the Atlantic during the early modern period.

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. *Poems, Protest, and a Dream*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. Penguin. (ISBN: 0140447032)

Catalina de Erauso. *The Lieutenant Nun*. Trans. Michele and Gabriel Stepto. Beacon Press. (ISBN: 0807070734)

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*, ed. Neal Salisbury. Bedford (ISBN: 0312111517)

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, The Rover and Other Works*. Penguin (ISBN: 0140433384)

Susan Howe, *The Birth-Mark*. Wesleyan (ISBN: 0819562637)

Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or the Horrors of St. Domingo*. Broadview (ISBN: 1551113465)

Bharati Mukherjee, *Holder of the World*. Ballantine (ISBN: 0449909662)

Phillis Wheatley, *Complete Writings*. Penguin (ISBN: 014042430X)

Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (with William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy*). Penguin (ISBN: 0140434682)

E-reserves: <http://furbo.gmu.edu/cgi-bin/ers/OSCRgen.cgi> (search for this course and enter password “”)

Other texts available online (hyperlinked in online version of this syllabus available both at our WebCT site and at <http://mason.gmu.edu/~tharvey2/>).

Useful databases:

Early English Books Online (EEBO)
Early American Imprints
American Periodical Series
North American Women's Letters and Diaries
JSTOR, Project Muse, LION, MLA International Bibliography, etc.

Course Requirements:

Commonplace book	10%
Paper 1 (4-6 pages)	20%
Presentation and précis	10%
Term paper (10-12 pages)	50%
Participation:	10%

1. Presentation and Précis: Once during the semester you will prepare a 10 minute presentation on an article or chapter that we are not reading as a class. I have chosen possible presentation articles for each class period; consult with me if you would rather present on a different article. You will also prepare a 1-2 page, single-spaced précis of that work. Your précis should be divided into three sections of approximately one paragraph each. In the first section you should introduce and provide a general summary or overview of the article or chapter; in the second you should provide a more detailed analysis of the writer's methodologies, argument, and conclusions; and in the third you should provide a brief critique of the piece in which you analyze its weaknesses or limitations as well as its strengths and usefulness. **Bring enough copies of your précis for everyone in the class, including me (currently there are 19 of us).** These précis are meant to be useful references for the class so your primary audience should be your fellow students.

2. Papers: You will write a short paper and a longer term paper for this class. I will provide more information about the first paper during the 2nd or 3rd week of the semester. Your term paper should be on a topic you develop in consultation with me. You will also submit a proposal and preliminary draft for this paper. Paper format and citations must conform to MLA Style. Papers should be typed and double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Be sure to use a standard font size (12) and a printer with sufficient toner to print clear, dark letters. All pages but the first must be numbered. Staple the paper in the upper left-hand corner; do not use a cover sheet or plastic cover. Include your name, the date, and a title for the assignment at the top of the first page.

3. Online commonplace book (with commentary): Commonplace books were kept by literate people of all walks of life during the early American period. In these books, writers recorded literary passages that they found particularly significant. As Karin Wulf has observed, they were a kind of literary diary, but they also circulated among a community of readers. In many ways, they were like blogs today—they were both personal and public or semi-public. And like blogs they often involved simply quoting (now linking to) something the writer finds significant and wants to share. An image from a commonplace book by Thomas Jefferson may be found here:

<http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/jefferson/images/vc24.jpg>. For women like Milcah Martha

Moore, who kept a commonplace book during the American Revolution, commonplace books provided a semi-public literary forum that took the place of print publication. Each of you will be keeping a commonplace book this semester using pbwiki. By **Tuesday** of each week you need to post a passage and/or image related to that week's assignments to your wiki page commonplace book as well as a brief commentary on that week's readings (go to <http://engl650sp08.pbwiki.com>, the password is "").

4. Participation: Ten percent of your grade is determined by your participation in this course. You are expected to participate actively in discussion and all class activities.

Note: You must complete all graded work in order to receive a grade for the course. All work is due at the beginning of class on the specified due date. Late papers will be downgraded one half-grade for each day they are late. Please do not leave assignments in my mailbox. I will assume they are late and will grade them accordingly. Absolutely no fax or e-mail submissions will be accepted except by special arrangement. **If you anticipate problems or conflicts, let me know as soon as possible.** I reserve the right to make exceptions to these policies, at my discretion, for students facing serious difficulties.

If class is canceled for any reason, continue with the assignments as scheduled.

Email and WebCT: Be sure to sign up for GMU email if you have not done so already—I will be using your GMU account to contact you throughout the semester. I have also arranged for a WebCT folder for this class. This week, take the time to log on and familiarize yourself with what is there (<http://webct41.gmu.edu/>). Throughout the semester I will be posting handouts, including the syllabus, to WebCT, so you can always find copies of class handouts, assignment sheets, and other important documents there if you have misplaced the copy I handed out in class.

Writing Center: The University Writing Center is a **free** writing resource. Tutors are available to assist students at any level and at any stage of their writing process. Tutors will not proofread your writing, but they will help you to develop revision and editing strategies. The University Writing Center is located in Robinson A 114. Hours are:

Monday-Thursday 9:30-7:30 (last appointment at 6:30)

Friday 9:30-2:30 (last appointment at 1:30)

For an appointment, call (703) 993-1200 or schedule online at <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>. Also, consult the Writing Center website for more information about their services as well as a variety of helpful online resources.

Academic honesty: When submitting work under your own name, please keep in mind that plagiarism is a violation of the GMU Honor Code. Like you, I am bound by the Honor Code to report suspected plagiarism to the Honor Committee. I will also make use of the university's subscription to Turnitin, a plagiarism detection service, if I feel such action is appropriate. For a description of the code and the committee, go to: <http://www.gmu.edu/departments/unilife/honorcode.html>. For the English Department's statement about plagiarism, go to: <http://composition.gmu.edu/faculty/plagiarism.php>. If

you have questions about how to incorporate and cite passages written by other writers, please ask me.

Students with disabilities: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

T 1/22: Introduction

T 1/29: Defenses. Primary works: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “La Respuesta a Sor Filotea” (1-76) and “A Philosophical Satire” (149-151); Anne Bradstreet selections from [The Tenth Muse](#), available on Early English Books Online (EEBO): “Prologue” (3-4), “Of the Foure Humors” (21-40), “In Honour of that High and Mighty Princess, Queen Elizabeth, of Most Happy Memory” (199-203); “Anne Hutchinson’s trial” (e-reserve).

Secondary works: Joan Kelly, “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” (e-reserve); Stephanie Merrim, “Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz and Early Modern Women’s Writing” (e-reserve).

Presentations: Sharon Harris, “Introduction: ‘And their words do follow them’—The Writings of Early American Women” (e-reserve); Malini Johar Schueller and Edward Watts, “Introduction: Theorizing Early American Studies and Postcoloniality” in *Messy Beginnings* ([E188.5 .M39 2003](#))

T 2/5: Tenth Muses and Circulation. Primary works: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, “Primer Sueno” (79-129); Anne Bradstreet, “Contemplations” (available in [Several Poems](#) on EEBO, pp. 221-229)

Secondary works: Stephanie Jed, “The Tenth Muse: Gender, rationality, and the marketing of knowledge” (e-reserve)

Paper 1 introduced.

Presentations: Ivy Schweitzer, “Introduction: Gendering the Universal: The Puritan Paradigm of Redeemed Subjectivity” (electronic reserve); Philip Round chapter on either Anne Hutchinson or Anne Bradstreet from *By Nature and By Custom Cursed: Transatlantic Civil Discourse and New England Cultural Production, 1620-1660*. ([F7 .R69 1999](#))

(Last day to drop with no tuition penalty. Last day to add classes (all individualized sections forms due.)

T 2/12: Adventurers. Primary works: Catalina de Erauso, *The Lieutenant Nun*. Selections from the letters of Marie de l’Incarnation (e-reserve)

Secondary works: Marie-Florine Bruneau, “The Confrontation between ‘Civilized’ and ‘Savage’ Femininity in the New World” (e-reserve). Kathleen Ann Myers, from *Neither Saints Nor Sinners: Writing the Lives of Women in Spanish America* (e-reserve).

Optional: paper 1 draft due.

Presentations: Stephanie Merrim, “From Anomaly to Icon: Border-Crossings, Catalina de Erauso, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz” in *Early Modern Women’s Writing and*

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz ([PQ7296.J6 Z697 1999](#)); Karen Weyler, “An Actor in the Drama of Revolution: Deborah Sampson, Print, and Performance in the Creation of Celebrity” (e-reserve)

T 2/19: Captivity. Primary works: *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* by Mary Rowlandson as well as introduction and related works.

Secondary works: Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse, “[The American Origins of the English Novel](#)” *American Literary History* 4.3 (Fall 1992): 386-410 (available through JSTOR). Susan Faludi, “America’s Guardian Myths” (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/07/opinion/07faludi.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

Presentations: Lisa Logan. “Mary Rowlandson’s Captivity and the ‘Place’ of the Woman Subject.” *Early American Literature* 28.3 (1993): 255-277; Jill Lepore, *The Name of War*, introduction and chapter 5 ([E83.67 .L46 1998](#)).

2/22: Last day to drop

T 2/26: Susan Howe, *The Birth-Mark*. **Paper 1 due.**

Presentation: [Peter Nicholls](#), “[Unsettling the Wilderness: Susan Howe and American History](#)” *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 37, No. 4. (Winter, 1996), pp. 586-601. (JSTOR)

T 3/4: Science, Discovery, and Conquest: Primary works: Margaret Cavendish, *The New Blazing World* (the second part of [Observations upon experimental philosophy to which is added, The description of a new blazing world](#) (EEBO—use the 1668 version because it is clearer).

Secondary works: Londa Shiebinger, “Noble Networks” (e-reserve)

Presentation: [Sujata Iyengar](#), “[Royalist, Romancist, Racialist: Rank, Gender, and Race in the Science and Fiction of Margaret Cavendish](#),” *ELH - Volume 69, Number 3, Fall 2002*, pp. 649-672, Project MUSE; Ralph Bauer, “[Notes on the Comparative Study of the Colonial Americas: Further Reflections on the Tucson Summit](#),” *Early American Literature* 38.2 (2003): 281-304. (Project Muse) Dana D. Nelson, “[From Manitoba to Patagonia](#),” *American Literary History* 15.2 (Summer 2003): 366-394. (Available through Project Muse)

Spring break, March 10-16

T 3/18: Primary works: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* and *The Widdow Ranter*.

Secondary works: William C. Spengemann, “[The Earliest American Novel: Aphra Behn's Oroonoko](#),” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 38.4 (March 1984), pp. 384-414 (JSTOR).

Presentations: Margaret W. Ferguson, “New World Scenes from a Female Pen: Literacy as Colonization in Aphra Behn’s *Widdow Ranter* and *Oroonoko*” in *Dido’s Daughters* ([PN471 .F45 2003](#)); Visconti, Elliott, “[A Degenerate Race: English](#)

[Barbarism in Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* and *The Widow Ranter*.](#)” *ELH* - Volume 69, Number 3, Fall 2002, pp. 673-701, Project MUSE

T 3/25: Bharati Mukherjee, *Holder of the World*.

Presentations: [Jennifer Drake, “Looting American Culture: Bharati Mukherjee’s Immigrant Narrative.”](#) *Contemporary Literature*, Vol. 40, No. 1. (Spring, 1999), pp. 60-84 (JSTOR)

T 4/1: Letters and diaries: Primary works: [Joan Vokins, *God’s Mighty Power Magnified*](#) (EEBO); Martha Ballard documents at [dohistory.org](#); your presentations
Secondary works: Susan Wiseman, “Read Within: Gender, Cultural Difference and Quaker Women’s Travel Narratives” (e-reserve). **Paper topic and annotated bibliography due.**

T 4/8: Race and revolution: Primary works: Phillis Wheatley selections, TBA.
Secondary works: Helen M. Burke, [“The Rhetoric and Politics of Marginality: The Subject of Phillis Wheatley.”](#) *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Redefining Marginality. (Spring, 1991), pp. 31-45. (JSTOR)

Presentations: Betsy Erkkila, “Phillis Wheatley and the Black American Revolution” in *Feminist Interventions in Early American Studies* ([PS185 .F46 2006](#)); Mary McAleer Balkun, [“Phillis Wheatley's Construction of Otherness and the Rhetoric of Performed Ideology,”](#) *African American Review*, Vol. 36, No. 1. (Spring, 2002), pp. 121-135. (JSTOR)

T 4/15: Women in the early Republic: Primary works: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*. Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes.” [Please consult the version of “On the Equality of the Sexes” first published in *The Massachusetts Magazine* in March and April of 1790 using the American Periodical Series Database. You will need to look at the following three files:

“On the Equality of the Sexes” [part 1](#)

“On the Equality of the Sexes” [part 2](#)

[“By way of supplement to the foregoing pages”](#)]

Draft of paper 2 due.

Secondary works: Selection from Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word* (e-reserve)

Presentations: Jennifer J. Baker, “Judith Sargent Murray’s Medium between Calculation and Feeling” in *Feminist Interventions in Early American Studies* ([PS185 .F46 2006](#)); Gillian Brown, [“Consent, Coquetry, and Consequences,”](#) *American Literary History*, Vol. 9, No. 4. (Winter, 1997), pp. 625-652. (JSTOR)

T 4/22: Leonora Sansay, *Secret History* (including secondary materials).

Presentations: Matt Clavin, "[Race, Revolution, and the Sublime: The Gothicization of the Haitian Revolution in the New Republic and Atlantic World.](#)" *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* - Volume 5, Number 1, Spring 2007, pp. 1-29, Project MUSE; Michael Drexler, "Brigands and Nuns: The Vernacular Sociology of Collectivity after the Haitian Revolution" in *Messy Beginnings* ([E188.5 .M39 2003](#))

T 4/29: Presentations

Final papers due Thursday, May 8.