

English 412C and 512
W 6:00 - 8:30 p.m.
Keezell Hall 310

Fall 2000

Captivity Narratives

General Information

Instructor: Dr. Alan Silva

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Office Hours: M W F 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.
and by appointment

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Course Description

The captivity narrative, traditionally a story of a white woman abducted by American Indians, was one of the most popular genres in early America. The captivity narrative of Massachusetts Bay Puritan Mary Rowlandson, now considered a “foundational” text in the tradition, became the first bestseller in 1682 and was reprinted many times over the next century. Numerous other captivity accounts followed, and by the 19th century, treatments of captivity appeared in poems, popular folktales, paintings, sculptures, and as sub-plots within full-length novels.

This course will examine the cultural work of the captivity narrative by focusing on the design and development of the genre and the ways in which it functions within American culture. We will discuss traditional Puritan captivities, their 18th-century counterparts, and their 19th-century retellings. We will also investigate the antecedents of the captivity narrative written by French, Spanish, and English explorers and settlers. We will analyze non-traditional captivity narratives (non-Indian or non-white). And we will look at 20th-century reflections on captivity by examining films and American Indian literature.

The primary objective of this course is to interrogate the “contact zone,” as Mary Louise Pratt has described it, a middle ground where members of different cultures come in contact and begin testing the boundaries of their own cultures and their own personal identities. What happens when cultures come in contact with each other? Does cultural contact result in conflict or negotiation? Does it lead to individual acculturation or transculturation? These questions and others will lead us to our other two broader objectives, an analysis of the changing shape of the captivity genre and an interdisciplinary inquiry into the cultural work of the captivity narrative.

English Major Requirements

Students may use this course to fulfill either the Genre requirement (captivity narrative as genre), or the Period requirement (Colonial American), or the Multicultural Studies requirement (cultural contact and exchange between Europeans, American Indians, and African Americans).

Texts

Sherman Alexie, “Captivity” (handout)

Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account: Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca’s Relación* (Arte Público Press)

James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (Penguin)

Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (Bedford History and Culture Series)

Gordon Sayre, ed., *American Captivity Narratives* (Houghton Mifflin)

Catharine Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (Penguin)

Assignments

You will have one essay, one oral presentation, and one research project in this class. Specific prompts for each assignment will be given to you later in the semester. The following details should suffice for now.

Close Reading Essay: a three to five page essay that analyzes any theme, character, imagery pattern, structural device, or stylistic feature of one of the early captivity narratives.

Critical Response Oral Presentation: a brief presentation that summarizes and formulates a critical response to a secondary source on captivity, and provides a one-page handout for all class members that summarizes key points of the presentation.

Research Project: an extended project that allows you to choose one of three tracks, either a creative intervention into one of the captivity narratives we read in class; a cultural analysis of various retellings of one captivity narrative we read; or an analysis of a captivity narrative we did not read that applies your knowledge of the captivity genre to the narrative you selected.

Late Assignments

Your first essay will be penalized one full grade for each class day it is late. The oral presentation and research project must be completed on the day designated on the calendar. Only in cases of extreme emergency will you be allowed to make-up the presentation or turn in the project late. In those cases, the instructor will determine the grade penalty at his discretion.

Attendance

The attendance policy for this class is strict. Each class session of a one day per week class is equivalent to an entire week's work. You will not find this class very beneficial or enjoyable if you do not come every time, on-time, and stay for the entire period. I strongly recommend you not take this course if you are someone who has difficulty attending class regularly, or if you already know you will need to miss several classes this term.

You are allowed up to one unexcused absence. If you have more than one unexcused absence, you automatically fail the course. *No exceptions.* Absences are excused for serious illness, death in the family, or other serious emergency at the discretion of the instructor. Please provide documentation so that I may excuse the absence.

Participation

This class will be run as a seminar. I will lecture in most of our classes, either toward the beginning of the period or toward the end, but lectures will be relatively brief. We will use class discussion as our method for interpreting texts and developing ideas. Although you will not be formally graded on your participation in class, I strongly invite and encourage you to contribute to class conversation. You will learn much more in this class if you comment thoughtfully on the materials, ask questions of your peers and your instructor, and respond to questions and musings raised in class. In all discussions, I ask that you respect each other's views and contribute to the discussion without monopolizing the conversation.

Academic Honesty

For some of your oral and written assignments, you will need to refer to scholarly books, articles, and websites. When you refer (by quotation or paraphrase) to the work of others, you must provide proper attribution and citation. Failure to do so is considered academically dishonest. The consequences of such behavior ranges from failure on the assignment to dismissal from the university. Please ask if you are in doubt about when you need to cite a source and/or how to make that citation.

Incompletes

You must complete at least two-thirds of the course work, be in satisfactory standing (a "C" average or above) and have an unforeseen emergency arise at the end of the semester (serious illness, death in the family) in order to receive an incomplete. All incomplete grades must be given prior approval by the instructor.

Grading

Grades represent my evaluation of the quality of your work. If you are ever dissatisfied with an evaluation, please see me immediately (don't wait until the end of the semester). All letter grades are converted into numerical equivalents and then calculated as percentages. Please see me for further details or to request a copy of my grade conversion table.

Close Reading Essay	25%
Critical Response Oral Presentation	25%
Research Project	50%

Calendar

Everyone is responsible for reading the assigned primary materials prior to our class session. Only the presenters are required to read the secondary sources that pertain to their report. Others are welcome to read some of the secondary materials if they have time.

8/30 Introduction: The Cultural Work of the Captivity Narrative
Discussion of Syllabus and Handouts
Alexie, "Captivity" (handout)

9/6 Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*
Salisbury, "Introduction: Mary Rowlandson and Her Removes" (1-60)
Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (63-112)

Secondary Sources

Dawn Henwood, "Mary Rowlandson and the Psalms: The Textuality of Survival."
Early American Literature 32:2 (1997): 169-86.

Perry Miller, "The Marrow of Puritan Divinity," *Errand into the Wilderness* (48-98)

Teresa Toulouse, "'My Own Credit': Strategies of (E)Valuation in Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative." *American Literature* 64 (1992): 655-76.

9/13 Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God*
Historical and Cultural Documents on King Philip's War (browse 115-49)
Joseph Rowlandson, *The Possibility of God's Forsaking a People* (149-64)
Mather, from *Decennium Luctuosum* (164-68)

Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*

Sayre, "Two Puritan Captivities as Told by Cotton Mather" (177-82)

Mather, "A Narrative of Hannah Swarton, Containing Wonderful Passages, Relating to Her Captivity and Her Deliverance" (186-94)

Thoreau, from *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* (195-97)

Secondary Sources

Sacvan Bercovitch, "Introduction: The Puritan Reassessed," *The American Jeremiad* (3-30)

Bercovitch, "The Vision of History," *Puritan Origins of the American Self* (35-71)

Russell Bourne, "Victory's Trail to Defeat," *The Red King's Rebellion: Racial Politics in New England, 1675-1678* (163-205)

- 9/20** Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account*
 Favata and Fernández, "Introduction" (11-20)
 Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account* (26-121)
 Selected film clips from *Cabeza de Vaca*

Secondary Sources

Rolena Adorno, "The Negotiation of Fear in Cabeza de Vaca's *Naufragios*," *New World Encounters* (48-84)

Francis Jennings, "Reciprocal Discovery" and "Savage Heathen," *The Invasion of America* (32-57)

- 9/27** Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "Saved by the Chief's Daughter" (59-64)
 de la Vega, from *La Florida* (65-82)
 Smith, from *The Generall Historie of Virginia* (83-90)
 Selected film clips from *Pocahontas*

Secondary Sources

Robert S. Tilton, "Miscegenation and the Pocahontas Narrative in Colonial and Federalist America," *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (9-33)

Tilton, "The Pocahontas Narrative in the Era of the Romantic Indian," *Pocahontas* (58-92)

10/4 CLOSE READING ESSAY DUE

Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "Jesuit Missionary Martyrs" (91-94)
 Jogues, "Novum Belgium" (95-121)
 Regnaut, "A Veritable Account of the Martyrdom" (122-26)
 Selected film clips from *Black Robe*

Secondary Sources

Myra Jehlen, "The Natural Inhabitants," *The Cambridge History of American Literature*,
 Volume One, 1590-1820 (37-58)
 David Sewell, "'So Unstable and Like Mad Men They Were': Language and
 Interpretation in American Captivity Narratives," *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early
 America* (39-55)

- 10/11** Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "Two African American Captives" (198-202)
 Marrant, "A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a
 Black" (203-24)
 Equiano, from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or
 Gustavus Vassa, the African* (225-57)

Secondary Sources

Houston Baker, "Figurations for a New American Literary History," *Blues, Ideology, and
 Afro-American Literature* (15-63)
 John Sekora, "Red, White, and Black: Indian Captivities, Colonial Printers, and the Early
 African-American Narrative," *A Mixed Race: Ethnicity in Early America* (92-104)

- 10/18** Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "A Legend of the American Revolution" (347-51)
 Hilliard D'Auberteuil, *Miss McCrea: A Novel of the American Revolution* (352-76)

Secondary Sources

Jonathan Clark, "The Problem of Allegiance in Revolutionary Poughkeepsie," *Saints &
 Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History* (285-317)
 Jay Fliegelman, "Affectionate Unions and the New Voluntarism," *Prodigals and
 Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against Patriarchal Authority, 1750-1800* (123-54)

- 10/25** Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "Two Captivity Poems" (377-79)
 Terry, "Bars Fight" (380)
 Ridge, "The Stolen White Girl" (381)

Sayre, "Two Popular Nineteenth-Century Tales" (382-85)
 "The Indian Captive: As Related by a First Settler" (386-92)
Gertrude Morgan: Or Life and Adventures Among the Indians of the Far West
 (393-418)

11/1 Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* (1-350)

Secondary Sources

David Haberly, "Women and Indians: *The Last of the Mohicans* and the Captivity Tradition," *American Quarterly* 28 (1976): 431-41.

Annette Kolodny, "Natty Bumppo as The American Dream," *The Lay of the Land* (89-115)

Richard Slotkin, "Man Without a Cross: The Leatherstocking Myth," *Regeneration Through Violence* (466-516)

11/8 *The Last of the Mohicans* (film)

11/15 Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (1-371)

Secondary Sources

Russell Bourne, "The Battle That Shaped New England's Mind," *The Red King's Rebellion* (41-84)

Philip Gould, "Catharine Sedgwick's 'Recital' of the Pequot War," *American Literature* 66 (December 1994): 641-62.

Leland S. Person, Jr., "'The American Eve: Miscegenation and a Feminist Frontier Fiction,'" *American Quarterly* 37 (Winter 1985): 668-85.

11/22 CLASS CANCELED: THANKSGIVING BREAK

11/29 Sayre, *American Captivity Narratives*
 Sayre, "A Captive Indian" (419-21)
 Geronimo, from *Geronimo's Story of His Life* (422-43)

12/6 RESEARCH PROJECT DUE

Conclusion: Captivity Narratives and Early American Culture
 Course Evaluations