

AML 3031

American Literature I

Section 0003
Fall 2009 (3 credits)
T/R 9:00-10:15 a.m.
CL1, 109

Dr. Mark Kamrath
Office: Colbourn Hall, 417c
Hours: T/R 10:30 -11:45 a.m.
p.m., & by appointment.
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WebCourse (for email): <https://my.ucf.edu>
CDWS Techangers (407) 823-3808

For some twenty-five years, from the close of World War II through the 1960s . . . a certain evolutionary literary coherence, even progress, was presumed to be demonstrable, as instructors and critics located in prose and poetry the growing expressions of democratic consciousness and of such values as individualism and self-reliance. . . . This postwar epoch in American literary study, however, began to undergo major reevaluation in the 1970s, when scholars pointed out that the canonical texts thought to constitute American literature excluded the cultural record of indigenous peoples, ethnic and minority groups, women, and non- Anglo colonial powers. . . . Suffice it to say that for the past twenty-five years, every term in the title of this essay and every ramifying subcategory has undergone dynamic, radical change.

Cecelia Tichi, "American Literary Studies to the Civil War" in *Redrawing the Boundaries* (1992)

Course Description and Goals

This course offers a broad “survey” of a wide variety of authors and texts from the period of colonization to the mid-19th century--nearly 500 years of writings representing some of the diverse ethnic and racial strands of our literary heritage as well as texts by women writers frequently excluded from literary collections.

Unlike other courses, this class must balance breadth of coverage and depth of understanding. The three primary goals of this are as follows:

- to become familiar with the historical, cultural, and ideological circumstances surrounding a given piece of literature, and to also explore the development and expression of some fundamental ideas, assumptions, myths, and beliefs that still influence the ways Americans think about themselves and their society.
- to examine the larger print and aesthetic developments of a range of prose, poetry, and fictional works and to closely examine— and practice ways of identifying various themes, rhetorical strategies, and discourses.
- to develop our ability to read these texts both carefully and critically, and to use textual evidence to support interpretations or opinions.

(Note: To enroll in this course you must have previously taken ENC1101 and ENC 1102. Failure to meet the prerequisites for a course can result in failing the course. ENG 3014 is highly recommended, but not required. Also, this course has a significant history component, thereby satisfying the “Literary History” requirement.)

Texts

Lauter, Paul. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, 5th ed. Volume A Colonial Period to 1800, and Volume B Early Nineteenth Century 1800-1865. Lexington: Heath, 2006 (ISBN 9780618588923, two volumes).

Requirements

1.) **Participation:** 15% of grade .

Participation means being in class and “actively learning,” i.e., actively engaging with reading materials, the teacher, and one’s peers. It is more than coming to class prepared and more than passively absorbing knowledge. It means raising questions, sharing insights, and actively and respectfully interacting with others as part of a “learning community.” It means challenging yourself to speak publicly on occasion, and knowing when to listen and to let others share their views. Participation in small group exercises, large group discussion, and other such activities are opportunities for you demonstrate your interest in, and knowledge of, the material—and to exchange perspectives and views. Laptops and other electronic devices, including text messaging, are **not allowed** so you can sharpen your listening, thinking, and speaking skills in “real time.” Perfect attendance and regular, intelligent participation usually earns one an “A”; regular attendance with complete passivity usually earns one a “C.” In short, success or improvement here usually translates well in the professional world, which is where you are heading with your degree.

2.) **Course Portfolio:** 40% of grade (110 points total)

Reading is an active dialogue with the text, and frequently involves the use of a pen or pencil to note reactions, jot down questions, or to simply underline something and say "Amen!" It involves an awareness of your personal response to the text as well as your insights about the ways texts relate to one another, the period in which they were produced, or even events and issues in our own time.

In terms of writing responses of any sort, I am looking for detailed, specific explanations of your thoughts with an awareness of how to use evidence—“quoted material”—from the text to back up or illustrate your ideas. You will be practicing that with several assignments during the semester, including your short paper assignment which includes use of Library research and MLA style of citation.

Also, this course is a Gordon Rule* course. It contains 6000 words of evaluated writing as required by the English Department. Assignments which fulfill the Gordon Rule are indicated with an asterisk. Each has the following characteristics:

- The writing will have a clearly defined central idea or thesis
- It will provide adequate support for that idea
- It will be organized clearly and logically
- It will show awareness of the conventions of standard written English
- It will be formatted or presented in an appropriate way.

By the end of the course, you will have done several assignments. The portfolio consists of the following assignments (“responses” are typically 2-3 typed pages):

- 1.) Personal Survey and Goals
- 2.) Columbus response (15 points)*
- 3.) Anne Bradstreet response (15 points)*
- 4.) Franklin *Autobiography* response (15 points)*
- 5.) Douglass response (15 points)*
- 6.) Short paper (6-7 typed pages) assignment, with email and draft exchange: (40 points)*
- 7.) Self-Reflection response (10 points)*

8.) any requested Writing Center documentation (minus 5 points, if missing)

110 points

Late assignments—for any reason—are lowered 3 points. You will earn a ZERO for the assignment if it is not turned in by the beginning of the following class period. Missing assignments CANNOT be made up later. If you are uncertain during the course of the semester about how you are doing with this aspect of the course, please stop by and see me during office hours. NO INCOMPLETES will be given for this course.

3.) **Examinations:** Midterm examination: 20%
Final examination 25%

Make-up exams are given only when I have been contacted *prior* to the exam and *only* when a verifiable extenuating circumstance exists, e.g., medical emergency and hospitalization. See “How to Study for Exams” at the WebCourse site.

Standards for Written Work

Generally, standards for written work are as follows, and may be modified some by actual assignment requirements:

An “A” text is exceptional or highly original work, presents sophisticated and significant critique or argument, meets or exceeds assignment requirements, and is free of grammatical or other errors.

“B” work is good or strong, contains all required elements of the assignment, but may fall short of excellence in one or more category, including mechanical errors.

A “C” text is competent, meets all, if not most, required elements of the assignment, but is average in some ways and may have several types of grammatical and other errors.

“D” writing is weak, falls below average in one or more major criteria, and may have substantial errors.

An “F” text is reserved for material that fails in all or most categories of evaluation.

Golden Rule and Grading Policy:

Please see The Golden Rule in the Student Handbook regarding classroom behavior and diversity. Typically, this means that while disagreement can and will occur during classroom discussions, we all will behave in a civil manner and respect the right of someone to express an opinion that may be different from our own. Please avoid sexist, racist, homophobic, or other types of derogatory remarks. “Live, and let live,” in other words.

Plagiarism and cheating. Often students plagiarize because they fear trying out their own ideas, they have not left themselves adequate time for an assignment, or they simply don't know how to credit a source. However, plagiarism—the submission of someone else's words or ideas as your own—is a serious offense. You will get an “F” for the assignment and can fail the course or be disciplined by the university for such action. Like you, I have access to the Internet and ways of verifying use of sources like Wikipedia and what's been cut and pasted—or simply purchased—so the consequences of plagiarizing are not worth the risk. Indeed, papers I suspect are plagiarized will be submitted to <http://www.turnitin.com> for verification of authorship. Cheating, or misrepresenting your work in any shape or form, will also earn an “F” for the assignment and can result in an “F” for the course.

If you have questions about how to document sources, please see me or the Writing Center.

The **grading_scale** is as follows:

94-100 = A	4.00	76-73 = C	2.00
93-90 = A-	3.75	72-70 = C-	1.75

89-87 = B+	3.25	69-67 = D+	1.25
86-83 = B	3.00	66-63 = D	1.00
82-80 = B-	2.75	62-60 = D-	.75
79-77 = C+	2.25	59 - = F	.00

Grades will be posted at WebCourses and updated regularly.

Attendance

Class attendance is expected and is related to participation and academic performance. “Being there” counts, in other words, both here and at Universal Studios, Microsoft, or anywhere else you plan to work professionally. For that reason and for university financial aid reporting purposes, I will take attendance to verify when individuals have stopped attending class. Taking attendance also helps me learn your name more quickly.

As a rule there are *no* “excused” absences in college. In this class, you are allowed **TWO** absences. After that, you are on my “Swimmer in Riptide Area Watch List.” If you are absent four times, your **final overall grade** will be lowered **four** points, e.g., from an “82” to a “78.” Your grade will be lowered four points for each additional absence. If you have **ten absences**, you will **fail** the course, regardless of what grade you have. If absolutely necessary, your absence should be used for days when you are sick, or have some emergency or special obligation; the decision is up to you, and you don't have to explain your reasons for absence.

The absence policy takes into religious holidays, account doctors’ appointments, mono and migraine headaches, swine flu, car problems, traffic accidents, computer (and printer) problems, funerals, etc. It would be wise to schedule doctor appointments, for example, any time except during this class. In short, if circumstances beyond your control are causing you to have excessive absences, you are advised to withdraw because you will **not** pass the course. In cases of extreme illness, you should document your absences and seek a “medical withdrawal.” If there are other circumstances I should be aware of, please see me.

If you are not in class, it is your responsibility to obtain missed assignments or notes from classmates. However, the opportunity to make-up the assignment will *only* be permitted when verifiable extenuating circumstances exist and I have been contacted beforehand. Also, if you think you'll have a problem getting to class on time, please take another course. Your classmates and I would like to start—and end—class on time. Further, getting your name on the **sign-up sheet** that goes around each meeting is **your responsibility**. I will not accept “but it didn't get to me” or “I forgot . . . ” Signing in and then “leaving early” counts as a full absence. Absences will be posted online on a regular basis.

Finally, students who have perfect attendance will, of course, get the “benefit of the doubt” when it comes to a “close grade.”

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center <http://www.uwc.ucf.edu/home.html>, staffed by the Department of English, exists to help those with concerns or questions they may have about all kinds of writing. Regardless of the course your writing is for, they can assist you with the beginning stages of writing, with effectively developing your thesis or ideas, and with mechanics and matters of revision and proofreading. It offers individual help, free of charge, and is located in Modular 608. You can set up an appointment by dropping in, or by calling (407) 823-2197. In some situations, I may require students to make a visit to the Writing Center.

Disability Accommodation

UCF is committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all persons with disabilities. Students with disabilities who need accommodations in this course must contact the professor at the beginning of the semester to discuss needed accommodations. Students who need accommodations must be registered with Students Disability Services (407) 823-2371.