

English 293-01
Spring 2010
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S. Luria
Fenwick 211, x 3443
OH: MWF 12-1 & by appt.

19th Century American Literature

Texts:

Norton Anthology of American Literature, Vol. B, 7th Edition
James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mobicans*, Penguin edition
Henry James, *Washington Square*, Signet Edition, paper, required

Course Description:

In this course we consider the evolving American saga as embodied by literary heroes such as fugitive slave Frederick Douglass in his *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, protofeminist Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, arch non-conformist Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*, and literary history's first criminal detective Auguste Dupin in Edgar Allan Poe's "The Purloined Letter." Through their stories we will see that the 19th century was a period of cataclysmic change in this country: Native Americans were forced off their land and slaughtered, the chronic issue of slavery refused to be solved peacefully and led to the Civil War, women began to stand up for their rights, and technological inventions such as the railroad and telegraph affected daily life as much as the computer and the web has affected ours. Such changes produced the transcendent oratory of Abraham Lincoln and poetry of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, whose texts we also study. As we go, we will sharpen our analytical skills to appreciate more fully the radical and experimental power of 19th Century American Literature.

Requirements:

Essay 1 = 20%; Test 1 = 10%; Test 2 = 10%; Essay 2 = 20%; Final Exam = 25%;
Participation = 10%; Thought Pieces = 5%.

Preparation: The only way to learn in this course is, of course, to do the work on your own (or when invited to do so, in pairs). **You are never to consult the web for help with our texts, either for class preparation or essay writing.** I am only interested in your own ideas. There will be a final exam and a two part mid-term. Test 1 (Mar. 31) will test your grasp of the key terms of the course. Test 2 (Apr. 16) will be a short in class essay on one of the texts studied so far. The way to do well on exams is to use all the homework prior to that to practice and develop your close reading skills. Plan on spending about 3 hours preparing for each class. Read the assigned text. Spend a solid amount of time in which you focus on one or at most two short passages and analyze them in the way we do in class until you reach an insight into them. What problem or question do they raise? What do you admire about them? What more do they tell you about the character or situation? Always consider how your passage relates to the larger assigned reading as a whole. Answer any questions I may post on Moodle about the day's reading. Do this work in your notebook and be prepared to speak from it when you come to class. You will be developing these thoughts at three different times over the course of the semester into Thought Pieces. There are six times in the syllabus (**TP**) when you may turn one of these in.

Participation: Come well-prepared and ready to share your insights. We need all hands on deck in this class. We are looking for roughly equal participation here: not three students dominating the discussion—no one wants that—but each class member sharing the work and fun of cracking open a text. Those who have honest and thoughtful comments to make in class help to do the work of appreciating what is going on in a text. Even if you aren't used to speaking in class, here you will have space to do so. Being comfortable with presenting your ideas in the informal friendly atmosphere of our class is a crucial piece of your education. We will frequently go around the room, and I will also call on people. Do note that your class participation counts for 15% of your grade. Simply attending all classes earns a C for participation. Contributing to class discussion in a substantive way raises your grade accordingly. More than two unexcused absences will also lower your course grade.

Academic Honesty. Academic work is based upon trust. Your work should be your own and should be prepared specifically for this class. That said, I heartily encourage you to talk with other students in the course about our poems and to respond to drafts of each other's written work. Beyond myself and your colleagues you should not go—not to the web or other outside sources, never to your parents. This is your college career, and yours only. What you get out of it will be only what you yourself put into it.

This class is the place to develop proper citation skills. When you do use ideas from a colleague in class, or something you remember from a previous course (such as the fact that as an adult Edgar Allan Poe married his 13 year old cousin), you should cite your source. Failure to do so even in this seemingly innocent situation technically constitutes plagiarism, and that is a serious academic offense. If you ever have questions about what needs to be cited and what does not, please ask me. Please use MLA format for all citations. You'll find an overview of MLA format in *A Pocket Style Manual*.

Students who use any **language or ideas** from a web source or book or article in their essays for this course will earn a zero on the assignment, a letter in their college file, and two semesters of academic probation. Second-time offenders will be suspended for a year, and third-time offenders will be dismissed from the college. Read the College academic honesty policy at the end of this syllabus and ask me any questions you may have about it. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and how it goes against everything that the joy and work of learning entails.

Late papers: If you do not submit your essay on the day it is due, you will need to get a note from your Class Dean to explain why it is late. If you do not come to class on the day your essay is due, then your essay will be counted late. If you do come to class but don't have your essay then you will have until 4 p.m. of that day to get it to me and it will not be counted late. Late essays are penalized 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late, including weekends. So Friday's A- is Monday's B-.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Assignments are due on the dates listed. Numbers preceding the readings are the year the text was first published. All page #s are to the *Norton Anthology*, unless otherwise specified. Read the headnotes to each author in the *Norton* even if I haven't listed them.

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| Jan. | 20 W | Course Introduction |
| | | Nature's Nation |
| | 22 F | Native Americans: Removal and Resistance, 1252-68; Sherman Alexie, "On the Amtrak from Boston to New York City" (hand-out) |
| | 25 M | Cooper, <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> , Chapt. 1-8 |
| | 27 W | <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> , Chapt. 9-16 |
| | 29 F | <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> , Chapt. 17-24; TP |
| Feb. | 1 M | <i>Last of the Mohicans</i> , Chapt. 25-end; Apees, "An Indian's Looking Glass for the White Man," <i>Norton</i> , 1051-58 |
| | 3 W | Emerson, Nature, 1110-1113 Asher Durand, "Kindred Spirits": http://www.artchive.com/artchive/D/durand.html Frederick Church, "Niagara" http://www.artchive.com/artchive/C/church.html#images |
| | 5 F | Thoreau, "Walking," (eres) Durand, "In the Woods" http://www.artchive.com/artchive/D/durand.html |
| | 8 M | Thoreau, "Economy," skim entire and read closely 1872-74; 1882-88; 1893-1904 |
| | 10 W | Thoreau, "Where I lived," 1914-24; TP |
| | 12 F | Emerson, "Self Reliance," 1163-80 |
| | | The Psychology of Mastery |
| | 15 M | Douglass, <i>My Bondage My Freedom</i> , 2129-40; <i>Narrative</i> , Chapters X-XI, 2097-2129 |
| | 17 W | Poe, "The Cask of the Amontillado," 1612-16 |
| | 19 F | Poe, "The Purloined Letter," 1599-1611 |
| | 22 M | Jacobs, from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> , 1808-1829; Essay 1 due in class |
| | 24 W | Melville, <i>Benito Cereno</i> , 2405-2461; TP |
| | | Spring Break |
| Mar | 8 M | Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4 th of July?" Read full text on (eres) |
| | 10 W | Lincoln, Gettysburg Address, 1627-28; 1635 |
| | 12 F | Lincoln, Second Inaugural Address, 1635-36 |
| | 15 M | Whitman, "Song of Myself," 2210 -2227 |
| | 17 W | Whitman, "Song of Myself," 2227-2254; TP |
| | 19 F | Dickinson, "There's a Certain Slant of Light," 2567; "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," 2568 |
| | 22 M | Dickinson, "The Soul selects her own Society," 2574; "This is my letter to the World," 2578 |
| | | Republic of Women |
| | | Winthrop, Anne Hutchinson |
| | 24 W | Seneca Falls Convention, Declaration of Sentiments Sojourner Truth, Speech to the Women's Rights Convention, 1695-96; TP |
| | 26 F | <i>Scarlet Letter</i> , Chapt. "Customs House Sketch," 1352-77 |

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| | 29 M | <i>Scarlet Letter</i> , Chapt. 1-11, 1358-1431 |
| | 31 W | Test 1, in class |
| | | Easter Break |
| Apr. | 7 W | <i>Scarlet Letter</i> , Chapt. 12-21, 1431-78 |
| | 9 F | <i>Scarlet Letter</i> , Chapt. 22-24, 1479-93 |
| | 12 M | <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , 1698-1751 |
| | 14 W | <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> , 1751-92 |
| | 16 F | Test 2, In class |
| | | Realism |
| | 19 M | <i>Washington Square</i> Chapters 1-10 Thomas Eakins, "The Gross Clinic"; John Singer Sargent, "Henry James" (paintings) |
| | 21 W | <i>Washington Square</i> , Chapters 11-21; TP |
| | 23 F | <i>Washington Square</i> , Chapters 22-35 |
| | 26 M | <i>Billy Budd</i> , chapters 1-30, 2468-2523 |
| | 28 W | <i>Billy Budd</i> , cont'd. |
| | 30 F | <i>Billy Budd</i> , Class Debate |
| May | 3 M | Dickinson, "This World is not conclusion," 2572; Essay 2 due in class Final Exam, date to be announced |

"I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now.
I spell it large because it comes large here. Large, and without mercy."

--Charles Olson, *Call me Ishmael*