

ENGL 3005W-009: American Literatures and Cultures I

Fall 2009

MW 7:00-8:55 PM

Smith 121

Professor: Dr. Abigail Davis
 Office: Lind 110B
 Hours: M 5:30-6:45 PM and by appointment
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 Grader: Sara Culver culve019@umn.edu

TEXTS

Required: *A Little Commonwealth: Family Life in Plymouth Colony* by John Demos
Norton Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed., package 1 (vols. A & B)

Optional: *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* by Edmund S. Morgan
Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America by Cathy N. Davidson

PURPOSE

EngL 3005W fulfills three CLA requirements: literature core, writing intensive, and cultural diversity theme. We will survey American literature from first European contact to 1860, exploring the intersection between literature and history through a variety of texts. My goal for this course is to expand each individual's knowledge and understanding of the role of gender, ethnicity, and race in structuring the human experience in the United States; to discover new approaches to the human condition through diverse literary genres; to employ the writing component of this course to deepen your relationship to the works we read; and to consider how these dissimilar sources contributed to the formation of a national identity.

ATTENDANCE

You are expected to attend class without fail. Because illness and emergencies do arise, **you will be allowed two absences during the semester** (the equivalent of one week of class). If you are absent more than twice, your final grade will be lowered by half a grade point. If you are absent more than the equivalent of two weeks—in this case, four classes—your final grade will be lowered by a full grade point (i.e., an A becomes a B). If you miss a class, check the class Moodle site and/or find out from a classmate what material was covered and any special assignments for the next meeting. There WILL BE additional assignments not listed on this syllabus.

This class begins punctually. Please be on time.

Please turn off your cell phones before class. Do not plan on using a laptop during class unless there is a special need, which should be first cleared with me.

Scholastic dishonesty (including plagiarism), disruptive classroom conduct, and harassment will not be tolerated in this class. Please refer to university policy for definitions and consequences of these behaviors. Put simply, I expect all of us to be respectful of the ideas and opinions of others.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Class participation will constitute 30% of your final grade. “Participation” includes involvement in our discussions, thoughtful reading, insights shared with the class, good preparation, and a willingness to take risks and venture into original thinking. It also includes your formal stint as a discussion leader, during which time you will team with several classmates and, prior to our meeting, prepare questions or other means of directing our talk about the day’s reading.

IMPORTANT!

If you have valid personal issues which preclude class participation (shyness, an inability to speak publicly, medical problems, etc.) SEE ME EARLY IN THE SEMESTER and together we will prepare substitute assignments so your final grade will not be impacted by your silence in class. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO TALK TO ME. I am happy to arrange alternative work for you, but I can’t help you if you don’t communicate with me. It is not at all unusual for at least one or two people in each class to have difficulty in this area.

THE READING REQUIREMENT

Approximately 50-100 pages per week. It is your responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the day’s readings. Always bring the relevant texts to class.

THE WRITING REQUIREMENT

This course is Writing Intensive (WI). The university definition of a WI course follows: *Undergraduate students are required to complete four Writing-Intensive (WI) courses in addition to completing the first-year writing requirement (more information available at <http://fyw.umn.edu>). All WI courses integrate writing into course content, include formal writing assignments, and provide instruction relevant to the writing assignments. Formal writing assignments are in addition to any informal, exploratory writing or in-class exams assigned in the course. At least one formal writing assignment will require students to revise and resubmit a draft after receiving comments from the instructor. Grades assigned in WI courses are substantially influenced by the writing assignments and quality of the writing produced.*

The required cumulative minimum is 10-15 pages of formal writing apart from any informal writing activities and assignments.

In this class, informal writing responses will be submitted on Moodle Forum.

Two formal papers, 6-7 pages each, will be required during the semester. Both papers will be revised using well-organized peer review and instructor feedback. Papers are due

on the dates indicated on the syllabus. I do not accept late work except under exceptional circumstances, and you must make prior arrangements with me.

I will assign several topics to choose from for both your essays. These are designed to allow you to write on the work that interested you the most.

So you can plan ahead: Your second paper will involve researching some aspect of YOUR family history. The narrative that you produce will be tied to primary sources, which can and should include material currently in print or archived (books, newspapers, magazines, personal correspondence, journals, diaries, papers you found in the attic, etc.); digital resources available online through the UMN libraries, such as the Evans Bibliography; media, such as television, film, and documentary; and oral histories (this will be particularly important to writers whose families have recently moved to the U.S. or who currently live abroad). I encourage you to use the most authentic sources you can find, and start thinking about your project NOW. This will not be one you can whip together in a few days.

STUDENT WRITING SUPPORT

Student Writing Support (SWS) provides free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students---graduate and undergraduate---at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, SWS consultants help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies.

SWS consultants are teachers of writing: graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants and professional staff. Some consultants specialize in working with non-native speakers, and others have experience with writing in specific disciplines.

Consulting is available by appointment through SWS online and in 15 Nicholson Hall, and on a walk-in basis in 9 Appleby Hall. For more information, go to writing.umn.edu/sws or call 612.625.1893.

In addition, SWS offers a number of web-based resources on topics such as documenting sources, planning and completing a writing project, and addressing punctuation and grammar questions. See http://writing.umn.edu/sws/quick_help.htm

GRADING:

Prepared writing (essays)	50%
Class participation	30%
Informal writing (Moodle responses), quizzes, etc.	20%

DAILY SCHEDULE

This is a tentative schedule. There WILL BE changes and additional assignments, so check Moodle and your email regularly.

SEPTEMBER**Week 1**

9 Intro to course

Week 2

14 Read *A Little Commonwealth*, Introduction and Part One; *Norton* pages 1-14; Thomas Harriot 49-55

16 LC Part Two; *Norton*, Bradford 104-138; John Winthrop 158-167

Week 3

21 LC Part Three; Thomas Morton, “New English Canaan”

23 LC Conclusion; Rowlandson, “A Narrative of the Captivity. . .”; “*A Notable Exploit*”: *Hannah Dustin’s Captivity and Revenge*, pages 343-352

Week 4

8 Jonathan Edwards, “Personal Narrative”; Franklin, “The Autobiography,” Part One
30 TBA

OCTOBER**Week 5**

5 John Woolman, “Journal”; **First draft paper #1 due to peers, grader, and prof**

7 John Adams and Abigail Adams, “Letters. . .”

Week 6

12 **Peer review**; film *John Adams*

14 film *John Adams*

Week 7

19 Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America”

21 Hannah Webster Foster, “The Coquette”; **Final draft paper #1 due in class with Revision Memo, Self-Assessment Checklist, and all first drafts**

Week 8

26 continue discussion of Foster

28 Sedgwick, “Hope Leslie”; Underhill, *Newes From America* (Moodle)

NOVEMBER**Week 9**

2 Washington Irving, “Legend of Sleepy Hollow”;

4 Black Hawk, from “Life of Black Hawk”

Week 10

9 film, *We Shall Remain: America Through Native Eyes*; **First draft paper #2 due to peers, grader, and prof**

11 film, *We Shall Remain: America Through Native Eyes*

Week 11

16 **Office conferences;** Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux”

18 **Office conferences;** Lincoln, “A House Divided”; Sojourner Truth, “Speech to the Women’s Rights Convention. . .”

Week 12

23 **Peer review;** Douglass, “Narrative of the Life. . .”

25 No class

26-27 Thanksgiving break

Week 13

30 Whitman, “Song of Myself,” selections from *Drum Taps*

DECEMBER

2 Melville, “Benito Cereno”

Week 14

7 Dickinson poetry

9 Davis, “Life in the Iron Mills”

Week 15

14 continue discussion of Davis

16 Last class **Final draft paper #2 due in class with Self-Assessment Checklist and Revision Memo (no peer copies needed)**