

Syllabus

AML 4041 American Novel

Section 0W61 (3 credit hours)

Spring 2020

Instructor Contact

Instructor	Dr. Mark Kamrath
Office	Colbourn Hall 254E
Office Hours	Email, phone, Skype, & office appointment
Email and Phone	WebCourse email preferred. Please contact me within the course. Alternative email contact: Cell phone

Course Description and Goals

The purpose of this course is to examine the American novel from its beginnings to 1900, to understand its various historical, cultural and discursive contexts, and to become more skilled in critical reading, writing, and thinking. The course explores how gothic, romantic, realist, and naturalist movements took shape and how various writers negotiated questions about American identity, race and gender, religious belief, and economic difference. At the same time, it also closely examines the ways sentimental, gothic, romantic, evangelical, and other discourses contributed to the American novel. We will read and discuss novels by Hannah Webster Foster, Charles Brockden Brown, James Fenimore Cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Harriet E. Wilson, Mark Twain, and Stephen Crane.

The three primary goals of the course are as follows:

- *First*, to become familiar with the historical, cultural, and ideological *contexts* surrounding a given piece of literature, and to also explore fundamental ideas, assumptions, myths, and beliefs that have shaped early American literature and culture.

- *Second*, to examine aesthetic *developments* of the American novel relative to romanticism, literary realism, naturalism, and other movements and to practice ways of identifying various themes, rhetorical strategies, and discourses.
- *Third*, to develop our ability to read these texts both carefully and *critically*, and to use textual evidence to support interpretations or opinions.

(Note: To enroll in this course you must have previously taken ENC1101 and ENC 1102, and ENG 3014. AML 3031 is highly recommended but not required. This course satisfies the “Literary History” requirement)

Texts

Hannah Webster Foster’s *The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton; A Novel; Founded on Fact*, edited by Cathy N. Davidson, Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780195042399

Charles Brockden Brown’s *Ormond; or, The Secret Witness*, edited by Mary Chapman. Broadview Press. ISBN: 9781551110912

James Fenimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans* (Bantam Classics, Mass Market). Introduction by A.B. Guthrie, Jr. ISBN: 9780553213294

Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *House of the Seven Gables*, edited by Milton R. Stern. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 9780140390056

Herman Melville’s *Moby-Dick or, The Whale*, edited by Andrew Delbanco and Tom Quirk. Penguin Classics. ISBN: 9780142437247

Harriet Wilson’s *Our Nig or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*, edited by P. Gabrielle Foreman and Reginald Pitts. Introduction by P. Gabrielle Foreman. Penguin Classics. ISBN 9780143105763

Mark Twain’s *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, edited by Stephen Railton. Broadview Press. ISBN: 9781554810048

Stephen Crane’s *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets*. Introduction by Luc Sante. Modern Library Classics (Penguin Random House). ISBN: 9780375756894

Academic Activity Assignment

For Financial Aid purposes, all faculty are required to document students’ academic activity at the beginning of each course. Please complete the academic goals assignment by the end of the first week of class (see Schedule).

Attendance Policy

This is a "W" course, so what I see online—or not—from you correlates directly with your grade. Please note that Webcourses allows instructors to see when you logged on, pages accessed, time on line, etc.

If circumstances beyond your control are causing you to not complete course requirements, you are advised to withdraw because you will *not* pass the course. In cases of extreme illness, you should document your absences and seek a "medical withdrawal." If there are other circumstances I should be aware of, please contact me.

Classroom Behavior

Proper online classroom behavior is expected at all times. Students must follow UCF standards for personal and academic conduct as outlined in The Golden Rule. As a matter of common courtesy, please give every assignment your best effort. Proper classroom conduct also entails creating a positive learning experience for all students, regardless of sex, race, religion, sexual orientation, social class, or any other feature of personal identification; therefore, sexist, racist, prejudicial, homophobic, or other derogatory remarks will not be tolerated.

Requirements

1.) **Participation:** 40% of grade.

Since this is a "W" class, you will receive a weekly participation grade for your online discussion postings—your initial post plus subsequent response posts.

Initial posts* typically contain a thesis and are 300-350 words long. Subsequent posts typically are 50-150 words long.

In terms of writing responses of any sort, I am looking for detailed, specific explanations of your thoughts with an awareness of how to use evidence—"quoted material"—from the text to back up or illustrate your ideas.

Please note discussion posting day and time deadlines in each week's discussion. If you have any questions about your participation grade, please contact me so I can suggest how you might improve it.

Also, this course is a Gordon Rule* course. It contains 6000 words of evaluated writing as required by the English Department. Initial posts*, your course paper*, and exam essays* should each have the following characteristics:

- The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
- It will provide adequate support for that idea
- It will be organized clearly and logically
- It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
- It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

Late initial discussion postings for any reason are lowered 5 points. Missing assignments CANNOT be made up later.

2.) **Course paper:** 20% of grade* 9-10 double-spaced, typed pages (plus Works Cited) assignment: (100 points)

Your Course Paper will be lowered 10 points if late. After 48 hours, you will earn a ZERO for the assignment if it is not turned in by the deadline.

3) Examinations:

- Midterm examination: 20% of grade*
- Final examination: 20% of grade*

These exams typically contain matching questions, short answer questions, and an essay question.

Make-up exams are given only when I have been contacted *prior* to the exam and *only* when a verifiable extenuating circumstance exists, e.g., medical emergency and hospitalization. See “Exam Study Guide” at the Web Course site.

There is NO extra credit for this course. Your best effort is expected with course assignments.

If you are uncertain during the course of the semester about how you are doing with any aspect of the course, please contact me. NO INCOMPLETES will be given for this course.

Grading Policy:

The **grading scale** is as follows:

94-100 = A	4.00	76-73 = C	2.00
93-90 = A-	3.75	72-70 = C-	1.75
89-87 = B+	3.25	69-67 = D+	1.25
86-83 = B	3.00	66-63 = D	1.00
82-80 = B-	2.75	62-60 = D-	.75
79-77 = C+	2.25	59 - = F	.00

Grades will be posted at the Web Courses url and updated regularly.

Standards for Written Work

Generally, standards for written work are as follows, and may be modified some by actual assignment requirements:

An “A” text is exceptional or highly original work, presents sophisticated and significant critique or argument, meets or exceeds assignment requirements, and is free of grammatical or other errors.

“B” work is good or strong, contains all required elements of the assignment, but may fall short of excellence in one or more category, including mechanical errors.

A “C” text is competent, meets all, if not most, required elements of the assignment, but is average in some ways and may have several types of grammatical and other errors.

“D” writing is weak, falls below average in one or more major criteria, and may have substantial errors.

An “F” text is reserved for material that fails in all or most categories of evaluation.

Discussions

There are several required online discussions throughout this course. These online discussions provide you the opportunity to collaborate with your peers. Each forum has specific deadlines for posts in order to receive full points.

We will alternate between small group and large group discussions so that you can engage a range of different perspectives though out the semester.

For detailed criteria regarding posting expectations/protocols, please refer to the table below:

Excellent or Superior	Good or Very Good	Average	Below Average	Failing
100-90	89-80	79-70	69-60	59-
Demonstrates close, careful reading of content and prompts	Demonstrates a good reading of content and prompts	Demonstrates solid understanding of reading content and prompts	Demonstrates inconsistent reading of content and prompts	Does not demonstrate careful reading or understanding
Provides highly original thought or analysis, and superior textual support	Provides strong analysis, and textual support for ideas or opinion	Provides adequate analysis, and textual support for ideas or opinion	Provides less than adequate textual support, and merely repeats what others have said	Does not provide any analysis, or textual support
Sophisticated, respectful	Helpful, respectful	Adequate engagement with others	Inconsistent engagement with others	No feedback to others

engagement with others	engagement with others			
Meets posting deadlines and significantly exceeds minimum number of postings	Meets posting deadlines, and exceeds minimum number of postings	Meets minimum number of postings, i.e., initial post plus 1-2 responses	Partially meets minimum number of postings, or misses posting deadlines	No postings
Prose contains no mistakes and is clear and easy to understand	Prose quality contains a few minor grammatical mistakes	Prose quality contains several grammatical mistakes, or messaging shorthand	Prose quality is sloppy, with messaging shorthand and several significant grammatical mistakes	Prose quality is unacceptable

IMPORTANT: While the "quality" of your posts is my first concern, the "quantity" or frequency of posts also matters. If you post the minimum response posts per week (2 replies), you will typically earn a "B." 3-5 reply posts per week can raise one's participation grade to an "A," if the quality is high as indicated in the above rubric.

Again, if you simply aren't sure why you are not getting the grade you want, please don't hesitate to contact me so I can explain, help you earn a higher grade, etc.

University Writing Center

The [University Writing Center](#) (UWC) is a free resource for UCF students. The UWC's most popular service is the individualized writing consultation: a trained writing consultant will spend thirty minutes with a student—in person or online--reviewing his/her work and making recommendations for revision. Students can bring their work to the UWC at any point in the process—even if they have not yet started writing. Consultation will be most helpful if the student takes the time to:

- **prepare:** identify specific issues on which s/he wants feedback
- **participate:** actively discuss the paper with the consultant
- **reflect:** decide which of the possibilities raised during the consultation are helpful
- **act:** revise his/her paper

The UWC will help with writing in any subject, including out-of-class writing such as job application letters. The UWC will also help students to organize oral presentations. The UWC accepts walk-ins, but it is best to make an appointment. The UWC does not write, proofread, or grade papers. For more information or to make an appointment, visit the UWC website at uwc.ucf.edu.

If you have been requested to contact the UCF Writing Center to work on grammar or related issues and do not do so, your *overall grade* will be lowered 3 POINTS.

Plagiarism, Cheating, and Academic Dishonesty

All work that students submit for this class must be their own, and it must be written exclusively for this course. Also, any sources consulted for writing assignments must be properly documented. “Rewriting,” in which a student consults a source, changes a few words, and presents the ideas as his/her own, is plagiarism. All of the following activities constitute plagiarism:

- turning in someone else’s work as the student’s own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of the work, whether one gives credit or not

The standard punishment for plagiarism and cheating of any kind on an examination, quiz, or assignment is an “F” for the entire course. Plagiarism and cheating subjects a student to referral to the Office of Student Conduct for further action. See the UCF Golden Rule for further information (<http://www.goldenrule.sdes.ucf.edu/>), or consult plagiarism.org. The professor assumes that students will adhere to the academic creed of this University and will maintain the highest standards of academic integrity.

Lastly, like you I have access to the Internet and ways of verifying use of sources like Wikipedia and what’s been cut and pasted—or simply purchased—so the consequences of plagiarizing are not worth the risk. Indeed, papers I suspect are plagiarized will be submitted to <http://www.turnitin.com> ([Links to an external site.](#)) and its latest web crawling technology for verification of authorship.

If you have questions about how to document sources, please see me or the Writing Center.

Disability Accommodation

The University of Central Florida is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. No accommodations will be provided until the student has met with the professor to request accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Student Disability Services, Student Resource Center Room 132, before requesting accommodations from the professor.

Syllabus Amendment

The course and reading schedule are subject to revision at any time in order to improve the quality of the course. Please be aware of any announcements to this effect by logging into WebCourses weekly.

A Few Final Thoughts About Undergraduate Study

This course assumes that students in undergraduate study at the B.A. or B.S. level are in the process of developing reading, writing, and research skills along with the ability to communicate clearly. This takes time--sometimes years!

Toward that end, everyone needs to put forward their best effort and respect each other's differences and opinions.

Here are some additional strategies for success:

- Study for class by [“actively reading” \(Links to an external site.\)](#) material with pen or pencil in hand and being prepared to discuss the assigned material from a critical perspective. Merely reading the material, in other words, is insufficient preparation for class discussion. You should mark the texts, take notes on them, and be prepared to ask questions and to share interpretations.
- As Benjamin Franklin noted, success depends on hard work and on “the appearance” of doing work. Please be conscious of the fact that you are constructing a “narrative” about yourself and your work ethic the minute you walk into the classroom or a work environment or “log in.” Becoming a “professional” in any field requires self-awareness and an ability to learn expected protocols and behaviors.
- Getting a degree, finally, is opportunity to gain self-confidence about one’s knowledge, skills, and ideal self. Emerson’s maxim, “Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string” can be useful to recall during moments of stress, doubt, etc.

SCHEDULE

Date	Weekly Focus	Reading Assignment	Due dates
Week 1 January 6	Module 1 History of the American Novel	“The Novel” (PDF)	Activity Assignment due 11:59 p.m. January 10
Week 2 January 13	Module 2 Sentimental tradition	Foster’s <i>The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton; A Novel; Founded on Fact</i>	

		(1797)	
Week 3 January 20	Module 3 Gothic novel	Brown's <i>Ormond; or, The Secret Witness</i> (1799)	
Week 4 January 27	Module 4	Brown	
Week 5 February 3	Module 5 Romance novel	Cooper's <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> (1826)	
Week 6 February 10	Module 6	Cooper	
Week 7 February 17	Module 7	Hawthorne's <i>House of the Seven Gables</i> (1851)	
Week 8 February 24	Module 8	Hawthorne	Midterm Exam, February 28-29
Week 9 March 2	Module 9	Melville's <i>Moby-Dick or, The Whale</i> (1851)	
March 9	Spring Break	Spring Break	Course paper proposal due 11:59 p.m. March 9
Week 10 March 16	Module 10	Melville	
Week 11 March 23	Module 11 Autobiography and the slave narrative	Wilson's <i>Our Nig or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black</i> (1859)	
Week 12 March 30	Module 12 Realism and the regional novel	Twain's <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> (1885)	
Week 13 April 6	Module 13	Twain	
Week 14 April 13	Module 14 Naturalism	Crane's <i>Maggie A Girl of the Streets</i> (1893)	Course paper due April 13
Week 15 April 20 (last day of class)	Module 15	Crane	
Final Exam			Final Exam April 24-25