

## Fall 2007 HNR 213/214 Honors American Civilization

Professors Steve Tripp and Michael Webster

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### Literature Text:

Baym, Nina, et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Volumes A and B*. 7th ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. Volume A: ISBN-10: 0-393-92739-3. ISBN-13: 0-978-393-92739-9; Volume B: ISBN-10: 0-393-92740-7. ISBN-13: 0-978-393-92740-5

Volumes A and B package: ISBN-10: 0-393-92993-0. ISBN 13: 978-0-393-92993-5.

<http://www2.wwnorton.com/college/english/naal7/>

**Readings:** Feel free to ask questions about the readings, which, while they may come from unfamiliar time periods and cultures, are nevertheless exciting, entertaining, and challenging. Come to class prepared, having read the material and thought about the study questions and any other questions you have raised on your own. We will help you keep on track by giving quizzes from time to time. Your participation will help make the discussion lively and the course more memorable.

These books are required; additional questions, outlines, or readings will be distributed in class and/or posted on the class web page on Blackboard. Assigned readings are noted on the syllabus; all readings shall be completed before the class for which it is assigned. Please use editions and translations ordered for this class.

**Syllabus** (Schedule of Readings): Note: Read all introductions to authors. The reading list may be altered as class proceeds.

**Week 1** [Aug. 27] Introduction: Lewis Hyde hears a trickster tale (handout). What do you think might be some meanings of this story? Why do you think the Navaho guys told Hyde this story? Do you think the story is religious in any way? How do you think the early English colonists would have reacted to stories such as these?

[Aug. 29] Views of the New World: Read in the *Norton Anthology*: Introduction (1-11); John Smith, from *The Generall Historie* (55-57, 61-66); Silvester Jourdain, "A Discovery of the Bermudas" (handout); and William Bradford *Of Plymouth Plantation* (104-120).

[No Class September 3-4, Labor Day Holiday.]

**Week 2** [Sept. 5] Read: William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation*, Book II, chapter XI ("Compact," Natives) and chapter XIX (Merrymount) (121-129), Thomas Morton, "Of

the Revels of New Canaan" (138-143), "Of a Great Monster" (143-146), "How the Nine Worthies . . ." (146). We will also discuss the history reading, John Winthrop's "A Model of Christian Charity" (147-158, especially pages 156-158). [Puritan assignment]

**Week 3** [Sept. 10] Read: Anne Bradstreet, "Prologue" (187-189), "Author to Her Book," poems on her children, grandchildren, and husband (204-213), "To My Dear Children" (214-217). Michael Wigglesworth, from *The Day of Doom* (217-234), [Sept. 12] Read selections from *The New England Primer* (353-355); Edward Taylor, Introduction, Prologue, Meditation 8 (267-271), Meditations 26, 150. Preface (276-279), "Upon Wedlock" "Upon a Wasp," "Huswifery," and "A Fig for The, Oh! Death" (283-287). Read also: "Upon a Spider Catching a Fly" (handout). Read selections from Samuel Sewall's *Diary* (288-303) and "The Selling of Joseph, A Memorial" (303-306). [Optional: Cotton Mather, from *Wonders of the Invisible World* (307-313).]

**Week 4** [Sept. 17] Read: "American Literature 1700-1820" (357-365); J. Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*, Letter III, "What Is an American?" (595-605); Letter IX, Thoughts on Slavery (605-609); X, On Snakes, and XII, Distresses of a Frontier Man (610-616). [Lecture: Jamaica Kincaid, "On Writing." Tuesday, September 18, 7 p.m. Eberhard Center, 2nd floor. Read "Alien Soil."]  
[Sept. 19] Read: Benjamin Franklin, "The Way to Wealth" (449-457); "Remarks Concerning the Savages" (468-472); and part one of *The Autobiography* (472-518). Read also Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God" (384-386; 425-436). [Note selections from Byrd's *Secret Diary* (378-384).]

**Week 5** [Sept. 24 & 26] Finish Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography* part two (518-534) and part three (534-587). Read John Adams, "Dr. Franklin" (619-620). Begin reading Royall Tyler's *The Contrast*, Acts I and II (Norton 764-784; Kierner 35-66).

**Week 6** [Oct. 1 & 3] Finish Royall Tyler, *The Contrast*, Acts III-V (Norton 784-805; Kierner 67-100).

**Week 7** [Oct. 8] Read: "American Literature 1820-1865" (929-947); Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (951-965); Lydia Maria Child, "Women's Rights" and "Barnum's American Museum" (1096-1106). [Optional: James Fenimore Cooper, from *The Pioneers* (985-1002).] [Oct. 10] Midterm

**Week 8** [Oct. 15] Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature*, Chapters 1, 7, and 8 (1106-1113, 1132-1138), "The Divinity School Address" and "Self-Reliance" (1151-1180). [Optional: "the Poet" and "Experience" (1180-1213).] Read also poems: "The Snow-Storm" (1245-46), "Merlin" and "Brahma" (1248-51).

[Oct. 17] Read: Nathaniel Hawthorne, Introduction (1272-1275); "Young Goodman Brown" (1289-1298), "The May-Pole of Merrymount" (1304-1311), and "The Birth-Mark" (1320-1332). Begin "The Custom House" (1352-1377) and *The Scarlet Letter*, chapters I-VII (1377-1415).

**Week 9** [Oct. 22 & 24] Read: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, chapters IX-XIX (1415-1466).

**Week 10** [Oct. 29] Finish reading Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*, chapters XX-XXIV (1466-1493). [Optional: Preface to *The House of the Seven Gables* (1493-1494).] [Oct. 31] Read: Edgar Allan Poe (1528-32); “The Raven,” “Ulalume,” and “Annabel Lee” (1536-1543); “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1553-1565); and “The Purloined Letter” (1599-1611).

**Week 11** [Nov. 6 & 7] Read: Fanny Fern, “Barnum’s Museum” (1796-1798); Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1808-1829); begin Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1698-1721).

**Week 12** [Nov. 12] Finish reading Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1721-1792); [Nov. 14] Read: Introduction to Henry David Thoreau (1853-1857); from *Walden* “Economy” (1872-1885; 1893-1900; 1908-1914), “What I Lived For” (1914-1924), “Solitude” (1940-1945), “Higher Laws,” “Brute Neighbors” (1981-1995), “Spring,” and “Conclusion” (2027-2046). Read also selections from *The Maine Woods* [Ascent of Mount Ktaadn] (handout). Read Introduction to Herman Melville (2304-2308) and start Herman Melville, “Bartleby” (2363-2384).

**Week 13** [Nov. 19] Finish reading “Bartleby” (2363-2384); read also H. W. Longfellow poems (1495-1507). *Happy Thanksgiving!*

**Week 14** [Nov. 26 & 28] Read: Emerson’s Letter to Walt Whitman (1251-1252); Introduction to Whitman (2190-2195), *Song of Myself* (2210-2254); “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (2263-2267), other poems (2274-2275); Whitman’s Letter to Emerson (2289-2296). [Optional: poems from *Children of Adam* and *Calamus* (2254-2262); *Drum Taps* (2275-2282).]

**Week 15** [Dec. 3 & 5] Read: Emily Dickinson, poems (3042-3081); letters (2594-2597; handout); Thomas Wentworth Higginson, letter to his wife on Emily Dickinson (handout).

Final Exam Times: HNR 214 01 [Webster]: Wednesday, December 12, 4:00 – 5:50 p.m.  
HNR 213 01 [Tripp]: Thursday, December 13, 2:00 – 3:50 p.m.

## AMERICA

Centre of equal daughters, equal sons,  
 All, all alike endear'd, grown, ungrown, young or old,  
 Strong, ample, fair, enduring, capable, rich,  
 Perennial with the Earth, with Freedom, Law and Love,  
 A grand, sane, towering, seated Mother,  
 Chair'd in the adamant of Time.

--Walt Whitman

### **Course Expectations, Goals, Design, Policies and Assignments, HNR 214, Fall 2007**

**Expectations:** read carefully, question wisely, participate joyfully, think critically, and write thoughtfully.

#### **Goals:**

- to enjoy reading, talking, and writing about American literature;
- to explore prominent themes and issues in American literature;
- to understand how cultural, intellectual, and historical backgrounds affect writers and their works;
- to explore and discover ideas and emotions through reading and writing;
- to learn to read more closely and carefully and thereby enjoy literary texts more fully;
- to discover a wider and more accurate vocabulary with which to express that enjoyment.

Enjoyment and analysis are not opposites: when we read, we also *interpret* and *judge*. Class participation, note-taking, and writing papers are simply more overt and extended forms of enjoyment and analysis. In addition, reading and enjoying poetry will help you develop skills needed to think critically and express yourselves (in writing and debate) as reflective, involved citizens. This course will give you the chance to sharpen your ability to form an argument, interpret evidence, and make connections among complex ideas. I also hope you will find the course challenging and enjoyable: the fun will come in discovering new ways of seeing the world through reading, talking, and writing about literature. Further, through a respectful give and take of opinions, you will have the chance to test your views of literary works against those of others in the class. Also, we'll read some really good poems, novels, stories, and plays that explore the beauty and complexity of human existence.

#### **Interpreting Literature**

Learning to interpret literature usually involves asking three kinds of questions: *reading* and *interpretive*, and *critical*.

- *Reading* questions ask about your feelings and comprehension of subject, content, plot, and the literal story-line.
- *Interpretive* questions ask for your opinions on themes, figurative language, psychology, symbolism, and form. These questions are open-ended and ask about meanings.
- *Critical* questions are also open-ended and ask you to make value judgements about the work in question. We may judge the value of the work itself, and / or its taste, time-period, history, politics, and ethics.

(Each kind of question may contain elements of another kind. Thus an analytical interpretation may take into account sensuous aspects like feeling and performance.) The best questions are open-ended—the quality of your answer depends on the evidence and reasoning you can bring to back up your ideas. These questions usually contain phrases like “do you think” or “why do you suppose.”

**Questions:** “The love of wisdom begins in wonder,” said Socrates. We learn by asking and working out answers to questions. You are encouraged to bring to class your own questions on the readings. The study and discussion questions are designed to stimulate your thinking and activate your reading, to highlight important issues, and to prepare you for in-class discussion.

**Attendance:** Coming to class regularly helps keep you on track and on task. For the most part, this class will be structured around class discussion of questions raised by the stories themselves. You cannot “make up” what you miss in the give-and-take of ideas that happens in the best sort of discussion. The readings in the class will be challenging and interesting, and the classroom is the place to have your questions about them answered. Feel free to talk to me at any time about any aspect of the readings or class participation. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but it definitely makes the grade go lower. Those who miss more than a week of classes without legitimate excuse will receive a failing grade for the course. Work is not a legitimate excuse for absence. I reserve the right to control access to laptops, cell-phones, and similar electronic gadgets during class time.

**Writing:** Besides reading and interpreting texts in class, students will write two 4-5 page papers. I will give you reading quizzes to help you keep up. Quizzes may take the form of short in-class response papers or answers to discussion questions prepared before class. There will also be a midterm (identifications, short answers) and a final.

**Grading:** Because grades are meant to reflect your effort in a course, **plagiarism** will be punished severely. At the least, you will receive an F for the paper; you may fail the entire course. For more information on the University's policy on plagiarism, see sections 223.00 and following in the Student Code. Your final grade will be based on the following percentages: class participation, exercises, and quizzes 20%, papers 40%, midterm 20%, final 20%.

**The Meijer Center for Writing**, with locations at the Allendale, Pew/Grand Rapids and Meijer/Holland campuses, is available to help you with the writing you do in any of your

classes. Writing Consultants, who are GVSU students, have been trained to help you with all stages of your writing process, from brainstorming to organizing to editing your papers. The Center's services are free and appointments aren't necessary. Simply bring a draft of your paper, the assignment sheet, and your questions/concerns about the writing to any of the Center's three locations:

Allendale Campus Lake Ontario Hall 120 331-2922	Pew Campus Grand Rapids DeVos 101B / 331-6407	Meijer Campus Holland Library Study Area
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Hours at LOH 120 are M-TH 9 a.m. - 8 p.m., F 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., and Sunday 3 – 8 p.m.

Hours at the other two locations vary: check the Writing Center home page at <http://www.gvsu.edu/wc>. Consultations with me and/or the people at the Writing Center are especially recommended for students who have not taken WRT 305 or those who have newly transferred from a junior college. Tell the Writing Consultant you work with that you'd like notification of your visit to be sent to your professor.

### Michael Webster Schedule, Fall '07

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9-10					
10-11	ENG 383 01 Literary Modernism 1116 ASH		ENG 383 01 Literary Modernism 1116 ASH		ENG 383 01 Literary Modernism 1116 ASH
11-12	Office Hour		Office Hour		
12-1			English Dept. Meetings		
1-2:15		ENG 382 02 Nature Writing		ENG 382 02 Nature Writing	
2:15-3:15		Office Hour		Office Hour	
3:00-4:15	HNR 223 02 American Civilization NMR 142		HNR 223 02 American Civilization NMR 142		
4:30-5:45	HNR 224 02 American Civilization NMR 142		HNR 224 02 American Civilization NMR 142		
6-8:50					