

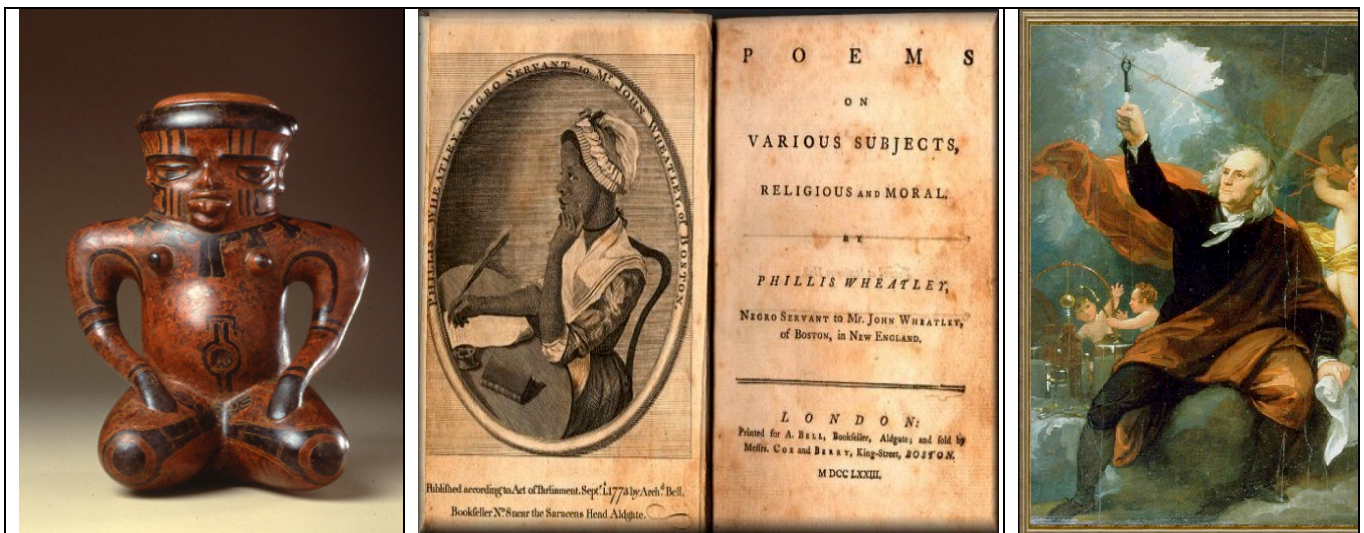
ENGL 4125-01W: COLONIAL AND EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE



FALL 2014
MW 12:30-1:50PM
PAFFORD 109

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NB: THIS COURSE DOES NOT USE COURSEDEN!



Specific Course Description: Let's face it—to most people in the general public, to most college students, and probably to YOU, early America seems like a nebulous, difficult, and more or less irrelevant period of American literature. Even in the American academy, the “real” American literature (celebrated as the “American Renaissance”) has usually begun with writers like Hawthorne, Melville, Emerson, Whitman, and Dickinson, who emerged in the mid nineteenth century. As such, American literature has often been equated with the *national* literature of the new United States; everything beforehand was, at best, a precursor. In this course, we want to undermine or suspend such a teleology (the idea that something is relevant because of its culmination or end point) and look at early American literature and culture on its own terms.

I want to envision and approach early American literature as a series of interconnected conversations: between people, authors, and texts; between geographical and environmental spaces; between ethnic, religious, and linguistic groups; between genders; and between a whole plethora of ideas (philosophical, intellectual, psychological, political, and so forth). In order to flesh out these conversations and participate in them, we will study the texts in our anthology but also consider art and artifacts from the period (asking how objects or the material reality participated in conversations), maps, images, and a variety of other primary documents that may not have been traditionally considered “literary” but that illuminate an important point or make a crucial contribution to the conversations we seek to understand. For example, these **primary documents** include letters, diary entries, newspaper articles and advertisements, book subscription lists, petitions, court transcripts, and many other “texts” (in the broadest sense), which often lie hidden in archives or are traditionally only considered relevant to historians. We will try to make such documents (as well as images and artifacts) an integral part of our day to day conversations about early American literature, and I will also ask you to search for such documents yourself—spontaneously during small, in-class research units using digital media and, eventually, as part of your final research paper and oral presentation.

Throughout the semester, we will study some of the most important genres, texts, and authors from the Anglo-American tradition as well Native American, African American, and non-English voices (in translation): for example, Iroquois creation stories, John Smith's exploration accounts, William Bradford's chronicle of Plymouth, Anne Bradstreet's and Edward Taylor's religious meditations, Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz's proto-feminist convent poetry, Mary Rowlandson's and Hannah Dustan's captivity narratives, Ben Franklin's and Samson Occom's autobiographies, Phillis Wheatley's poetry, Hannah Webster Foster's epistolary novel *The Coquette*, and poetry and prose visions of the American West and Native American removal.

Finally, we will consider how early American texts stand in conversation with our own time and concerns:

- conflicts about racial, ethnic, and religious difference, and the fear of the unknown
- questions about the roles of God and faith in our personal and communal lives
- the question of knowing oneself and others in an increasing complicated media landscape
- the development of individual autonomy and its expressions in various forms of life-writing.

These issues were equally germane to the life and letters of people in early America as they are to us today, and we will use them to probe the relevance of early America for ourselves and our “cultural moment.”

A final and important word about pedagogy and methodology in our course: of course, I will be the expert in the room and teach you a lot about early American literature; however, our approach will be inquiry-based, i.e. your learning depends on your engagement with the central course questions and our readings, your investigation of historical contexts and connections, and—most importantly—your active conversation with your peers in class.

General Course Goals:

- Students will become familiar with a range of literary works representing different genres from the colonial and early American period, understanding how these works are related to each other and to the historical literary traditions of European and world literature.
- Students will know the distinctive properties of literary expression in America during the colonial and early American period.
- Students will understand how social, political, economic, and historical conditions influence the production of literary works.
- Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
- Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.
- Students will learn to use discipline-specific computer technologies related to the study of language such as listservs, word processing, and internet research.

Program Goals:

- This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements for the completion of the English major.
- Students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business and a variety of other fields.
- Students will be able to define and pursue independent research agendas.
- This course contributes to the program goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture.
- This course broadens students' desire and ability to take pleasure in their encounter with literature.

Required Text:

You need the exact edition listed below:

- Nina Baym, gen. ed., *Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Volume A). 8th edition. New York: W.W. Norton, 2011. ISBN 978-0-393-93476-2.

Do not try to cobble together the readings from other sources; you will never have the exact selections and will never be on the same page during class discussions.

Additional Materials:

- Images and additional readings on website /or handouts provided by the instructor.
- Primary sources researched in and out of class.
- In-class film clips and images.

Recommended Texts/Materials:

- Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition (previous editions are acceptable). MLA style will be required for all papers turned in for this course.
- A handbook of literary terms (e.g. Holman/Harmon, *A Handbook to Literature*, or M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*).
- A college dictionary (e.g. *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* or *American Heritage Dictionary*; for the etymology and historical usage of words, however, consult the *Oxford English Dictionary* on Galileo).

USEFUL LIBRARY DATABASES FOR SECONDARY RESEARCH:

Worldcat

MLA Bibliography
 Project Muse
 America: History & Life
 JSTOR
 Google Scholar [not a library database]

REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN: (see detailed descriptions in separate handouts!)

- Participation, In-class Writing, Group Work, 20%
- Reading Quizzes (weekly multiple choice; open notes—closed book) 10%
- Short Analytical Paper I (no secondary sources; 4 pages) 10%
- Short Analytical Paper II (minimum of 4 secondary sources; 5 pages) 15%
- Research Project, including the following stages
 - Proposal 5%
 - Annotated Bibliography 5%
 - Oral Presentation (on primary source document) 10%
 - Graded Draft 10%
 - Final Paper (8 full pages minimum) 15%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- ☞ **Investment and Interest in the Course, its Materials, and its Subjects:** I bring a great deal of enthusiasm and intellectual curiosity to my teaching and the materials and questions we discuss in class. I demand that you do the same and treat your work in this course as an important part of your intellectual growth. I will quickly recognize if you treat the course merely as “just another requirement” and/or try to coast through it by doing the minimum amount of work. Some of the texts we read are difficult, but they are also immensely rewarding if engaged deeply and with an open mind.
- ☞ **Readings and Participation:** In a course focused on conversations and inquiry-based learning, active participation is absolutely essential. I encourage you to cultivate an engaged reading style, using underlining, marginalia, post-it notes to mark relevant pages, and notes. Classroom discussion will usually involve close readings, and I may ask you to support your comments with evidence from the text. I evaluate both the quality and quantity of your contributions, so less vocal students may excel through fewer, but thoughtful comments. I will help you prepare for your reading and classroom discussion by posting specific **reading questions** for each text on the website. I may restate these questions in class to guide discussion, and you may use them to cultivate active note-taking. We can discuss at any point during the semester how you are doing on your participation grade.
- ☞ **Quizzes:** I will ask you to complete regular pop-quizzes, testing general knowledge of the readings assigned for pre-viewing at home. Quizzes are multiple choice (10 questions = 100%; i.e. 10 correct answers = A, 9 correct answers = B, etc.) and are closed book only. There are NO make-up quizzes, except for students participating in previously arranged, official university business (such as athletic team events, debate team events, etc.). If you miss class, you also miss the quiz for that day, resulting in a grade of 0% for that quiz.
- ☞ **Short Analytical Paper I:** This paper requires an argumentative thesis about one literary text, supported by close textual analysis (no secondary sources; minimum 3 full pages). **Detailed assignment description to follow.**

- ☞ **Short Analytical Paper II:** This paper continues to practice argumentative writing and textual analysis, while considering and incorporating two secondary sources such as literary criticism and historical scholarship (minimum 4 full pages). **Detailed assignment description to follow.**
- ☞ **Research Project:** We will develop the research paper over a significant portion of time toward the end of the semester (circa 4 weeks). In addition to primary analysis and secondary research, this project requires that you find and incorporate at least one significant primary source from a digital or actual archive. In other words, you need to locate, research, and analyze a text such as historical document, a letter, a diary entry, a court transcript, a historical newspaper article, etc. in relation to the text(s) from our course anthology you are already studying. In other words, your project should dedicate a significant portion to showcasing the conversation between the primary source you located, the established/anthologized works, and the existing scholarship. The main point of this requirement is to give you a sense of the opportunity for new understandings of American literature emerging through research in original, archival sources and thus also highlighting the exiting possibilities of undergraduate research. Such a project would provide an excellent starting point for participating in undergraduate research conferences such as NCUR or the Sigma Tau Delta annual convention, as well as UWG’s own “Big Night.” **Detailed assignment description for the entire project (including each step below) to follow.**
- **Proposal:** The proposal provides a concise formulation of your preliminary argument, your research objectives, your methodology (i.e. how you will go about researching your topic and analyzing your sources), and the larger questions you are trying to answer (circa 2 full pages).
 - **Annotated Bibliography:** The annotated bibliography lists all primary and secondary sources you *plan* to use in your research project. You may later add or take away texts. A brief annotation below each MLA formatted (alphabetically) sorted entry should briefly summarize each source and say how you will use it (circa 2 sentences each annotation).
 - **Oral Presentation:** During your circa 10-minute oral presentation, you will showcase the primary text you found during your archival research. You should introduce its author, genre, circumstances of production, historical context and its actual contents, and, most importantly, discuss its relevance for your analysis of the anthologize text(s) you are analyzing in your research project.
 - **Draft:** This draft should be a *complete* version of your final research paper. I will use this draft to comment, and we will workshop it intensively in class (minimum 10 full pages).
 - **Final Paper:** As a revised version of your full draft, the final version should be virtually error free and must demonstrate significant revisions based on my and your peers’ comments. Though graded, I will only comment on this version if you wish to use it for a conference or presentation outside of class.

COURSE POLICIES:

- ☞ **Attendance:** Regular and timely attendance is **MANDATORY**. You have two (4) allowed absences. Each additional absence will result in a full letter grade deduction from your *final*

course grade (A to B, B to C, etc.). All absences will be treated the same (i.e. no distinction between excused and unexcused absences). Thus, you do not need to turn in a doctor's note or any excuses for absences, email me, or call me about your absence. Everyone is responsible for signing an attendance list circulated at the beginning of every class meeting. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to request the attendance list at the end of class. Failure to sign up on the attendance list may be counted as an absence for that day. Absences will also result in a grade of 0% for any missed quizzes; no quizzes can be made up. Also, tardiness may result in a missed quiz, which cannot be made up later in the class (because we will cover the material during the class meeting).

- ☞ **Paper Deadlines:** Papers are to be submitted in hardcopy, *at the beginning of class*, on the dates listed in the schedule (see below). If you know you have to be absent for that class, please make arrangements with me *ahead of time!* If you miss class that day due to unforeseen circumstances, you must contact me at the earliest possible time. Acceptance of any late papers is completely at the discretion of the instructor.
- ☞ **Tardiness:** Roll will circulate at the BEGINNING of class. Everyone who is late will be noted as tardy. **Three (3)** "tardies" will result in **one (1) absence!**
- ☞ **Paper Use Policy:** Following the English Department's guidelines for paperless teaching, this course strives to reduce paper use as much as possible. Handouts, syllabi, reading/discussion questions, and supplementary readings will be available through my personal website (www.westga.edu/~perben/).
- ☞ **Plagiarism:** There are different forms of plagiarism, from blatant theft of entire papers to negligence in acknowledging a source in your writing. However, you will be held responsible for any form of plagiarism—whether intentional or not. Consequences and responses to plagiarism are entirely at the discretion of the instructor, but expect as a minimum a failing grade (F) on the assignment and potentially a failing grade on the entire course (with potentially disciplinary action from the honors' council). Please pay specific attention to the English Department's site on plagiarism: <http://www.westga.edu/%7Eengdept/Plagiarism/index.html>. I expect all out-of-class work to abide by **MLA Format** (See: *MLA Handbook for the Writers of Research Papers*) for proper documentation of sources (primary and secondary).
- ☞ **Quizzes and Final Exam:** For any attempt to cheat during a quiz or final exam, you will automatically receive a failing grade on that assignment.
- ☞ **Communication and E-mail Policy and Etiquette:** According to university policy, I can only accept and answer emails you send me from your official West Georgia email account. Please make sure that your inbox is not full; check your email daily for any updates or changes. **Email etiquette:** please observe basic rules of politeness and formality in email messages. These rules include:
 - any message must include an address line (e.g. "Dear Dr. Erben" or "Dr. Erben")
 - use polite and appropriate language, as well as reasonably edited prose (i.e. complete sentences, correct spelling, no text-messaging lingo, etc.)
 - always sign your name
 - Please remember that I do have a life outside of the university; thus, allow reasonable time for me to answer your emails.

- ☞ **TECHNOLOGY POLICY:** As a general rule, all electronic devices, such as phones, i-pods, tablet computers, etc. must be turned silenced and tugged away in your bag for the entire class. If you urgently have to take care of some kind of business, please step outside of class. However, we will sporadically conduct brief online searches for relevant materials going along with the texts we are discussing in class. **You may then take out your digital device and conduct the assigned search and communicate your findings to the rest of class.**
- ☞ **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:** *Before you read the following, keep in mind that I wouldn't have to address these issues if they hadn't caused problems in the past—even in upper-level courses...* I expect everyone to be ready to work at the beginning of class. This means in particular having ALL reading materials assigned for that day on hand and ready to use, as well as any tools for note-taking. Sleeping during class may result in dismissal and count as an absence for that day! You MAY bring drinks and/or non-smelly or noisy food to class. There will be a short bathroom break roughly half-way through every class meeting (please be mindful to your classroom peers and refrain from smoking during those breaks). **Most importantly: Be respectful toward the opinions, ideas, and personal identity of all members of our class!**
- ☞ **Individual Help, Office Hours, and Writing Center:** The writing center provides individual tutorials for any writing-related problems, but no proofreading service. The center is located in TLC 1201. However, I am not only available during my designated office hours, but am happy to speak to you about assignments and any other questions by appointment.

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

- All changes are at the discretion of the instructor and will be announced in class and through email (please check your email regularly for any updates, and make sure your inbox is not full!).
- Important: All assignments, including readings, are to be completed for the date listed in the schedule!
- Other reading assignments may be added during the semester and will be made available electronically or as a hardcopy handout by the instructor (free of charge).
- All readings listed below are from *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volume (A)*, 8th edition, unless otherwise noted.
- FOR EACH ASSIGNED AUTHOR, THE RESPECTIVE BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION IN THE ANTHOLOGY IS ALWAYS REQUIRED (even though the page numbers below may not include the introduction).
- MATERIAL FROM AUTHOR INTRODUCTIONS MAY BE TESTED IN QUIZZES.

DATE	THEMES AND READING/VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS	DUE DATES
M 8/25	Introductions and syllabus.	
W 8/27	THEME 1: CONTACT, COLONIZATION, AND CAPTIVITY Narratives of Pre-Columbian America Read: "Introduction" (Beginnings to 1700, 3-20); "Stories of the Beginning of the World" (21-34). Art of the Ancient Americas (Slide show—instructor).	

M 9/1	Labor Day—no classes. (Drop/Add ends at midnight, 9/2)	
W 9/3	Contact and Conquest Read: Christopher Columbus (34-38); Bartolome de las Casas (38-42); Cabeza de Vaca (43-51); “First Encounters: Early European Accounts of Native America” (52-81).	
M 9/8	A New English World Handout on Pocahontas/John Smith; John Smith (81-99); William Bradford (121-156).	
W 9/10	Video clips (<i>The New World</i> and <i>We Shall Remain</i> ; intro to Short Analytical Paper I.	
M 9/15	Captivity Narratives Mary Rowlandson (256-288); Hannah Dustan (handout).	
W 9/17	Captivity narrative continued.	Short Analytical Paper I due.
M 9/22	THEME II: POETRY AND RELIGION New England Poets and Poetry Anne Bradstreet (207-234, i.e. <i>excluding</i> “To My Dear Children”).	
W 9/24	Edward Taylor (289-307)	
M 9/29	Other Poetic Voices Johannes Kelpius and Christopher Witt (handout)	
W 10/1	Sor Juana Inez de la Cruz (handout); Introduction to Short Analytical Paper II	
M 10/6	The Beginnings of African American Poetry Lucy Terry, “Bars Fight” (handout); Jupiter Hammon, selections (handout); Phillis Wheatley (763-774)	
W 10/8	Wheatley, continued.	
M 10/13	THEME III: “ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL”—EARLY AMERICAN FICTION AND THE GENDER POLITICS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE Linda Kerber (handout); Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes” (737-747); selections on the education of women in the early Republic (handout); selected letters by Abigail and John Adams (625-639) Video: selections from <i>John Adams</i> (HBO miniseries)—in class.	
W 10/15	Continued. Introduction to the Research Paper.	Short Analytical Paper II due.
M 10/20	Hannah Webster Foster, <i>The Coquette</i> , letter I-XXIII	
W 10/22	Cont. <i>The Coquette</i> , letter XXIV-end.	
M 10/27	THEME: BEGINNINGS OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY Anne Bradstreet, “To My Dear Children” (235-238); John Woolman (596-604); Jonathan Edwards, “Personal Narrative,” “On Sarah Pierpont,” and “Sarah Edwards’s Narrative” (398-416).	
W 10/29	Samson Occom (445-448); Olaudah Equiano (687-721).	
M 11/3	Benjamin Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> , Part 1 (480-526)	
W 11/5	<i>Autobiography</i> , Part 2 (526-542).	

M 11/10	Research Paper workshop	
W 11/12	Research Paper workshop	
F 11/14		Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due by 5pm in my email inbox.
M 11/17	No general class meeting; individual meetings with me in TLC 2239.	Mandatory Conferences
W 11/19	No general class meeting; individual meetings with me in TLC 2239.	Mandatory Conference
M 11/24	Thanksgiving break—no classes	
W 11/26	Thanksgiving break—no classes	
M 12/1		Oral Presentations
W 12/3		Oral Presentations
F 12/5	(no class meeting)	Research Paper draft due by 5pm in my email inbox (perben@westga.edu)
W 12/10	Final Exam Period Peer Review	Bring 2 printed copies of your completed research paper to class!