American Experience in Literature I  Fall 2003
Instructor: Dr. Jack Jobst  E-mail: jjobst@mtu.edu
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Classroom: Walker 116  Class time: 9:05 AM-9:55 AM

Purpose of Course: To gain insight into the challenges facing those who lived in what became the colonial US. To become familiar with the work of representative US writers or those who wrote about what eventually became the US. To become familiar with major trends in American Literature.

What is the course Attendance Policy?
Students are expected to attend all classes. The instructor will allow four class absences for common illnesses, plant trips, personal reasons, etc.

More than four class absences will usually drop grades one level (B to C; C to D, etc.). Missing six classes (two weeks) is grounds for failure. Contact the instructor as soon as possible if you have mitigating circumstances (e.g. hospitalization).

As a Disabled Person, What Are My Rights?
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA).

If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, (7-2212).

For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, the department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Readings
We will not be able to discuss all works in any great detail, but you will still be responsible for reading everything listed in the syllabus unless notified otherwise. If we modify the course schedule, I will tell you in class and via email.

What are Commentaries?
These are one-page informal responses to the readings we will do in this class, and occasionally to questions posed by the instructor.

All class days with assigned readings will require a commentary, unless otherwise indicated in the course calendar. The purpose of a commentary is to encourage thought about the readings before the class meets.

You may discuss any aspect of the material in your words, but avoid repeating the plot. Instead, focus on such areas as what surprised you about the material; or how successful (or unsuccessful) was the work in reaching its presumed goal.

Grading will be pass/fail on individual commentaries, with the number of commentaries you submit providing the letter grade (e.g., if you submit all assigned commentaries your grade will be an A; all but three, a, b, etc.).

Usually I will read every commentary, but I won't always comment.

On what should I comment if the assignment is on more than one author, or writing sample? You could write less on each part, or focus on something you particularly like/dislike.

Example of Commentary Format

Mary Jones
Irving's "Rip Van Winkle"

What if I forget a commentary? Bring it to the next class meeting, or you may leave it in my mailbox (3rd floor, highway side of Walker) no later than the class day after the due date. Except under unusual circumstances, no commentaries will be accepted later than the class meeting immediately following the due date.

What is a "Synopsis"? These are 3-4 paragraph descriptions of what we discussed in class on a particular date. If you miss a class, you can catch up on general discussion information by reading the student-written synopsis for that particular class day.

Assigned dates will be made around week 2 on our email list, ha2501-L. Please write down the dates you have been given so you won't forget.

Post your completed synopses to this list as soon as you can, but no later than two calendar days after the class meeting. If you are unable to fulfill this assignment, please find your own substitute.

Use headings above the paragraphs to identify the major topics, and a lot of white space! (Double space between your short paragraphs.)

What will the exams be like? They will focus on your recall of the assigned material, along with information that the instructor mentions during class discussion. Thus if your class attendance is low, and/or you fail to read the text material, your exam grade will likely reflect this.
American Experience-Lit I  
HU 2501, Section 1: Fall 2003

Course Calendar
Aug
25 Intro to the course.
27 Intro, Creation Stories; 1-24
29 Columbus, 25-9.
   Commentaries begin.
   K-Day begins at noon.
1  No class: Labor Day.
3  Cabeza De Vaca, 29-36.
5  John Smith, 42-59.
8  Trickster Tales, 59-61; 65-70.
10 Wm. Bradford (Plymouth Planta), 75-94.
15 Anne Bradstreet, 114-end.
17 Mary Rowlandson, 135-end.
19 Discuss Exam #1. No commentary.
22 Edward Taylor, 152-end.
24 Cotton Mather, 161-end.
26 Exam #1: Early Writers
29 To Be Announced
   1 Benjamin Franklin, 219-231; quiz #1.
   3 Franklin, 231-263; quiz #2.
6  Occom, 293-299.
8  Thomas Paine, 320-end
10 Thomas Jefferson, 334-end.
13 Olaudah Equiano, 350-end.
15 Phillis Wheatley, 366-end.
17 To Be Announced.
20 Royale Tyler’s The Contrast, 378-397.
22 Briton Hammon, 419-end.
24 Exam #2: Colonialist Writers.
27 Romanticism. No Commentary.
31 James Fenimore Cooper, 460-end.
3 W. C. Bryant, 469-end.
5 R. W. Emerson, 482-93; 514-519; 527-532; 539-544.
7 Emerson, cont. No commentary.
   Nathaniel Hawthorne Week
10 “Young Goodman Brown,” 610-19
14 “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” 647-67. Film.
22-30 Thanksgiving Break
   Edgar Allan Poe Week
1 All poems, 694+
3 “Heart” and “Letter,” 727-743.
5 “Cask of Amontillado,” 743-end.
8 Lincoln, 757-end.
10 Wm. Apess, 476-end. H. B. Stowe, 771-end
12 Harriet Jacobs, 812-end.
15 H. D. Thoreau, 834-868
17 Frederick Douglass, 939-end.
19 Course Evaluation. Bring a #2 pencil.
Final Exam: TBA

Grading
Commentaries/Synopses: 10
Exam #1: 20
Exam #2: 25
Final Exam: 30
Participation/Extra Credit: 10
Quizzes: 5