English 2327-700
American Literature to 1865—Fall 2020

Instructor: Steve Marsden
Prereqs: Six hours of Freshman English (or equivalent)
Class Hours: T, R, 9:30-10:45
Classroom: Zoom delivered class. No physical classroom.
Phone: Email please, to set up a Zoom call.
Office: No physical office hours this semester.
Department: English and Creative Writing
Email: marsdensj@sfasu.edu ENG2327 in subject line. Please try not to mail from within D2L—it makes following up more complicated, and may not reach me as quickly

Office Hours: T 6:00-7:30pm, R: 3-3:30pm F: 10am-1pm and by appt.

Webpage: D2L/ Brightspace –http://d2l.sfasu.edu (very important—check it daily)

Course Description / Objectives
According to our course catalogue:

This course is a survey of major authors and literary movements / paradigms in American literature from its beginnings to 1865.

The goal of this course is to familiarize you with great works of American literature from the Colonial period to the Civil War, and the contexts you will need to read them well. It will enable you to recognize a variety of authors and be familiar with their times, their concerns, and the categories into which their works are customarily divided. You will read journals, poems, novellas, romances, sermons, political and religious essays.

We’ll work our way through how our authors strive to answer some basic questions about nation, spirit, race, gender, and identity. We’ll examine biographical and historical information to help frame the personal, regional, and national conflicts that inform and frame the works we read.

Through careful attention to context, form, and language and through careful discussion and argument, you should become better readers, better writers, and better thinkers.

English Program Learning Outcomes
English majors and minors are required to take two courses of sophomore-level literature in which the student will

- demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately (this correlates to the Core objective of Critical Thinking).
- demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations. (Demonstration includes the student’s ability to add to meaningful discourse, in oral communication and written communication; this correlates to the Core’s Communication objective).
- demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of world literature; the student will further understand how human interactions, decisions, and actions carry with them consequences. (Knowledge of literary history entails competence in cultural considerations as well as understanding of how social and civic responsibilities impact diverse communications; this correlates to the Core objectives of Social and Personal Responsibilities).
• demonstrate the ability to effectively conduct literary research. (This objective correlates to the Core objectives of Communication and Critical Thinking).
• demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis. (This objective correlates to the Core objective of Communication).

Student Learning Outcomes for ENG 2327:
By the end of the course, students should be able to:
• Exhibit an understanding of and appreciation for key works in American literature, as evidenced in daily work and quizzes, course discussions, written assignments, and/or examinations. This outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication.
• Demonstrate an understanding of periodization in American literature, as evidenced in daily work and quizzes, course discussions, written assignments, and/or examinations. Periodization is not merely an historical consideration, as defined by events, persons, or dates; students will demonstrate an understanding that historical, cultural, spiritual, and ethical issues, among others, shape human experiences and impact motivations. This outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication as well as Personal Responsibility and Social Responsibility.
• Read literature with increased critical acumen, as evidenced in daily discussions of readings and in responsive essays. This outcome aligns to the Core objective of Critical Thinking and Communication.
• Respond to literature with facility, addressing important thematic considerations having to do with literary and historical milieu, culture, human responsibility, morality, ethics, and the manner and causes by which humans interact with one another. This outcome aligns to the Core objective of Social Responsibility and Personal Responsibility.

Course Outcomes
By the end of the semester, you should be able to:
• Recognize and understand some of the major works in American literature during the period covered, and demonstrate your recognition and understanding.
• Show your understanding of some of the major literary movements and genres of the period and your appreciation of their aesthetic and stylistic qualities.
• Place major works in the context of American literary, historical, social and intellectual discourse.
• Conduct literary research and write clear correct responses to literary material using standard format and documentation.

Credit Hour Justification
ENGL 229 “American Literature from 1865” (3 Credits) typically meets three times each week in 50-minute segments or twice each week in 75-minute segments for 15 weeks, and also meets for a 2-hour final examination. Students are expected to complete a generous amount of weekly reading of mainly primary source material. The weekly reading may be accompanied by such assignments as reading quizzes and in-class and out-of-class writings. The amount of writing will average between 8-12 pages over the semester and may require research. The required outside of class workload will average 6 hours per week.

Textbooks
Baym, Nina et al., editors. The Norton Anthology of American Literature. 9th ed., Vols. A, B., Norton, 2017. Please get this edition if possible—the former edition will have different page numbering, and some readings may be unavailable or slightly different. Volume A will be needed immediately.

Some works may also be assigned through online copies or through electronic course reserves. It would be wise to print these out. Background information will frequently be provided in the form of web links or handouts: you’re responsible for reading and keeping up with these.

Course Policies

Reading, Participation, and Note Taking
This course is reading intensive, and some of the works we will be studying will be quite difficult. Budget your time and read ahead when necessary. Take notes as you read and write out questions about your reading for use in class. Mark up your books. Reread
when necessary. Talk about your reading outside of class. Ask questions in class. If you find anything particularly impenetrable and need help, feel free to drop by my online office hours to chat about it. My job is to help you understand this stuff.

This course is taught largely as a dialogue-I ask and answer questions. The students who get the most out of the class are those who participate well in class discussion. If you can answer, do.

**Contact by Email**
Correspondence relating to this course must use your SFA email account. Don’t use D2L mail for this course, as it will result in a delay in answering. The subject line must be ENG 2327. I am not certain to respond to emails with any other subject line, especially if they resemble spam. I never accept assignments by email unless I have asked for them that way. However, if there’s a problem with d2l dropboxes, sending the completed assignment via SFA email will prove proof of assignment completion.

**Plagiarism**
I take plagiarism very seriously. According to SFASU Policies and Procedures:

> Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at [http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp](http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp)

If I find papers with plagiarized passages, I will schedule a Zoom meeting with who produced them. Consequences may include an un-revisable score of 0 on the assignment and / or an F for the course. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Form will be filed. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or fear you may not have properly cited something, please talk to me immediately.

**Recycled Papers**
All assignments turned in for this course must be written specifically for this course to receive credit. Please do not turn in papers that were written in whole or in part for other courses or purposes: such papers, if yours, will be counted as late until an original paper can be turned in.
Attendance and Absences
Regular attendance to Zoom meetings is required for success in this course. Lectures and discussions will highlight what sorts of things will be on the tests, there will be occasional activities for credit, and assignments will be explained. Questions / quizzes in the Zoom sessions may be worth daily work points, and can only be made up with XC.

Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all information and work covered in class. Most (but not necessarily all, as accidents happen) course meetings will be recorded on Zoom and available later, so there’s no need to make up the missed class.

According to university policy, after six absences (the equivalent of three weeks of missed class) for any reason whatsoever, you may automatically fail the class. Please keep an eye on your absences, and document all absences with reasons. It’s an extraordinary time, and things happen. Be able to talk to me about them with evidence to avoid deductions.

Exam Deadlines
Exams for this course will be taken online and offered for a 24 hour window (due at 11:59 pm on the due date), and must be completed within 1 hour and 15 minutes from start—2 hours for the final exam. An automatic grace period for starting (until 11:59 am the next morning) will be built into the exam. After that, exams will only be re-opened for authorizable excuses. Please email me your reasons immediately (the day you have access again), and we’ll re-open or reschedule as needed.

Late Homework and Major Papers
Homework is due in dropbox via D2L by the beginning of the Zoom meeting on the due date. An automatic grace period will be extended til 11:59pm of that day. After that, homework credit will be halved if it’s turned in without a valid excuse (please type excuses in the submission box). Homework more than a week late that you haven’t emailed about will receive a grade of 0.

Major papers are due in dropbox on D2L by 11:59pm on the day they are due. They have a built in grace period of one day (til 11:59pm) the next day. Papers turned in during the grace period will be graded last, and may receive less detailed feedback. After the grace period, any paper turned in without a viable and documented excuse will accrue 10 percentage point penalty per day it’s been late (after the grace period, it’ll start with 20 points down). Another full letter grade will be deducted for each weekday that passes. The easiest way to receive a very poor grade in this course is to turn things in late without arrangement.

No assignments will be accepted by email, but if D2L is down / you are having net problems, an emailed completed assignment will “stop the clock” until you can turn it in properly.

Acceptable File Formats
Microsoft Word files (.docx) are the only acceptable file type for this course. Most word processors will save as .docx, and the Microsoft 365 apps should be available to you on
MySFA. You are responsible for making sure that your file is correct and will open (check it in the dropbox). Papers turned in with broken files or invalid file type will be considered late until the correct type is submitted.

**Extra Credit**
Several times during the semester, I will announce extra credit assignments. Please do not ask me for individual extra credit. Any extra credit assignments I given will be applied to the homework / quiz total, and will be offered to everyone. With extra credit, the daily work score will top at 100%.

**Accommodations for Disabilities**
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to [http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/](http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/).

**WH Grades**
I do not grant withheld grades lightly. According to university policy, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

**Assignments and Grade Determination**
We will have three exams, one during the scheduled final exam period, a brief personal response paper, and a terminal paper project. The remainder of the course grade will be determined by very short reading quizzes (one or two objective questions), short response papers, drafts or in-class assignments.

**Grade Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes, responses, daily work</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final project proposal</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final project</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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**Percentage Grade**
Tests
In order to do well on the tests in this course, you will have to have read and done your best to understand the material. Our discussions in class will also be sources for exam questions, so it is best to come to class, participate, and take good notes.

Tests may include multiple choice, short-answer, identification, matching and essay components. Tests are generally not comprehensive. Each test covers what we've read and discussed since the last test, with the exception of technical, periodization, or literary terms.

Multiple choice and short answer questions: These will speak to the plot, form, and characters of the works discussed. They may also include questions about memorable facts of the authors' lives. Please remember to take notes over these sometimes lecture-only facts: they are often the most difficult portion of the exam to prepare for without adequate notes.

Quote identification and contextualization: We will use the quotations I've put on the board throughout the semester, (and/or discussed at length in class) for this section of the exam. There will be a list of them online for studying purposes. You will identify in a few sentences the author of the quotation, the work it appeared in, the context in the work (who spoke the quote, when, who or what it refers to) and you'll speak to its meaning or its relation to a major theme in the work. I will give you many options for the quote identifications (approximately 2x to 3x the number I expect you to answer), but it is important to have noted down and understood all the quotations in class.

Short Responses
Often, I'll have you write some relatively informal response to the readings for a day. These, should be typed, should follow MLA 8 format scrupulously unless otherwise specified, and will have other requirements as posted. The intention is to get you thinking and recording what you think about the works, and to prepare you for class. (And to check your writing / formatting in a low-stakes way.)

5 = Excellent, flawless: Very insightful, and otherwise dazzlingly good. I think "wow! I wonder if I can get a copy to teach with next semester!" This is a rare score.
4.5 = Very good: Accomplishes everything needed with style and economy, reflects a strong understanding of the subject matter, and has no very significant errors. I think "good!"
4 = Good: Does the work expected, and contains only errors that might be expected of the average careful student at this point in the semester. I think "okay."
3.5 = Needs some work: Ideas may be incomplete or unfocused, organization may be sloppy. May be “off” in tone or style. I think "well, okay, I guess."
3 = Needs a lot of work: May be unclear in spots, or have numerous, embarrassing, or unprofessional errors. I think "well, maybe next time."
2 = Unacceptable: Fails to accomplish some aspect of the assignment, or has a variety of unprofessional errors. I think "maybe he or she had a high fever or something."
1 = Token effort: Wrong assignment or shows very little work. Accomplishes little of what the assignment asks. Reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the assignment or a deficit of effort
or skill. I think "why did I ever get into this line of work?" A paper with a name on it and a sentence, turned in on time.
0 =Didn't turn paper in: I think "hmm, I wonder if he or she has dropped the course?"

**Reading Quizzes**
If there are a few class periods in a row where participation is sub-par (I suspect people haven’t done the reading), I will create brief self-grading quizzes in D2L, due before the time of the class period. These will go to the daily work score.

**Personal Response Paper**
A 3-4 page critical essay that engages with a work we’ve read this semester, articulating an interpretation, as well as a personal ethical, moral, or philosophical response to the work. More details to come.

**Proposal for Final Project**
A page or two describing in detail your plans for the final project (the rewriting assignment or filling in the blanks assignment). A prompt and example will be coming soon.

**Final project:** You will have the choice of one of two final project options.

**Adaptation assignment**
Take a work that we’ve read this semester, read it closely until you’re sure you understand it, research and read criticism on the work, then rewrite it or adapt it. You might retell it from a different point of view, modernize the language, change the audience, change the medium (make it a play or a poem or a song or a movie). Then, you will write an analytical and justificatory paper of around five pages, explaining what in the original work you found central, proving it with primary evidence and at least three secondary sources (peer-reviewed criticism by qualified literary critics, historians, or biographers), then stating why and how you made the adaptations you made. Finally, you’ll compare how the original worked with how your adaptation works for the audience you conceive for it.

Or

**Term paper and annotated bibliography**
You’ll write a 5 entry annotated bibliography and a brief 5-8 page argumentative research paper. You may go over length if you feel it absolutely necessary, but five full pages (MLA 8 format, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12, 1 inch margins, not including the required Works Cited page) are absolutely required. In this rather brief paper, you will engage one small, manageable aspect of a work or two on the syllabus, coming up with a thesis and proving it through careful reference to the specifics of the text. You must use at least four good, relevant, scholarly (no web-only or study-guide) outside sources to bolster your argument or to argue against. You will be graded on your analysis, your writing skills, your ability to incorporate quotation and outside evidence, and your conformity to standards of grammar, punctuation, and format.

More information about the major papers will be posted on D2L in advance of their deadline.
Important Dates

Exam 1—Open from Saturday, September 26 until class time, Tuesday, September 29
Personal Response Paper—Thursday, October 15
Exam 2—Open Saturday October 31, till class time, Tuesday, November 3
Proposal (1 page) due for Final Project – Tuesday, November 10
Project RD: Tuesday, December 1
Project FD: Thursday, December 3
Final exam: online, open until Monday, December 7 until Wednesday, December 9

Reading Schedule

An extremely tentative reading schedule follows below. Expect the readings to be tuned for reading speed and student interest throughout the semester. The daily posts on D2L will be the authoritative reading list: check them often. The exam dates, however, are firm.

Week 1
Intro lecture

Early readings: Intro, Cabeza de Vaca, John Smith, Bradford and Winthrop

Week 2
Intro Post and Intro Letter due, Sept. 1
Catchup.
Anne Bradstreet, “Prologue,” “To Her Father with Some Verses,” “The Author to Her Book,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “Another,” “Here Follows Some Verses Upon the Burning of Our House,” etc.

Mary Rowlandson, A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson
Rowlandson DW due, Sept. 3

Week 3
Mather Quiz due before class September 8
Finish Rowlandson. Excerpts from Mather.

Benjamin Franklin, “Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America,” native American works.

XC Assigned: Franklin Thing (due in one week)

Week 4

J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, “From Letters from an American Farmer”
Thomas Paine, “Common Sense,” “The Crisis,” selections from The Age of Reason
Paine / Crevecoeur Daily Work due, September 15

Olaudah Equiano, selections from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself

Week 5
Continue Equiano

Week 6
Exam 1—(online, due before class September 29)

Irving, “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

William Cullen Bryant, “To a Waterfowl,” “The Prairies”

Week 7
Emerson, “The American Scholar,” “The Divinity School Address,” portions of “Nature,” poems

Week 8
Hawthorne, “The May-Pole of Merry Mount,” “The Birth-Mark,”
(possible substitutions)

Edgar Allan Poe, “To Helen,” “Alone,” “The Raven,” “The Philosophy of Composition,”
Personal Response Paper Due –Thursday, October 15

Week 9
Dupin / Usher Daily Work Tuesday, October 20

Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” selections from Walden (to be announced)

Week 10
Thoreau Device DW, Tuesday, October 27
Finish Thoreau

Frederick Douglass, Selections from Narrative of the Life (possible substitution)

Week 11
Before class: Exam 2—Tuesday, November 3
Harriet Jacobs Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Whitman, introduction, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”

Week 12
Walt Whitman, sections from Leaves of Grass
Proposal (1 page) due for Final Project – Tuesday, Nov 10

Walt Whitman, sections from Leaves of Grass, Drum Taps

Week 13
Herman Melville: “Bartleby the Scrivener”

Emily Dickinson – poems to be announced.
XC Assigned: Dickinson-Style Poem

Week 14
Thanksgiving Holidays
Week 15
Finish Dickinson

Finish up, review, work on projects
Project RD: Tuesday, December 1
Project FD: Thursday December 3
Final exam open from Monday, December 7 until Wednesday, December 9