

Swarthmore College
ENGL 057A
American Literature Through A Traveler's Eyes

Spring 2012
M & W, 6:00-7:30 pm
1 credit

Professor Keat Murray
kmurray1@swarthmore.edu

Office: LPAC 305
Hours: M & W 4:45-5:45

I love to travel, but I hate to arrive.
-Albert Einstein

There are no foreign lands. It is the traveler only who is foreign.
-Robert Louis Stevenson

Course Description

The multicultural history of the Americas provides countless rich narratives in which travelers attempt to comprehend unfamiliar people, places, and cultures. Do travelers see the new in *its* terms or through their own tropes and interests? Do contact zones create new perspectives? Who are the real strangers in a strange land? These questions will initiate our survey of writings by conquerors and captives, indigenes and immigrants, seekers and satirists, slaves and surveyors, planters and POWs, reformers and rebels, exiles and entrepreneurs. Course readings are concentrated in pre-1830 writings and then extend into late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. analyze literary works, authors, genres, and themes of early American and antebellum literature
2. develop critical habits of mind through active reading and collective inquiry
3. employ effective active reading strategies to comprehend, interpret, interrogate, and evaluate a variety of literary and cultural texts
4. formulate and pursue critical inquiries about literary texts in their historical and cultural contexts
5. compose cogent, well-organized essays that develop arguments and articulate thoughtful, text-based interpretations
 - a. develop an important, provocative thesis that is specific, developed, and supported
 - b. marshal an argument in support of a thesis
 - c. integrate textual evidence to support and develop the thesis and argument
 - d. conform to standard rules of style by using appropriate tone, diction, grammar, spelling, and punctuation
 - e. demonstrate flexible recursive writing strategies for generating ideas, planning, drafting, revising, and editing drafts
6. conduct research with primary and secondary resources and integrate research material into a composition
7. participate in discussions—in class and through posts—to advance individual and collective inquiries in the humanities
8. formulate interdisciplinary readings of literary, visual, and filmic texts based on the historical and cultural contexts in which those texts were created and/or circulated.
9. generate a general chronology of American literary texts and literary forms
10. become familiar with issues and questions regarding canonization.

Class Texts

1. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Volume A (Beginnings to 1800)*. Sixth Edition. Ed., Paul Lauter. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2009. ISBN-13: 978-0-618-89799-5
ISBN-10: 0-618-89799-2
2. William Least Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways: A Journey into America*. 1982. New York: Back Bay Books, 1999. ISBN: 978-0-316-35329-8
3. Kathryn Zabelle Derounian-Stodola, ed. *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*. New York: Penguin, 1998. ISBN: 0-14-043671-5
4. Henry David Thoreau, *The Maine Woods*. New York: Penguin, 1988. ISBN-10: 0140170138; ISBN-13: 978-0140170139
5. Mark Twain, *Roughing It*. Signet, 2008. ISBN: 9780451531100
6. Bill Buford, ed. *The Best American Travel Writing*. New York: Mariner, 2010. ISBN-10: 0547333358
7. online reading materials and pdf files available through our course Moodle site

Course Assignments

Students will write three response papers (2-3 pages) and two longer papers (4-6 pages, 7-9 pages). Students are expected to complete weekly reading assignments according to the Course of Study below. The professor might give quizzes if readings and assignments are being neglected. For these quizzes, students are permitted to use their *own handwritten* notes on the reading selections. Photocopies, computer-printed materials, and the like are *not* permitted for use during these quizzes. Course work will include occasional but not regular Blackboard posts. Other graded items could include work completed in class. A large portion of our class meetings will be dedicated to discussing readings, evaluating human theories, and other materials presented in class.

Response Papers and Formal Papers

All submitted papers must be double-spaced, typed in 12-point Times New Roman, and organized in MLA style. Students are strongly encouraged to consult the Department of English Literature's online guides on "Plagiarism and Citation"; see <<http://www.swarthmore.edu/x10027.xml>>.

Response papers encourage students to explore primary texts in their own meaningful, inquisitive way, to make sense of a text, and to pursue and develop an interpretive idea. The most productive response papers *interact with the text*, and they have a stated direction or purpose that explores a text in terms of themes, critical questions, or connections to other texts and course material. The most productive response papers might also toy with ideas about a writer's assumptions, perspectives, and purposes, the cultural and political debates at issue in a text, or the human experiences it relates. During class meetings, response papers often trigger new topics, points, and angles for discussion. They can also serve as spaces for students to generate questions and ideas for further development in a formal essay.

Formal papers will assert, support, and develop a thesis (argument) that focuses on a specific topic and addresses a critical question(s) in regard to one or more literary selections on the course syllabus. Students will be provided with specific requirements and sample topics.

When constructing a Works Cited entry for a selection in the *Heath Anthology*, use the following example from MLA:

Terry, Lucy. "Bars Fight." 1855. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*. Ed. Paul

Lauter et.al. 6th ed. Vol. A. Boston: Houghton, 2009. 792-93. Print. 5 Vols.

Course of Study

Reading assignments must be completed by the date specified on the schedule below. Be prepared for quizzes on the assignments. In the event of a quiz, a student's *own handwritten* notes may be open and used. Consider the professor's reading guides when reading, taking notes, and contemplating texts. Read introductory materials and footnotes, as they will help to frame your understanding of the text. **The texts listed on the schedule below are possible texts for our study; I will trim readings according to the interests and themes that develop through our course together.**

The schedule for submitting **Response Papers** is encoded: "G" = "Group," "R" = "Response," and the numerals signify Group numbers and Response numbers. The "G1-R1" in Week 3 means that students in Group 1 (G1) will submit their first response paper (R1) at the beginning of class on September 12. The subject of the Response Paper must be one or more of the assigned readings for that class. The "G2-R1" in Week 4 means that students in Group 2 (G2) will submit their first response paper (R1) at the beginning of class on September 19. The subject of the G2-R1 paper must be one or more of the assigned readings for that class. The same pattern applies to G3-R1, G1-R2, G2-R2, G3-R2, and so on.

Weeks 1 & 2

Jan. 16, 18, 23, 25

G1-R1, Jan. 23

Mary Louis Pratt, from *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*
First Contact Narratives

- Joseph Jeremy, Micmac
- Yuchi, "Creation of the Whites," 73
- Lenape and Mahican, "The Arrival of the Whites [Dutch]," 74-79
- Columbus, from *Journal of the First Voyage*, 138-46
- Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *La Relacion [The Relation of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca]*, Prologue, Chapters X, XI, XXI, XXIV, XXVII, XXXII, 157-60, 163-68
- Pierre-Esprit Radisson, from *The Relation of My Voyage, being in Bondage in the Lands of the Iroquois, which was the next yeare after my coming into Canada, in the yeare 1651, the 24th of May*

Week 3

Jan. 30, Feb. 1

G2-R1, Jan. 30

"New World" Voyages

- Samuel de Champlain, from *The Voyages of Samuel de Champlain, 1604-1618*
- Jean de Lery, from *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil, Otherwise Called America*, Mulford, 74-85
- Thomas Hariot, from *A Brief and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, 255-64
- Adriaen van der Donck, from *A Description of the New Netherlands*, 308-13
- William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 351-57
- William Penn, Description of the Lenape, from "Letter to the Committee of the Free Society of Traders, [August 6, 1683] FHL

Week 4

Feb. 6, 8

G3-R1, Feb. 6

Mary Rowlandson, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives*, 1-51
Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight*, 608-25

Week 5

Feb. 13, 15

G1-R2, Feb. 13

Richard Lewis, "A Journey from Patapsko to Annapolis, April 4, 1730," 772-82
William Bartram, from *Travels Through North and South Carolina, Georgia, East and West Florida*
John Filson, Appendix ("The Adventures of Col. Daniel Boone") from *The Discovery, Settlement and Present State of Kentucke*, 49-82 (1784), Early American Imprints, Series 1, no. 18467.
Christopher Saur, from *A Dialogue between a Newcomer and a Settler in Pennsylvania*

Abigail Adams, *Abigail Adams's Diary of Her Return Voyage to America, March 30-May 1, 1788*, 1016-18

Week 6 **Feb. 20, 22** **G1-R2, Feb. 20**

John Woolman, from *The Journal of John Woolman*, 713-26

Elizabeth Ashbridge, from *Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge*, 701-12

Week 7 **Feb. 27, 29** **G3-R2, Feb. 27**

Friends Historical Library Transcribe and conduct research regarding Quaker travel journals

Spring Break – March 2 (after last class) to March 11

Week 8 **March 12, 14** **4-6 Page Formal Essays are due on March 12.**

Samson Occom, *A Short Narrative of My Life*, 1175-81

Olaudah Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vasssa, the African. Written by Himself*, 1212-45

Nancy Gardner Prince, from *A Narrative of the Life and Travels of Mrs. Nancy Prince*

Week 9 **March 19 & 21**

Meriweather Lewis and William Clark, *Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition*, 1119-46

Week 10 **March 26 & 28** **G1-R3, March 26**

Jose Longinos Martinez, from *The Journal of Jose Longinos Martinez*

Ebenezer Fletcher, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Sufferings of Mr. Ebenezer Fletcher, of Newipswich, Who Was . . . Taken Prisoner by the British* (1798)

Sarah Winnemucca, from *Life Among the Paiute*

Mary Jemison, *A Narrative of the Life of Mary Jemison* (1824), in *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives, Introduction, Chapters I, II, III, VI and VII*, 125-48, 159-69

Week 11 **April 2 & 4** **G2-R3, April 2**

Henry David Thoreau, "Walking" and *The Maine Woods*

Week 12 **April 9 & 11** **G3-R3, April 9**

Mark Twain, *Roughing It*

Week 13 **April 16 & 18**

Zitkala Sa, from *The School Days of an Indian Girl*, online

Sui Sin Far (Edith Maud Eaton), "Leaves from the Mental Portfolio of an Eurasian"

Amy Tan, "A Pair of Tickets"

Week 14 **April 23 & 25**

William Least Heat-Moon, *Blue Highways*

The Final Exam period begins on May 3 **7-9 page Formal Essays are due on May 3.**

Our Final Exam will be a session during which each student will present a summary and highlights of his/her findings in the final essay.