

EARLY AMERICAN LITERATURE

Course Description and Syllabus

TEXTS: (In order of reading. Please purchase these volumes so the pagination is the same for all of us.)

Preliminary Genres

Rowlandson, Mary. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson. 1682. Filiquarian Publishing, LLC.

Franklin, Benjamin. The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin. 1793. Dover Publications, Thrift Edition.

The Seduction/Sentimental Novel

Webster-Foster, Hannah. The Coquette. 1797. Oxford University Press.

Tenney, Tabitha. Female Quixotism. 1801. Oxford University Press.

American Gothic

Brown, Charles Brockden. Wieland: or The Transformation. 1799. Oxford World Classics.

Irving, Washington. "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" (and Other Stories). 1819-20. Penguin Classics.

Historical Mythmaking

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. Hope Leslie. 1827. Rutgers University Press.

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

We will be studying the early development of the American novel. Our primary reading and discussion of the novels will be accompanied by historical-cultural context that we as a class will provide as we try to develop a sensitivity to the cultural situation out of which this literary tradition grew. Reading novels that are 200 years old (or almost) requires a double vision. We will be looking at our own responses to the novels as well as how they might have been understood in their own times.

HELP:

Office = 141 Russell Hall.

Phone = 831-5285, or call my secretary at 831-5614 and leave a message. I also have voice mail.

E-mail address = rguruswa@radford.edu

Office hours = 10-11 MTWR and by appointment. Please note that, as chair of the department, I also have office hours posted on my door for general student use. Feel free to avail yourself of these hours if mine for this class are not convenient for you.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Class participation and in-class work. Worth 15% of overall grade.
2. Homework for class discussion. Worth 15% of overall grade.
3. Midterm examination. Worth 15%.
4. Final examination (comprehensive). Worth 20%
5. Final paper. Worth 35% of overall grade.

POLICIES:

1. The class participation and homework grades are based on your attendance. If you are not here to participate in a class activity for which points are given, or to turn in a homework assignment, you cannot make it up or hand it in late. In the case of circumstances beyond your control causing you to miss class, you should see me as soon as possible to explain your absence.
2. Students are expected to keep reading so that they are with the “benchmarks” set in the syllabus. We have some classes where reading is not required, but you should be keeping up on those days, allotting a certain amount of time each night to read for this class.
3. All work is due on the days noted in the syllabus or on the assignment sheet. If you must miss an exam due to circumstances beyond your control, I **must** be notified before the exam or **within 24 hours afterwards** or you will forfeit your chance to make up the exam. All make-up exams must be done within 1 week of the scheduled exam. The paper will lose one letter grade for each 24 hour period it or any preliminary assignment leading to it is overdue. Extensions will be granted if they are asked for before the due date.
4. Incompletes will be given only in cases of grave illness or other circumstances preventing you from completing the course. These must be arranged prior to the end of the semester, and you must be present to sign the necessary paperwork.
5. I do not give extra-credit work under any circumstances.
6. All Radford University students are expected to abide by the Honor Code posted in each classroom. This class will be conducted in strict observance of that Code.

DAILY ASSIGNMENTS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES:

Have assigned work read when you come to class. Be sure to bring the appropriate book(s) to class on the days noted.

- T Sept. 2: Introduction to course and beginnings of the American novel. Homework assignment distributed and discussed.
- Th Sept. 4: Have Mary Rowlandson’s captivity narrative begun by class time today; it will be introduced.
- T Sept. 9: Discussion of Rowlandson. Have it finished for today. **Bring in material about the Indian captivity narrative tradition.**
- Th Sept. 11: READ Franklin, Part One.
- T Sept. 16: Finish Franklin. **Bring in material about spiritual autobiography or Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography.**
- Th Sept. 18: Paper assignment distributed and discussed.
- T Sept. 23: Begin discussion of Coquette. Have up through Letter XXXVI read (p. 71).

- Th Sept. 25: READ through Letter XLVIII (p. 106) for today. **Bring in material about the epistolary novel.**
- T Sept. 30: Finish Coquette. Discussion of literature search and MLA format.
- Th Oct. 2: Begin discussion of Female Quixotism. Have Book I read (up to p. 151). **Bring in material about the seduction or the sentimental novel tradition.**
- T Oct. 7: Finish Female Quixotism for today. Discussion of proposal format.
- Th Oct. 9: Final discussion of the seduction/sentimental/epistolary tradition. Review for midterm.
- T Oct. 14: Midterm exam.
- Th Oct. 16: No Class. Teacher at conference.
- T Oct. 21: **Bring in material about the American Gothic tradition.** Proposal due.
- Th Oct. 23: READ Wieland, pp. 5-104 (through Chap. XI).
- T Oct. 28: READ Wieland, pp. 105-66 (through Chapter XX).
- Th Oct. 30: Finish Wieland. Preliminary bibliography due (optional).
- T Nov. 4: READ “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (pp. 272-97 in our collection).
- Th Nov. 6: American Gothic discussion continued.
- T Nov. 11: **Bring in material about historical fiction .** READ Hope Leslie through Chap. VII (p. 94).
- Th Nov. 13: READ Hope through end of Volume One (p. 167).
- T Nov. 18: First complete draft of paper due. READ Hope to p. 204.
- Th Nov. 20: READ Hope to p. 294.

THANKSGIVING BREAK

- T Dec. 1: Revising the final paper: Instructions.
- Th Dec. 3: FINISH Hope Leslie.
- T Dec. 8: Optional conference day.
- Th Dec. 11: Final draft of paper due. Review for final exam.

The final exam period will be 2:45-4:45 Wed. Dec. 17.