Class Meeting Hours: T 15:00-17:00 & Th 11:00-12:00
Instructor: Dr. Myrto Drizou
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Office: TB 440
Office hours: Th 13:00-14:00 & F 10:00-12:00

We used to think, Joseph, … that words were cheap and weak. Now I don’t know of anything so mighty. There are those to which I lift my hat when I see them sitting princelike among their peers on the page. Sometimes I write one, and look at his outlines till he glows as no sapphire.

(Emily Dickinson)

In a mid-19th-century letter to her friend, Joseph Lyman, American poet Emily Dickinson affirms the power of the written word as a “mighty” vehicle of expression and communication. In this class, we will examine the different aspects of power—social, religious, and political—that literature has wielded in the development of American consciousness and culture from the early colonial period to the Civil War. We will explore the cultural, religious, and racial diversity of early American literature across various genres—from colonial accounts, Puritan sermons, and captivity narratives, to early women’s poetry, slave narratives, sentimental fiction, Transcendentalist essays, and the Gothic. Our goal will be to debate what constitutes “American” literature and how it changes in relation to different sociohistorical contexts, including the Puritan legacy, the ideas of the Enlightenment, the American Revolution, transatlantic literary networks, slavery, westward expansion, gender and class inequality, and social reform.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance is required. You are allowed 4 absences without any penalty. Further absences will impact your attendance grade by 5 pts each. Regular tardiness will negatively affect your attendance as well. If you miss more than 7 classes, you will not be allowed to submit your final paper and you will fail the course.

- You must come to class on time, fully prepared, and having read all the assigned material. Each class will include a short lecture, but it will be largely taught in seminar fashion; class discussion is an essential part of instruction and your participation is required. I expect everyone to share their informed views and to be open to a constructive exchange of perspectives.

- The midterm exam will take place during class time on November 19. If a student is legitimately excused from the midterm (i.e. for documented circumstances), a make-up exam will be arranged accordingly. There will also be announced and unannounced quizzes on a regular basis as well as other assignments and responses. For responses: you must submit your file on Turnitin (class number 21852797; registration key: AmericanLit). There will be no make-up for quizzes or other assignments. No late assignments will be accepted.

- For the final paper: Details and submission date will be provided a few weeks before the end of the semester. No late papers will be accepted. [For submission: see Turnitin information above]
• **Final Grade Breakdown:**
  Attendance and Participation: 10%
  Quizzes: 15%
  Reading Responses: 10%
  Midterm Exam: 30%
  Final Paper: 35%

• The course pack is available at the Library Photocopy shop. Additional readings and supplementary material will be uploaded on Moodle.

• For written assignments, you must follow the MLA (Modern Language Association) guidelines for formatting and citation. You can access the latest edition here:

  [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

  All sources must be properly cited otherwise you are committing plagiarism (i.e. presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own). Not only direct quotations and facts but also paraphrases of ideas must be properly documented. If you have any doubts about whether/how you should cite a source, please ask me BEFORE you submit your work. Plagiarism also includes submitting papers or work you’ve used for other courses (your own or others’), buying papers online or having others write papers for you: no such work will be accepted. Additionally, all exams and quizzes must be completed without the use of outside material, including books, notes, electronic sources, phones, and classmates’ help. Any instance of academic dishonesty will be subject to appropriate sanctions. For more on plagiarism and how to avoid it, see the department’s website: [http://westlanglit.boun.edu.tr/?page_id=5987](http://westlanglit.boun.edu.tr/?page_id=5987)

• If you have any questions about the class, please don’t hesitate to send me an e-mail or see me in my office hours. I welcome your queries and I will do my best to address your questions in a timely manner.

**Course Schedule:**

NOTE: All readings and assignments must be completed **before** you come to class on that day. In case of change to the schedule, I will notify you in advance.

**Week 1**

Th Sept 19: Introduction to the course

**Week 2: Exploration and Colonization**

T Sept 24: Introduction (beginnings to 1820); C. Columbus, *Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage* and *Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage*

Th Sept 26: Bartolomé de las Casas, *From the Devastation of the Indies: Hispaniola*; Nahuatl Elegies; Ann Plato “The Natives of America”

**Week 3: The Puritans**


Th Oct 3: Anne Bradstreet, “The Prologue”; “The Author to Her Book”; “Before the Birth of One of Her Children”; “To my Dear and Loving Husband”; “To My Dear Children”
Week 4: Narratives of Captivity, Freedom, and Success
T Oct 8: Mary Rowlandson, A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson
Th Oct 10: Benjamin Franklin, The Way to Wealth; from The Autobiography part II; 1st Response Due

Week 5: Enlightenment Ideas and the American Revolution
Th Oct 17: Phillis Wheatley, “Preface” and “On Being Brought from Africa to America”; Thomas Jefferson, from Notes on the State of Virginia

Week 6: Native American Removal
T Oct 22: Philip Freneau, “The Indian Burying Ground”; Benjamin Franklin, Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America; Andrew Jackson on Native American Removal
Th Oct 24: Continued discussion on the readings

Week 7: Introduction to Transcendentalism
T Oct 29: No class
Th Oct 31: “Transcendentalist Literature”; Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature”

Week 8: Transcendentalism and Women’s Authorship; American Gothic
T Nov 5: “Self-Reliance”; Margaret Fuller, The Great Lawsuit, Man Vs. Men. Woman Vs. Women;
Phoebe Cary, “Advice Gratis to Certain Literary Women”; 2nd Response Due

Week 9: American Gothic (cont.)
T Nov 12: Uriah Derick D’Arcy, The Black Vampyre: A Legend of St. Domingo (see link on Moodle);
Edgar Allan Poe, “Ligeia”
Th Nov 14: Poe, “The Fall of the House of Usher”; “The Raven”

Week 10: The Question of Race
T Nov 19: Midterm Exam

Week 11: Slave Narratives
T Nov 26: “The Genre of Slave Narratives”; Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
Th Nov 28: Frederick Douglass, from Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself

Week 12: Searching for “Home”; Labor, Industrialization, and Gender
T Dec 3: Rebecca Harding Davis, Life in the Iron Mills; Herman Melville, “Bartleby the Scrivener”
Th Dec 5: Emily Dickinson, selected poems

Week 13: The Future of American Democracy
T Dec 10: Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”; 3rd Response Due
Th Dec 12: Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?”

Week 14: Final Week of Classes
T Dec 17: Concluding discussion – thank you for all your work! Final Paper Due Date TBA