

ENG 370

The University of Southern Mississippi
College of Arts and Letters, Department of English
ENG 370:H001 – American Literature I

American Literature I

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TH 3:40-4:40pm; and by appt.

COURSE INFORMATION:

Term: Fall 2017
Time: Tuesday and Thursday 2:25 – 3:40 PM
Location: Liberal Arts Building 201
Course website: CANVAS

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

This section of ENG 370 was designed using Open Educational Resources. All of the texts are available for free on the Canvas course website and other editions of the text can be found online as well. Students are required to read all of the texts listed on the course schedule, though they can be accessed in any number of formats. I have provided clean, edited copies to read and/or download on Canvas. For students who prefer reading the texts in an anthology, most of the readings are available in the Norton anthology below; and the two longer works are also available in cheap paperback editions. However you choose to access the readings, buying the books is not required. They are free and available on the Canvas website.

- Nina Baym, ed., *Norton Anthology of American Literature* (Shorter 8th Edition), 978-0393918861
- Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette* (Oxford Paperbacks), 978-0195042399
- Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (Dover) (978-0486290737)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

ENG 370: American Literature I. 3 hrs. Surveys American literature from its beginnings to the Civil War.

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course offers a selected survey of early American literature, culture, and literary history. We will explore literature written during the period of discovery, exploration, and colonization; the age of Enlightenment and revolution; and a century of literary nationalism, reform, and Civil War. We will read across multiple genres while reflecting on the historical emergence of “American literature” in the context of geographic, political, religious, intellectual, technological, and literary change. At the same time, we will also survey this field from the perspective of the 21st century, engaging with and reflecting on a range of digital tools, archives, and databases that are changing our relationship with literature and print history. Designed as survey, the course will offer students an introduction to the diverse and complex literature produced in early America, as well as the reading and digital skills necessary to navigate their way through the multiple pathways that constitute the field of Early American literature. Course requirements include active and consistent participation, two short papers, regular participation in informal assignments, a commonplace journal, and a final project.

COURSE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

By the end of the course, students should have improved their ability:

- To understand the formal and literary strategies used by different American writers from diverse cultural backgrounds and traditions.

- To consider how cultural, technological, and political conditions informed how and what people wrote, and for what purpose.
- To read across a variety of different genre and media, contextualizing forms of expression in the wider context of historical forces.
- To navigate and critically engage print and digital resources in the field of American literature.
- To understand how digital tools, archives, and databases are changing our relationship with the past and opening “history” to new methodological investigations.
- To understand “literature” as a category that encompasses not just fiction and poetry, but a range of genres including travel writing, sermons, personal narratives, histories, sketches, essays, tracts, speeches, and pamphlets.
- To contextualize 20th century literature within the wider history of early American literature.
- To recognize the influence of cultural differences such as gender, ethnicity, race, geography, and class on the historical practice (and categorization) of reading, literature, and interpretation.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & ASSESSMENT:

PARTICIPATION ASSESSMENT:

**CLASS PARTICIPATION &
DISCUSSION PROMPTS:** 20%

READING ASSESSMENT:

COMMONPLACE JOURNAL: 20%

WRITING ASSESSMENT:

PAPER #1: EXHIBIT REVIEW: 15%

PAPER #2: WORD ANALYSIS: 20%

FINAL PAPER/PROJECT: 25%

CLASS PARTICIPATION & DISCUSSION PROMPTS (20%):

Your participation grade for this class will consist of your in-class participation during lectures, discussions, and group work, as well as your participation in online Canvas discussions. Given the “survey” nature of the course, preparation for the class involves more than just reading the texts; it involves keeping detailed notes, maintaining your digital commonplace book, and coming to class ready to contribute and collaborate. I expect every student to come to class having read the assigned readings and completed their commonplace journal entry for that text. This means that every student should come to class with a minimum of at least one observation, one question, one quotation, and one connection to share (see Commonplace Journal for details). I will often call on students at the start of class, so please come prepared. The quality of your class contributions is as important as their quantity.

Your participation grade will also include participation in the Canvas discussion board prompts, where I will occasionally ask you to share your thoughts, respond to your peers, explore an archive and share a resource, and perform other minor tasks related to the readings. Please pay attention to announcements on Canvas so you don’t miss any of these assignments. If reading quizzes are needed at any point in the semester, these grades also count toward your participation grade. Half way through the semester, I’ll ask you to complete a Participation Audit in which you will take account of your class participation. The first part of the semester will count for 10% of your participation grade; the second part, another 10%.

COMMONPLACE JOURNAL (20%):

To track and assess reading participation, students will maintain a commonplace journal in which they record, annotate, organize, and synthesize their responses to the weekly reading assignments. A commonplace book, or commonplace journal, is a way of compiling and organizing knowledge, usually by writing and annotating information into a book or journal. These books were incredibly popular in the 18th and 19th century as a way of recording, saving, and organizing information, providing users with a way of keeping track of inspirational

quotes, memorable thoughts, or anything else that was noteworthy and worth saving. Essentially, the books were scrapbooks filled with textual items of every kind: notes, quotes, letters, poems, tables, prayers, graphs, formulas, etc. To see some examples of different commonplace books, visit the following Pinterest site: <https://www.pinterest.com/explore/commonplace-book/?lp=true>.

For our purposes (and in lieu of reading quizzes), your commonplace journal will be used to assess your own engagement with the assigned readings. Over the course of the semester, you are responsible for producing 20 different entries: the first 10 are due half way through the semester on Friday, 9/29 by midnight; and the second 10 are due at the end of the semester on Tuesday, 11/28 by midnight. In general, this accounts for about 1 entry per required text. Since there are about 11 required readings during each half of the semester, you can skip one entry each half and still get the required 10.

Your commonplace journal can take the form of a paper notebook or an electronic document, but it should be easy to read and neatly organized. Each entry should begin with the name of the author and the text, and be followed by your own observations, quotations, commentary, questions, and connections. For the sake of consistency, please organize each entry with the following headings and sections:

- Author and Text
 - E.g., Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*
- Observations
 - In this section, write down 1-2 *specific observations* about the reading, including anything that strikes you as *critically important or noteworthy*. No need for a long discussion here—just record a few specific thoughts and observations that you had while reading and thinking about the texts. Avoid vague and general statements; rather, try to practice *articulating your reaction and observations specifically*. Sharpen your close reading skills through specific articulation.
- Quotations
 - Write down 2-3 quotes and/or phrases that you found interesting, relevant, noteworthy, or important to understanding the reading. If you're keeping a digital journal, you can simply cut and paste the quotes electronically; if a paper journal, you will need to write them out completely and legibly. Regardless, make sure that the font and font size are consistent.
- Commentary
 - In this section, choose one of the quotations you recorded and write a brief annotation for it. In a few sentences, close read the quote by either explaining its significance, interpreting its meaning, annotating or explaining specific words and language, or critically analyzing its importance. (No more than a few sentences here; at most, a short paragraph). *Practice your close reading skills and put them on display.*
- Questions
 - Write down 2-3 questions about the reading. These may include questions for discussion, questions about your confusion, questions about the author's style, questions about word choice and language, etc. Make sure your questions are specific, not vague and general.
- Connections
 - In the final section, try to make at least one connection between the text and another source. This could include a connection between the text and another text; the text and history; the text and social/cultural issues (race, class, gender, sexuality); the text and the world; the text and your own experience; the text and our own contemporary society.

Despite the relatively short length and time commitment, you should treat these entries seriously and not like a secondary assignment; indeed, your commonplace journal accounts for 20% of your final grade. While you may keep your writing casual and informal, all of the entries should show evidence of attention, engagement, and close reading. Not only will I use them to assess your reading participation; I will often use them to start

our class discussions; furthermore, they will provide useful material for jogging your memory and generating ideas for the final paper.

As mentioned earlier, I will collect your commonplace journal at two different points in the semester. I will read and grade them collectively, evaluating the entirety of the journal on the following 10-point scale.

Rating	Characteristics
9-10	<i>Exceptional.</i> The entries reflect in-depth engagement with the readings. The writing and the organization are clear, focused, and developed, connecting ideas at the highest level. Ideas and thoughts are expanded when necessary; quotations, commentary, questions, and ideas are specific, purposeful, and demonstrate close and critical reading.
7-8	<i>Good.</i> The entries reflect strong engagement with the readings. The writing and organization are clear, focused, and reasonably developed. Quotations, commentary, questions, and ideas are evident, but they are not always articulated critically and specifically; critical insights are offered, but the entries don't always demonstrate close and critical reading.
5-6	<i>Underdeveloped.</i> The entries reflect passing engagement with the readings. The writing and organization are hastily conceived, with few connections made by your own observations and thoughts. Entries often stop at the bare minimum, rarely including more than a single quotation, question, and thought.
3-4	<i>Limited.</i> The entries are unfocused and reflect last minute engagement with the readings. They display little evidence of student engagement with the readings and the course. Some of the entries are missing.
0	<i>No Credit.</i> Multiple entries are missing and the assignment is not complete.

PAPER #1: DIGITAL EXHIBIT REVIEW (15%)

In this short paper (about 3 pages) you will write a critical review and analysis of a digital exhibit related to the field of early American literature. A list of exhibits will be provided in the full assignment on Canvas.

PAPER #2: WORD ANALYSIS PAPER (20%):

In this short page paper (about 3 pages), you will combine digital search tools, the Oxford English Dictionary, and your own close reading skills to perform a textual analysis that investigates how Walt Whitman or Emily Dickinson deploys a particular word, phrase, or cluster of words across multiple poems. The full assignment is available on the Canvas course website.

FINAL PROJECT/PAPER (25%):

The final project will include a number of different options, but all of them will require students to creatively and critically synthesize material from the course, translating what they learned into the production of new knowledge. Options will include a traditional paper, a multimedia essay, a video/audio recording, an edited critical edition, a website, and more. Details about the assignment are on the Canvas course website.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

GRADING

Grades are earned, not given. Students should not expect to earn a grade of an A by simply completing the assignments and showing up for class. I use a standard 100-point grading scale in which 90-100=A, 89-80=B, and so forth. Final grades will not be rounded up.

- A work is considered superior or excellent. The student demonstrates deep critical thinking and sophisticated use of language throughout the semester.
- B work is above average. It still meets the standards of A work but may not have the same level of excellence or consistency.
- C work indicates satisfactory, college-level work.
- D and F grades represent work that is below college level.

I will not discuss grades until *at least 24 hours* after handing back your work. This is to give you time to carefully review your work and my written comments on it. I will likewise not discuss grades over email. These matters can be discussed during my office hours or by appointment.

LATE WORK

All assignments are due at the time indicated on the Canvas website. No informal writing assignments will be accepted late. Formal papers turned in late will be lowered one letter grade for each day they are late.

ATTENDANCE

The attendance policy is that there is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. Every student is allowed a maximum of 4 absences. Any absence over that number will count directly against your final grade. I will deduct 3 percentage points from your *final grade* for every absence starting with your fifth. If you miss more than seven classes you will automatically fail the course.

There is no need to alert me of an upcoming absence. You may send an email as a courtesy, but please do not ask me to provide you with material that you missed. If you are absent on a day when written work is due, you are still responsible for completing the assignment. If it is not an online assignment, you should either send it with a classmate or email it to me as an attachment before the start of class. Please rely on your classmates to provide you with notes and announcements that you miss. You should also regularly check the course website for current information. I will not make an exception regarding an assignment because you were not in class when it was assigned or changed.

EMAIL

I am happy to respond to questions by e-mail, and I try to do so whenever possible within 24-48 hours. Before you contact me, however, please make sure the information you are seeking can't be located either on the syllabus, the course website, or by asking one of your classmates. When writing emails, students should conform to acceptable email etiquette and use a salutation, correct language, and a closing with their full name.

ASSISTANCE

I enjoy working with students to help improve their skills. I encourage you to use me a resource. Feel free to stop by my office hours or to make an appointment to discuss grades, assignments, readings, and any other matter related to the course or your future goals.

DIGITAL ETIQUETTE

To ensure responsible and attentive participation, all cell phones and/or other devices (iPods, etc.) should be turned off *before* you enter the classroom. If your phone rings once during class, we'll laugh and I'll ask you to turn it off. If your phone rings again during the semester, I'll ask you to leave and this will count as an absence. If I see anyone sending text messages during class, I will also provide one warning and then mark you absent.

You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes in class. However, in-class laptops also present temptations that many students find irresistible. So to be clear: you may not use a laptop or tablet in class to follow a game, check your friends' statuses on Facebook, respond to email, post a Tweet, etc. Such activities not only distract you but they distract anyone around or behind you. If you often seem distracted by what's on your

screen, I will ask you to put your laptop away, perhaps for the duration of the semester. If the problem continues, I will ask you to leave the class for the day; this will count as an absence.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

USM's policy is that students conduct themselves in a respectful manner in keeping with the academic environment. Among other things, this means maintaining polite discourse in class discussion and a non-combative attitude with both the instructor and fellow classmates. I reserve the right to ask any student not adhering to this behavior to leave the classroom and/or to drop the course.

WRITING CENTER

Students should follow their own best practices when it comes to their writing practices, but all students can benefit from crafting multiple drafts and visiting the USM Writing Center. As stated on their website, "The Writing Center is a free tutorial service available to any USM student who wants assistance with a writing project. We offer one-on-one writing instruction that's designed to help you become a more effective writer. This tutorial service is offered on a walk-in basis or by appointment (on the hour for 45 minutes). However, the appointments often book up several days in advance, so making an appointment is always a good idea." The Writing Center is located in Cook Library. Appointments can be scheduled by phoning (601) 266-4821 or by visiting their website located at <http://www.usm.edu/writing-center>.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism, which is the presentation of someone else's words or ideas as your own, is a serious offense in the academic community and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is defined in the USM Undergraduate Bulletin as follows: "Plagiarism is scholarly theft, and it is defined as the unacknowledged use of secondary sources. More specifically, any written or oral presentation in which the writer or speaker does not distinguish clearly between original and borrowed material constitutes plagiarism. Because students, as scholars, must make frequent use of the concepts and the facts developed by other scholars, plagiarism is not the mere use of another's facts and ideas. However, it is plagiarism when students present the work of other scholars as if it were their own work. Plagiarism can be committed in a number of ways:

1. Reproducing another author's writing as if it were one's own;
2. Paraphrasing another author's work without citing the original;
3. Borrowing from another author's ideas, even though those ideas are reworded, without giving credit; and
4. Copying another author's organization without giving credit.

Please feel free to ask if you are ever unsure about what constitutes plagiarism or if you need any help in synthesizing, quoting, and/or citing a source. For more information on plagiarism, visit the USM library website's section on plagiarism: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/whatisplag.php>. The library website also offers a Plagiarism Tutorial: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/legacy/plag/plagiarismtutorial.php>

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty can take the form of plagiarism and/or cheating, neither of which will be tolerated. The following is from the USM Undergraduate Bulletin: "When cheating is discovered, the faculty member may give the student an F on the work involved or in the course. If further disciplinary action is deemed appropriate, the student should be reported to the Dean of Students. In addition to being a violation of academic honesty, cheating violates the Code of Student Conduct and may be grounds for probation, suspension, and/or expulsion. Students on disciplinary suspension may not enroll in any courses offered by The University of Southern Mississippi."

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

This course follows all university regulations for students with disabilities. If a student has a disability that qualifies under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and requires accommodations, he/she should contact the Office for Disability Accommodations (ODA) for information on appropriate policies and procedures. Disabilities covered by ADA may include learning, psychiatric, physical disabilities, or chronic

health disorders. Students can contact ODA if they are not certain whether a medical condition/disability qualifies.

Address: The University of Southern Mississippi
Office for Disability Accommodations
118 College Drive # 8586
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Telephone: (601) 266-5024 or (228) 214-3232 *Fax:* (601) 266-6035

Individuals with hearing impairments can contact ODA using the *Mississippi Relay Service* at 1-800-582-2233 (TTY) or email Suzy Hebert at Suzanne.Hebert@usm.edu.

CHANGES

All parts of the syllabus and the course, including the schedule, are subject to change to meet the needs of students in the course. Please consult the Canvas course website for the most up-to-date information.

PAPER FORMAT

In order to help me grade fairly, all assignments (except those completed in class) must be typed, double-spaced, and in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. To reduce padding, include only your name and the course number in the heading (e.g., Mary Smith, ENG 370).

Course Schedule

Week 1: Contact and Exploration

08/17 Introduction to the course and each other.

In Class: Christopher Columbus, “Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage” (1493)

Digital Resources

[Exploring the Early Americas](#)

[Exploration and Explorers](#)

[Archive of Early American Images](#)

[Early Americas Digital Archive](#)

Week 2: Native Americans and Early Settlement

08/22 “Indigenous Literary Traditions” handout.

Native American Stories: The Iroquois Creation Story (Iroquois); The Creation of the Whites (Yuchi); Wohpe and the Gift of the Pipe (Lakota); Coyota Steals Fire (Klamath)

08/23 *Last day to add/drop full term classes without academic or financial penalty*

08/24 John Smith, selections from *The General History of Virginia* (1624)

Digital Resources

[Virtual Jamestown](#)

[The Pocahontas Archive](#)

Week 3: Captivity and Typology

08/29 Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682)

In Class: Examples of typology from Jonathan Edwards, *Images or Shadows of Divine Things*

08/31 Listen to [Anne Bradstreet NPR](#). Anne Bradstreet (c. 1612-1672), *Selected Poems*: “The Author to Her Book,” “Before the Birth of One of Her Children,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “A Letter to Her Husband, Absent upon Public Employment,” “Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House, July 10th, 1666”

Digital Resources

[The Plymouth Colony Archive Project](#)

Week 4: Revolution and Federalism

09/05 Thomas Paine, selections from *Common Sense* (1776)

Philip Freneau, selected poetry: “On Mr. Paine’s Rights of Man,” “On the Religion of Nature,” and “The Country Printer”

09/07 Alexander Hamilton, “Federalist No. 1” (1787) and James Madison, “Federalist No. 10” (1787)

Week 5: Enlightenment and Print Culture

- 09/12 Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* [Part One]
 09/14 Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* [Part Two]

Digital Resources

[Benjamin Franklin: Writer and Printer](#)
[Benjamin Franklin: In His Own Words \(Library of Congress\)](#)
[The Papers of Benjamin Franklin](#)

Week 6: The Black Atlantic

- 09/19 Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789)

Digital Resources

[Olaudah Equiano and the Eighteenth-Century Debate over Africa and the Slave Trade Episode on “The Black Atlantic” from The African Americans: Many Rivers to Cross Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade](#)

- 09/20 *Last day to withdraw from first term 8W1 classes with grade of W*
- 09/21 **Paper #1 (Digital Exhibit) Due.**
 Phillis Wheatley, Selected Poems: “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” “To the University of Cambridge, in New England,” and “To S.M., a Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works”

Week 7: The Sentimental Novel

- 09/26 Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton* (1797)
- 09/28 Hannah W. Foster, *The Coquette; or, The History of Eliza Wharton* (1797)
- 09/29 **Commonplace Journal, Part I Due.**

Week 8: American Romanticism

- 10/03 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “The Minister’s Black Veil” (1832)
- 10/05 Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (1841)

Week 9: Nature and Transcendentalism

- 10/10 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Selections from *Nature* (1836)

Digital Resources

[Web of American Transcendentalism](#)
[Digital Emerson](#)

- 10/12 Margaret Fuller, “Leila” and “The Magnolia of Lake Pontchartrain”

Week 10: Henry David Thoreau

10/17 Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden* (1854): “Solitude,” and “Spring”

Digital Resources

[The Writings of Henry David Thoreau](#)

[Henry David Thoreau Papers](#)

[Digital Thoreau](#)

[Walden, A Game](#)

[Thoreau's Kalendar](#)

[Henry David Thoreau's Land & Property Surveys](#)

10/19 Fall Break

Week 11: The Gothic and Dark Romanticism

10/24 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839)

Digital Resources

[Edgar Allan Poe Society of Baltimore](#)

[The Museum of Edgar Allan Poe](#)

[Nevermore: The Edgar Allan Poe Collection of Susan Jaffe Tane](#)

10/26 Edgar Allan Poe, “The Tell-Tale Heart” (1843)

Week 12: American Poetry I

10/31 Walt Whitman, selections from “Song of Myself” (1855) (sections 1-24)

11/02 Explore *The Walt Whitman Archive*: <http://www.whitmanarchive.org/>

Week 13: American Poetry II

11/07 Emily Dickinson, *Poems* #112, 124, 202, 340, 355, 359, 409, 479, 519, 591, 764, and 1263.

11/09 Explore the Digital Archives devoted to Emily Dickinson.

Digital Resources

[Emily Dickinson Archive: Manuscripts Lexicon](#)

[Radical Scatters | Radical Scatters](#)

[Dickinson Electronic Archives](#)

[Emily Dickinson Lexicon](#)

[Emily Dickinson's Herbarium, circa 1839-1846](#)

Week 14: The Slave Narrative

11/14 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

11/16 Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

Digital Resources

[Harriet Jacobs](#)

[Harriet Jacobs Papers](#)

Week 15: The Civil War

11/21 *Paper #2 (Word Analysis) Due.*

Herman Melville, selections from *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War* (1866): “The Portent,” “A Utilitarian View of the Monitor’s Flight,” and “Shiloh: A Requiem”

11/23 Thanksgiving Break

Week 16: Comedy and Critique

11/28 *Commonplace Journal, Part II Due.*

Herman Melville, “Bartleby, the Scrivener” (1855)

Digital Resources

[Melville's Marginalia Online](#)

[The Life and Works of Herman Melville](#)

[Herman Melville Electronic Library: A Critical Archive](#)

11/30 Writing Workshop

Final Paper/Projects Due: Wednesday Dec. 6