

INGL3251-002 Survey of American Literature to 1865

Professor: Sharif El Gammal-Ortiz, PhD

Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 2:30 pm to 3:50 pm

Office hours: By appointment only

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This course is to be offered entirely online

Course description: Close readings of U.S. Literature from its inception to the mid-nineteenth century with attention to national discourses as the United States is founded and begins to expand toward global imperial power. The founding myth of the nation will be critically analyzed and discourses of liberty coexisting with contradictory practices such as slavery and indigenous genocide will be explored. We will ask: What is a national literature? How does the body of national literature, or canon, function and how has it recently been radically reconfigured? How did literature help manage the racial tensions and linguistic, religious and cultural definitions of the United States? We will study major figures, including Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Nathaniel Hawthorne (*The Scarlet Letter* is our only novel, unless we choose to read Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* instead), Edgar Allan Poe, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, as well as Latino, indigenous and African-American works by Christopher Columbus, The Cherokee and Frederick Douglass.

Teaching strategies: Classes will consist of analysis and discussion of assigned readings, and conceptual understanding of related issues. Visual and audio materials will be incorporated as needed and available.

- Los estudiantes que reciban servicios de Rehabilitación Vocacional deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a al inicio del semestre para planificar el acomodo razonable y equipo asistivo necesario conforme a las recomendaciones de la Oficina de Asuntos para las Personas con Impedimiento (OAPI) del Decanato de Estudiantes. También aquellos estudiantes con necesidades especiales que requieren de algún tip de asistencia o acomodo deben comunicarse con el/la profesor/a.
- In a preplanned fashion, via in class and/or email announcements, classes occasionally may be held outside the assigned classroom, for example to see films at a screening room, to read poetry outside, or for a class trip to a museum. This is intended to pedagogically encourage learning and thinking beyond our class.

Methods of Evaluation:

- Class attendance and punctuality: 15 percent
- Class participation: 15 percent
- Short freewriting assignments: 15 percent
- One brief oral report: 5 percent
- Midterm Exam: 25 percent
- Final Exam: 25 percent

- Absences: There will be no differentiation between excused and unexcused absences: 6 will affect your grade and 8 absences are grounds for failure.
- Late assignments: I will accept freewrites no more than two class dates after the due date. I can't accept assignments that are more than one week late, or accept all assignments at the end of semester. I am open to exam deadlines extensions...just ask!
- Grading system for freewrites will be \checkmark , $\checkmark+$ or $\checkmark-$, according to your own level of English and analytical proficiency. Works that receive $\checkmark-$ may be resubmitted.

- Please also note: For students with disabilities, there will be differentiated methods of evaluation. *Evaluación diferenciada a estudiantes con necesidades especiales.*

• **¡OJO! PLAGIARISM WILL EARN A FAILING GRADE FOR THE COURSE AND CAN RESULT IN SUSPENSION FROM ENTIRE UPR SYSTEM.**

Please remember that if you copy any writing off the internet, you need to cite it “in quotes” and state which website it came from. Even if you paraphrase (summarize) or put another writer’s ideas into your own words, you need to write, as NAME the AUTHOR states, or I agree/disagree with NAME of AUTHOR, or in parenthesis after the sentence (NAME of AUTHOR) or footnote the author and website.

I grade according to your ability, so no matter what your comfort level is with writing in English, you are better off submitting your own work, even with errors! Please ask if you need a deadline extension...I am flexible with deadlines to a degree.

Plagiarism Statement from English Department website:

Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or experience in your writing without acknowledging the source. Other forms include repeating another's particular apt phrase without appropriate acknowledgement, paraphrasing someone else's argument as your own, introducing another's line of thinking as your own development of an idea, and failing to cite the source for a borrowed thesis or approach (*The MLA Style Manual*). Plagiarism may be punished by failure in a course as well as by suspension or dismissal from the English Graduate Program and the entire University.

Papers and Exams: A few free-writes will be due during the semester. Take-home midterm and final exams will consist of five short identifications and choice of one essay. Essays will require analyzing in depth and citing at least three works we have studied. I will review exams as they near. **NOTE:** For Humanities majors or those needing an essay for graduate applications, an independent paper may substitute the final exam essay.

Text (at Libreria Norberto Gonzalez in downtown Río Piedras or online at Alibris, etc.): *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, 7th or 8th edition*, Volumes A and B in one package. Make sure to get volumes A and B (not C, D & E and not English Lit). If you use 8th edition instead of 7th most of the readings are the same, but are not on the same pages. If several students obtain both editions, I will orient with both in class.

- Please avoid buying the earlier editions, as the readings have changed more.
- Please always bring assigned texts to class.

The University of Puerto Rico prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in any of its forms including that of sexual harassment. According to the Institutional Policy Against Harassment at the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Num. 130, 2014-2015 from the Board of Governors, any student subjected to acts constituting sexual harassment, must turn to the Office of the Student Ombudsperson, the Office of the Dean of Students, and/or the Coordinator of the Office of Compliance with Title IX for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

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Integridad académica: La Universidad de Puerto Rico promueve los más altos estándares de integridad académica y científica. El Artículo 6.2 del Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR (Certificación Núm. 13, 2009-2010, de la Junta de Síndicos) establece que “la deshonestidad académica incluye, pero no se limita a: acciones fraudulentas, la obtención de notas o grados académicos valiéndose de falsas o fraudulentas simulaciones, copiar total o parcialmente la labor académica de otra persona, plagiar total o parcialmente el trabajo de otra persona, copiar total o parcialmente las respuestas de otra persona a las preguntas de un examen, haciendo o consiguiendo que otro tome en su nombre cualquier prueba o examen oral o escrito, así como la ayuda o facilitación para que otra persona incurra en la referida conducta”. Cualquiera de estas acciones estará sujeta a sanciones disciplinarias en conformidad con el procedimiento disciplinario establecido en el Reglamento General de Estudiantes de la UPR vigente.

• **Required 1st assignment** due either class day of next week: A minimum two-page response to your anthology textbook. Closely examine and analyze the cover art, the maps inside the covers, and tables of contents of both volumes, and comment on anything that strikes you, makes you curious, or fills you with dread. You can comment on all these areas OR just one (the covers, the maps or the contents or just one volume). This can be informal. Express yourself freely without worrying about correct grammar. However, you should examine the covers, maps and/or contents closely before beginning to write. Copies of the book will be left at the Richardson Seminar Room of the English Department (1st floor Pedreira, end of the hall), or you could look it up online.

As a separate exercise, to be included on a page attached to your anthology freewrite (or at the bottom of the last page under a separate heading), name one artist of any medium who has influenced you (in your past or now). Then “Google” them. Tell me briefly (in a paragraph or two or three) why or how this artist is important to you.

Reading List and Course Outline

Week 1 – Introduction to course, in next class fill out index cards

Week 2 – For this week, read Introduction and Timeline to first part of Volume A, Literature to 1700, AND pick from our syllabus an author you would like to briefly report to the class about (5-10 minutes), on your own OR with partner of choice. I will email you the full syllabus.

Note: If your books have not arrived yet, I will upload a PDF file of the readings.
Due: Required short responses to textbook cover art, maps, and/or contents.

Week 3 – Iroquois Creation Story and Pima or Navaho Stories of the Beginning of the World (all selections)

• **Key Words:** Oral traditions, performance, religious freedom, translation
Christopher Columbus (biographical intro and all selections) AND Bartolomé de las Casas (all selections)

• **Key Words:** romanticizing, rhetorical strategies, savagery, translation, early Latino U.S. literary history

Week 4 – William Bradford, biographical intro and selections from Chapter I, Chapter IV, Chapter IX, Chapter X, Chapter XI to Chapter XII (The First Thanksgiving), and Chapters XXVII and XXVIII (pages 132-136 in 7th ed.)

• **Key Words:** Puritans, primitivism, religious freedom, official histories
Anne Bradstreet bio and poems “Before the Birth of One of Her Children,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Elizabeth...,” “In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Anne...,” “In Memory of My Dear Grandchild Simon...” and “As Weary Pilgrim”

• **Key words:** iambic pentameter, tone, rhyming couplet, literal/figurative meanings
• Recommended film: *The Crucible* (with Daniel Day Lewis, Winona Ryder)

Week 5- Introduction & Timeline to 1700-1820 (next historical period)

• Free-write will be assigned on Ben Franklin, due either class day next week

Week 6 - Benjamin Franklin, biographical intro, “The Way to Wealth” AND “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America”

• **Key Words:** cultural relativism, rhetorical strategy, persona, dominant discourses
• Freewrite on Franklin due today or Wednesday

Thomas Jefferson, bio and all selections. Pay attention to first and final draft of Declaration of Independence, as anthology highlights differences

• **Key Words:** liberty, cataloging impulse, separation of church and state, slavery

Week 7 – Phillis Wheatley “On Being Brought from Africa to America”

• **Key Words:** internal colonialism, civilizational binaries, iambic pentameter
Oulaudah Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* (36 pgs)

• **Key Words:** Abolitionism, civilizational binaries, manumission, freedom, capitalism
• Take-home Midterm exam to be handed out in class, due next week

Week 8 – Finish Equiano. End historical period, survey Table of Contents

We will screen in class *Slavery and the Making of America*, Episode 2, “Liberty in the Air” (PBS, 2004)

• **Midterm due** (please ask if you need an extension, instead of being late or absent)

Week 9 – Introduction, Timeline to Vol. B, 1820-1865

• Bring Volume B to class please.

Memorial of the Cherokee Citizens or Cherokee Memorials

• **Key Words:** sovereignty, land, ancestors, oral/scribal traditions, nation

Note: Your mid-term grades should be available online by XXX.

Week 10 James Fenimore Cooper, bio, from *The Pioneers*, Chapter III, *The Slaughter of the Pigeons*

- Recommended film *The Last of the Mohicans* (starring Daniel Day Lewis again)
 - **Key Words:** Rugged individualism, mythological character, environmentalism
- Edgar Allan Poe, poem “Annabel Lee” & story “The Tell-Tale Heart.”
- **Key Words:** American Gothic, horror & detective genres, macabre, obsession

Week 11 Ralph Waldo Emerson, bio, and essay “The American Scholar”

- **Key Words:** Transcendentalism and its main tenets, US exceptionalism
- **Key words:** simplicity, self-reliance, nature, experience, ethics, spirituality, individualism
- Will assign freewrite on *The Scarlet Letter*, due next week

Nathaniel Hawthorne, bio, and preparation for *The Scarlet Letter*

Week 12 Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel *The Scarlet Letter*

- **Key Words:** supernatural, magical realism, “romance,” historical fiction, “The Woman Question”
 - *The Scarlet Letter* freewrite due this week
- Continue and finish discussing *The Scarlet Letter*

Week 13- Henry David Thoreau, essay “Resistance to Civil Government”

- **Key Words:** dissidence, state repression, visionary Herman Melville, bio, select selections from *Moby-Dick*, Chapter 1, *Loomings*; Chapter 27, *Ahab*; Chapter 36, *The Quarter-Deck*; Chapter 42, *The Whiteness of the Whale*
- **Key Words:** whaling industry, imperial sublime, signification (for color white), hubris (*Ahab* as symbol), global capitalism, labor (multicultural ship crew)

Week 14 Fanny Fern “Male Criticism of Ladies’ Books” and “A Law More Nice Than Just” (short, witty 1850s columns by 1st famous female U.S. journalist)

- **Key words:** The Women Question again, *Femme Fatale*, the *Fallen Woman*
- IF TIME:** (dense writing, as Emerson) Margaret Fuller, *The Great Lawsuit: MAN versus MEN, WOMAN versus WOMEN* (early US feminist philosophy and theory, 1843)

Week 15 – Frederick Douglass, bio, and speech “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” AND Harriet Jacobs, all selections *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

- **Key Words:** abolitionist movement (again), African Americans and women as heterogeneous categories (re class, race, gender, sexuality)
- IF TIME:** Abraham Lincoln “A House Divided: Speech Delivered at Springfield, Illinois, at the Close of the Republican State Convention, June 16, 1858,” “Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at Gettysburg, November 19, 1863,” and “Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865.”

Week 16 – Walt Whitman, bio, “Song of Myself” (40+ page poem) AND “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”

- **Key Words:** expansionist style, Pantheism, vernacular language, free verse, homoeroticism
- **Will hand out Take Home Final Exam due** over email.
- Exam covers Cherokee Memorials to Whitman and Dickinson.

LAST CLASS! Emily Dickinson, bio, “Wild Nights-Wild Nights!,” “Much Madness is Divinest Sense,” “I Felt a Funeral, in my Brain,” “I Heard a Fly buzz-when I died-,” “The Brain is wider than the Sky-,” “Tell all the Truth but Tell is Slant-.”

• **Key Words:** imagination, structured style, innovative use of dash, capitalization and punctuation.

• **Final exam** via email with INGL3251 Final Exam in subject heading--
¡ÉXITO!

Prepared by Dr. Maritza Stanchich, revised by Dr. Sharif El Gammal-Ortiz