

**ENGL 2327-005: American Literature to 1870
Encounters in Early American Literatures**

Fall 2009
Section 005, Monday 6-8:50 p.m.
Location: LANG 316
Phone: 940-369-8952

Professor Kelly Wisecup
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Office: LANG 409 A
Office hours: M, 3:30-5:30 p.m.,
and by appointment

A. Description

The European colonization of the Americas was characterized by cross-cultural encounters among European colonists, Native Americans, and Africans. These encounters exposed peoples in the Americas to unfamiliar religious, scientific, political, and cultural beliefs, and literary practices.

This course will survey the major texts of American literature from Europe's colonial expansion, conquest, and settlement of the Americas to the period following the Civil War. We will ask the following questions:

- How did early Americans describe cross-cultural encounters and how did they depict their interactions with unfamiliar peoples?
- How did the circulation of ideas in America and throughout the Atlantic world, in contexts of discovery, war, settlement, travel, revolution, nationalism, and slavery shape the literatures of early America?
- How did these literatures reflect and shape ideas about people and places—both “America” and “Americans”?

Additionally, you should:

- Develop critical thinking, writing, and reading skills to interpret texts and make arguments supported by textual evidence.
- Analyze, interpret, and evaluate the rhetorical strategies with which writers shaped definitions of “Americanness” and “literature” in early American literatures from 1492-1870.
- Participate in our classroom and the community at the University of North Texas by analyzing and discussing how cross-cultural encounters have shaped what “American” and “literature” mean for readers.

B. Texts

Norton Anthology of American Literature, 7th ed., volumes A and B, ISBN 10: 0-393-92993-0
Available at the University Bookstore

C. Assignments

1. Participation (15 %)

a. Reading assignments

Reading assignments must be completed in full before the day for which they are assigned.

Please bring all readings, including those posted online, to class. Please read the introductory material for each author.

b. Reading Questions (RQs)

I will hand out reading questions for each text. You should answer these questions with a written response of at least 4-5 sentences, based upon your own reading of the text. A satisfactory response will specifically address the question by explaining your interpretation of the reading. You should give evidence for your opinion by referring directly to the text. **RQ's must be submitted electronically, on Blackboard (at <http://ecampus.unt.edu/webct/entryPage.dowebct>), by midnight on the Sunday before class and cannot be made up.**

2. Essays

a. Response Papers (35 %)

During the semester, you will write three short (2 page) close reading papers that analyze one of our readings. For these papers, you will be given an assignment sheet with prompts.

b. Final Paper: Comparison/Contrast (25 %)

You'll write a final paper of 3-4 pages, in which you compare or contrast two of our readings. I will give you an assignment sheet before the paper is due.

*** Papers will lose one-third of a letter grade per class day they are late and will receive "F's if not turned in a week after the due date. Emailed papers will not be accepted.*

4. Final Exam (25 %)

There will be a cumulative final exam during finals week, which will include objective questions (multiple choice, short answer) and essay questions.

D. Course Policies

1. Participation/Attendance

Because group discussion will be an essential part of the class, you will be expected to participate in class discussions with relevant, interesting, and respectful questions and responses. Reading questions and discussion count as part of your participation grade. Your engagement and participation in the class is valued and expected, so roll will be taken at the beginning of every class. The only absences that are excused are those that are university-approved: for religious holidays, documented illness, and representation of the University at approved events. **Excused absences must be documented in writing, no later than one week after the absence. Please let me know, in writing, ahead of time if you will be absent for a university-approved reason.**

More than three absences will result in your final grade dropping one letter grade for each class day missed thereafter.

2. Academic Integrity

You are expected to abide by the University's Policy of Academic Dishonesty in the Student Handbook. Academic dishonesty (including plagiarism, cheating, or falsification of academic records) will not be tolerated; all cases will, at the least, result in a grade of F. The UNT Student Handbook defines plagiarism as:

- a) the knowing or negligent use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person with out full and clear acknowledgement, and/or
- (b) the knowing or negligent unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or by an agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Please see UNT's policy on academic integrity, available in the Student Handbook, <http://www.unt.edu/csrr/handbook.html>.

3. *Disabilities*

If you have a disability that you feel will affect your performance in this class, please register with the Office of Disability Accommodation, University Union, Suite 321, (940) 565-4323, and inform me in writing as soon as possible.

The University of North Texas is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112—The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of new federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

4. *Instructor Contact*

Please feel free to contact me with any questions: through email, during my office hours, or by making an appointment. I will respond to your emails within 48 hours of receipt.

E. Grading

Participation (includes discussion, RQs, attendance): 15%

Response Papers: 35%

Final Essay: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Schedule

Week 1: Monday, August 31

Course Introduction

Christopher Columbus, *Letters*

“The Iroquois Creation Story”

Week 2: Monday, September 7 NO CLASS, Labor Day Holiday

SEPTEMBER 10: Last day to drop a class online

Week 3: Monday, September 14: Conquest, Exploration, and Colonization

Bartolome de Las Casas, “The Devastation of the Indies”

Thomas Hariot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*

John White, Paintings

John Smith, *Generall Historie; A Description of New England*

Week 4: Monday, September 21: Conquest and Migration in the Americas

William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* pages 104-9; 114-30

John Winthrop, *A Model of Christian Charity*

True Relation of the Vicissitudes that Attended The Governor Don Hernando de Soto
(online)

Week 5: Monday, September 28: Religion and Dissent

Response Paper 1 Due

Roger Williams, *A Key to the Language of America* (in Norton and online)

Anne Bradstreet, selected poems

Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*

Week 6: Monday, October 5: Captivity I

Mary Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration*

OCTOBER 6: Last day to drop with a “W”

Week 7: Monday, October 12: Captivity II

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *Relation of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca*

“A Notable Exploit”: Hannah Dustan’s *Captivity and Revenge*

John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings* (online)

Week 8 Monday, October 19: Travel and the Enlightenment

Response Paper 2 Due

Sarah Kemble Knight, *Journal of Madam Knight*

William Byrd, *The History of the Dividing Line* and *Secret History* (online)

Week 9 Monday, October 26: Enlightenment and Self-Fashioning

Jonathan Edwards, *Personal Narrative, Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God*

Benjamin Franklin, selections from *Autobiography*

Week 10 Monday, November 2: The Black Atlantic

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*

Week 11 Monday, November 9: Slavery and “Americans”

Pontiac, *Speech at Detroit*; Red Jacket, *Speech to the US Senate*;

Thomas Jefferson, *Logan*; Tecumseh, *Speech to the Osages*

Phillis Wheatley, *Poems and Letters*

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (pages 444 and 657-665)

Samson Occom, *A Short Narrative of My Life*

Week 12 Monday, November 16: Revolution and Sympathy

Response Paper 3 Due

Hector St. John Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*

Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*

13 Monday, November 23: American Gothic

Nathaniel Hawthorne, Young Goodman Brown, *The Minister’s Black Veil*

Edgar Allen Poe, *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Masque of the Red Death*

14 Monday, November 30: Slavery and Abolition

Final Paper Due

Frederick Douglass, selections from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

William Wells Brown, *Clotel*

15 Monday, December 7: Slavery and Revolution

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*