

English 461 - American Literature to 1800: Early American Literature through film

Spring term 2014 12:00 – 1:20 pm in 276 Education
4 credits CRN 26522

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Description:

English 461 is an introduction to the literature of colonial America and the Early Republic. This course does not emphasize the genres of poetry, novels and short stories that you will be familiar with from other English courses. Instead, we will be reading missionary relations, spiritual autobiographies, scientific tracts, and personal narratives of exploration and captivity, as well as two stage dramas. This year, the course is designed around five recent feature films that we will screen during special evening class sessions: Cabeza de Vaca, Black Robe, Pocahontas, Jefferson in Paris, and Amazing Grace. These movies portray the experiences of sixteenth and seventeenth-century explorers and missionaries, and eighteenth-century politicians, and also enable us discuss the political and cultural importance of certain texts and histories for contemporary audiences.

Learning Objectives:

Students in this course will learn about the history and literature of colonial North America from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, including English, French, and Spanish colonies. The course will introduce students to narrative forms and genres from this period, such as missionary relation, captivity narrative, slave narrative, spiritual autobiography, and the tragicomic drama based on these events. Students will view and analyze films based on events in colonial to demonstrate how this history is still important today, and how narratives forms can be adapted for cinema.

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is required in this course. Completing all the reading assignments, attending class and participating in discussion is vital to your success. Attending the wednesday evening film screenings is also expected. However, it is also possible to check out the videos and watch the films individually, which is recommended if you are writing a paper about that film.

You are permitted to miss three classes for whatever reason, but your grade will be reduced for each absence beyond three. I will distribute an attendance list at the beginning of each class period. Leaving class early will also constitute an unexcused absence. If you need to leave early, please discuss it with me ahead of time.

Writing Assignments:

There are three papers required, with a variety of possible topics and due dates, see p 6 below.

Grades:

20 points for each of the three essays

20 points for the final exam

20 points based on participation and in-class quizzes

for a total of 100 points. The final letter grades will be set on a curve based upon the point totals.

Academic Honesty:

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please consult Rules for Writers for a definition of plagiarism and information on documentation, and refer to the Student Conduct Code on the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards website.

Books: at University of Oregon bookstore

Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. Frank Shuffleton (Penguin Classics)
Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Castaways: The Narrative of Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca*, trans. Patrick Kautz and Rolena Adorno (U. of Nebraska Press)
Allan Greer, ed. *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in Seventeenth-Century North America* (Bedford/St. Martins)
Gordon Sayre, ed. *American Captivity Narratives* (Riverside/Houghton Mifflin)

e-texts posted on the Blackboard coursesite, on the “course documents” tab
(listed in the order in which they will be assigned)

Ralph Bauer, chapter on Cabeza de Vaca from *The Cultural Geography of Colonial American Literatures: Empire, Travel, Modernity* [pdf]

Juan Bruce-Novoa, “Shipwrecked in the Seas of Signification: Cabeza de Vaca’s *La Relación* and Chicano Literature.” from *Reconstructing a Chicano Literary Heritage*, ed. Maria Herrera-Sobek (1993), 3-23. [pdf]

“The tradition of the Nottowegui or Five Nations “ from John Norton’s journal [pdf]

James Dean, from *The Oneida Creation Story* ed. Elm and Antone, pp157-162 [pdf]

Brébeuf relation of 1635, in the *Jesuit Relations* vol. 8, pp. 67-152 [link]

http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_08.html

Ward Churchill, “And they did it like dogs in the dirt: An Indigenist Analysis of *Black Robe*” from *From a Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985-1995* pp423-437 [pdf]

The Voyages of Pierre-Esprit Radisson, the First Voyage [rtf text file]

John Rolfe’s letter to Thomas Dale about his marriage to Pocahontas [pdf]

Leslie Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (1968) pp. 63-83 [pdf]

excerpts from John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia...* (1624) [pdf]

James Nelson Barker, *The Indian Princess* (1808) <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/29230>

Gordon M. Sayre, “Communion in Captivity: Torture, Martyrdom, and Gender in New France and New England” from *Finding Colonial Americas: Essays Honoring J. A. Leo Lemay*, ed. Carla Mulford and David S. Shields. U of Delaware Press (2001), pp50-63. [pdf]

John Augustus Stone, *Metamora, or, The Last of the Wampanoags* (1828) [pdf]

Gronniosaw, James. Gronniosaw's narrative, <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/readex/13311.html>

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, chapters 7 and 8

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano2/equiano2.html>

Vincent Carretta, “Questioning the Identity of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African” from Felicity Nussbaum, ed., *The Global Eighteenth Century* (2003), 226-235 [pdf]

Memoirs of Madison Hemings and Israel Jefferson, from *Pike Co. Ohio Republican*, 1873 [pdf]

Jill Lepore, review of *The Hemingses of Monticello* in *The New Yorker*

http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/books/2008/09/22/080922crbo_books_lepore

Films (in case you need to screen them for yourself):

Cabeza de Vaca (1993; 110 minutes) library vhs 2596

Black Robe (1991, 101 minutes) library dvd 165

Pocahontas (1995) library dvd 3301

Amazing Grace (2006; 111 minutes) library dvd 3302

Jefferson in Paris (1995) library dvd 1636

Schedule of Assignments

- Unit 1: Cabeza de Vaca
themes: efforts to trace his route; Mexican vs. US legacy; hagiography, miracles and healing
- April 1st assignment: first half of Cabeza de Vaca pp. 44-110
- April 2nd screening #1 Cabeza de Vaca in Knight Library 41 at 7 pm
- April 3rd Film Analysis
assignment: second half of Cabeza de Vaca's Narrative, pp. 110-176
- April 8th assignment: Ralph Bauer, "Mythos and epos: Cabeza de Vaca's empire of peace"; Juan Bruce-Novoa, "Shipwrecked in the Seas of Signification: Cabeza de Vaca's La Relación and Chicano Literature" [pdfs]
- Unit 2: Black Robe and the Jesuit Relations
themes: Cosmogonies; baptism and contamination; mimicry; martyrdom
- April 10th Iroquoian Creation Stories
assignment: "The tradition of the Nottowegui or Five Nations " from John Norton's journal (c. 1810) [pdf]; Judge James Dean, "Oneida Creation Story" [pdf] Greer, ed. The Jesuit Relations pp 41-48
- April 15th Jean de Brébeuf: missionary, ethnographer, martyr
assignment: Regnault, Martyrdom of Brébeuf; Brébeuf, Relation of 1635, in Jesuit Relations vol. 8 pp 69-153 (link; look for the page numbers in bold face in brackets]
- April 16th screening #2 Black Robe in Knight Library 41 at 7 pm
- April 17th Professor Sayre's presentation for the Environmental Studies Colloquium series, "Creole Degeneracy: Colonial Science and Environmental Anxiety in 18th-century America." in Columbia 254. Lunch will be available
- April 22nd The Captivity and Martrydom of Isaac Jogues
assignment: Greer, ed. The Jesuit Relations pp 155-171; American Captivity Narratives pp 95-126
- April 24th Pierre-Esprit Radisson
assignment: Radisson's First Voyage [text file on blackboard]
- Unit 3: Captivity Narratives and American Identities
themes: protestant conversion narratives; captivity, communion, and contamination; the romance of conquest, the disney-fication of history
- April 29th John Smith's narrative of captivity
assignment: American Captivity Narratives 1-17, 83-90
- April 30th screening #3: Pocahontas in Knight library 41 at 7 pm

- May 1st Film analysis: The Romance of Pocahontas
assignment: Rolfe letter; excerpts from Smith's General Historie [pdfs], Leslie Fiedler, The Return of the Vanishing American pp 63-83 [pdf]
- May 6th James Nelson Barker, The Indian Princess (1808)
assignment: the play text is on gutenber.org
- May 8th Juan Ortiz and the Enchanted Muslim Princess tale
assignment: American Captivity Narratives pp65-82; Sayre, "Communion in Captivity" [pdf]
- May 13th American Historical Typology
assignment: John Augustus Stone, Metamora, or, The Last of the Wampanoags [pdf]
- May 15th Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative
assignment: American Captivity Narratives pp127-176
- Unit 4: Olaudah Equiano and the Black Atlantic Spiritual autobiography
themes: the talking book; African-American literary traditions; conversion
- May 20th John Marrant, J. A. U. Gronniosaw and Gates' "Talking Book"
assignment: American Captivity Narratives pp198-224; Gronniosaw's narrative
- May 21st film screening #4 Amazing Grace in Knight Library 41 at 7 pm
- May 22nd Equiano's slave and conversion narrative 1
assignment: Equiano in American Captivity Narratives pp225-257
- May 27th Equiano's slave and conversion narrative 2
assignment: chapters 7 & 8 of Equiano's book [link]; Vincent Carretta, "Questioning the Identity of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African"
- Unit 5: Thomas Jefferson
themes: American Nature and the Dispute of the New World; the Sally Hemmings controversy
- May 29th Notes on the State of Virginia
assignment: Shuffleton's Introduction; Queries IV – VII
- June 4th assignment: Letters to the Marquis de Chastellux and to Richard Price, Notes on the State of Virginia Query IX, (pp18-38, 67-75, 142-152)
- June 5th film screening #5, Jefferson in Paris in Knight Library 41 at 7pm
- June 6th Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemmings film analysis
assignment: Notes on the State of Virginia Query XIV (pp168-185) memoirs of Madison Hemmings and Israel Jefferson (pdf); Jill Lepore, review of Annette Gordon-Reed, The Hemingses of Monticello in The New Yorker

You are required to write three essays for this course, of 5-6 pages each. One of the essays should focus on an analysis of one of the five films. The other two essays will examine the readings in our five units, through the four topics described below.

This flexible timetable, with nine possible paper topics and nine due dates, allows you to schedule your work around your other commitments this term. However, it requires advance planning and personal responsibility. If you miss earlier due dates, you will not be allowed to turn in all the papers at the end of the term. So please look over this document closely, plan ahead which papers you plan to write, and notify me by email of your plan.

Film analysis paper:

Some of you may have experience in writing papers about film for courses in CINE or in ENG, others may not. I want to be flexible with this assignment and accommodate various approaches. You might read several reviews of the film and compare them with your own assessment. The film analysis essay is due in class at the meeting following our discussion of each film in class: that is, on April 8th, April 22nd, May 6th, May 27th, or June 8th (the first day of finals week).

For the first four of the five films, you could respond to these questions: How does the film address issues of Mexican, Canadian, U.S., or British national history and politics? How are indigenous American peoples portrayed? What scenes in the film are closely based upon the textual sources we have read, and how does the meaning change as they are translated into a new meaning? How do the films follow or diverge from the genres of historical bio-pic or Disney animated romance? For *Jefferson in Paris*, I encourage you to write a paper based on research in the James Ivory papers at the Knight Library special collections.

Textual analysis paper: Here are the five topics based on one or more of the five units.

Units 1 and 2 on **missionaries and evangelization** due April 22nd: How do Father Lafourgue, Father Brébeuf, or Cabeza de Vaca show that they have been converted to the beliefs of those whom they might wish to evangelize?

Units 1, 2 and 3 on **captivity narrative** due May 20th: Scholars studying captivity narratives have offered various interpretations for what may seem to be sensational and implausible acts by the Native Americans. For example, the gruesome tortures or mock executions inflicted on men like Radisson and John Smith have been explained as hazing rituals which had the paradoxical effect of cementing the captive's attachment to his captors. Another approach has been to question the truth of these accounts and point out the ways in which the stories resemble European folktales or myths. Using the captivities of Jogues, Radisson, Smith, Rowlandson, and Ortiz, lay out your own position on how much of these stories are true, or how they might be modeled on fictional sources.

Unit 3 on the **romance of conquest** due May 15th: How are the violent facts of colonization turned to a comedy or romance in *Pocahontas*, and/or in the two plays based on the colonization of New England and of Virginia?

Unit 4 on **spiritual conversion narratives** due May 27th: The "trope of the talking book" as it appears in the texts by Gronniosaw, Equiano, and others is not necessarily a religious allegory. But given the importance of the Bible and literacy to protestantism since Luther, it could be. Examine the connections between literacy and spiritual enlightenment or conversion in two or three of the texts we read.

Unit 5 on **Thomas Jefferson** due June 4th: I proposed in class that Thomas Jefferson was conscious of himself as an American creole, born in Virginia and eager to promote his homeland. How does he negotiate this desire to show that he and other Euro-Americans embody the virtues of the place, while also asserting his superiority to the Native Indians and the African in Virginia?

I'd like to aim for 40 points, so that I could average it down to 20

Matching: Texts and dates, probably in 50 year intervals, 1550-1599, 1600-1649, 1650-1699, etc. 6 points

Short Answer: 10 pts in 5 questions

1. 1. 1. Who was George Whitefield? Name one text we read in which he appears.

1. 1. 2. What is hagiography, and how does the selection we read by Francisco Palou fit that genre?

What is the "enchanted Moslem Princess" archetype, and where did we read about it?

what is requickening, and name one text we read in which it occurs

talking book trope?

do a matching of passage id: I could use Gates, Jr., Hochschild, Fiedler, Bauer, Carretta, or Bruce-Novoa 6 oints?

Medium Answer: 8 points

do a q. about mutual misrecognition?

do something about healing, using a passage from CV, and another from the JR

use this and another passage

"thou sayest that Baptism and the sufferings of this life lead straight to Paradise; thou wilt go soon, for I am going to baptize thee, and to make thee suffer well, in order to go the sooner to thy Paradise.' The barbarian, having said that, took a kettle full of boiling water, which he poured over his body three different times, in derision of Holy baptism. And, each time that he baptized him in this manner, the barbarian said to him, with bitter sarcasm, 'Go to Heaven, for thou art well baptized.'"

Why does the "barbarian" do this?

I could use this

Essay:

use this but w/ ? in place of JE provide another passage, mostly likely from TJ

ONE:

"I went along that day mourning and lamenting, leaving farther my own Country, and travelling into the vast and howling Wilderness; and I understood something of Lot's Wife's Temptation, when she looked back. We came that day to a great Swamp; by the side of which we took up our lodging that night. When I came to the brow of the hill that looked toward the Swamp, I thought we had been come to a great Indian Town, (though there were none but our own Company,) the Indians were as thick as the Trees; it seemed as if there had been a thousand Hatchets going at once: if one looked before one there was nothing but Indians, and behind one nothing but Indians; and so on either hand; I myself in the midst, and no Christian Soul near me, and yet how hath the Lord preserved me in safety! Oh the experience that I have had of the goodness of God to me and mine."

"I often used to sit and view the moon for a long time; and in the day, spent much time in viewing the clouds and sky, to behold the sweet glory of God in these things: in the meantime, singing forth, with a low voice, my contemplations of the Creator and Redeemer. And scarce any thing, among all the works of nature, was so sweet to me as thunder and lightning; formerly nothing had been so

terrible to me. Before, I used to be uncommonly terrified with thunder, and to be struck with terror when I saw a thunderstorm rising; but now, on the contrary, it rejoiced me. I felt God, if I may so speak, at the first appearance of a thunder storm; and used to take the opportunity to view the clouds, and see the lightnings play, and hear the majestic and awful voice of God's thunder, which oftentimes was exceedingly entertaining, leading me to sweet contemplations of my great and glorious God."

"About a quarter of a mile from my Master's house stood a large remarkably fine Oak-tree, in the midst of a wood; I often used to be employed there in cutting down trees, (a work I was very fond of) and I seldom failed going to this place every day; sometimes twice a day if I could be spared. It was the greatest pleasure I ever experienced to set under this Oak, for there I used to pour out my complaints to the LORD: and when I had any particular grievance, I used to go there, and talk to the tree, and tell my sorrows, as if it were to a friend."

Discuss how these excerpts from texts we read by Mary Rowlandson, Jonathan Edwards, and James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw reveal changing attitudes toward the natural world by American protestants during the eighteenth century. How does the author's social class also inflect each passage?

Extra Credit (2 points): Name four makes of automobile named for North American explorers (only one is still in production).