

Spring 2008  
English 401-04

Sarah Luria  
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OH T 3:30-4:30; M 1-3 (1/23-2/4);  
F 10-12 (after 2/11) & by appt.

## The Other American Renaissance and American Sentimentalism

Susan Warner, *Wide Wide World* (1850)  
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851)  
Maria Cummins, *The Lamplighter* (1852)  
Readings on Eres

Jan 17 Introduction. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter*

Jan 24 *Wide Wide World* (Chs 1-8); Fred Kaplan, "The Moral Sentiments" (eres); Joanne Dobson, "Reclaiming Sentimental Literature" (eres); **Interpretive Summary due**

Jan 31 *Wide Wide World*, Chaps. 8-32

American Antiquarian Society visit, date and time TBA

### **Feb 5 2 student essays emailed to the rest of class by noon**

Feb 7 *Wide Wide World* (Chs. 33-Appendix)  
Hawthorne, "A Rill from the Town Pump" (eres) + 2 student essays

Feb 14 *Wide Wide World*, **R:** Tompkins, afterword, 584-608; **R:** Brodhead, "Sparing the Rod," part I (eres)

Feb 21 Stowe *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Preface-Chapt. 12; Stowe, Preface to the 1<sup>st</sup> illustrated edition (eres)  
**R:** Karen Sanchez-Eppler, "Then When We Clutch the Hardest" (eres)

### **Feb 26 2 student essays emailed to the rest of class by noon**

Feb 28 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chaps. 13-29; **R:** Tompkins, "Sentimental Power," *Norton*, 501-22.  
Fred Kaplan "Are You Sentimental?" (eres)  
Charles Dickens "The Death of Little Nell" in *The Old Curiosity Shop* (eres) + 2 student essays  
Emily Dickinson, "I heard a fly buzz when I died" (handout)

## SPRING VACATION

Mar 13 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Chaps. 30-42; **R:** Merish, "Sentimental Consumption" (eres);

Beecher and Stowe, *American Woman's Home*, selection (eres)

#### EASTER RECESS

Mar 27 *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Chaps. 43-45; **R:** Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," *Norton*, 495-01; **R:** Spillers "Changing the Letter," *Norton*, 542-67; Brodhead, "Sparing the Rod," part II (eres)

Apr 3 Show and Tell: Sentimentalism in American culture today

**Apr 8 2 student essays emailed to the rest of class by noon**

Apr 10 *The Lamplighter*, Chaps. 1-21; Dickens, *Bleak House*, Chaps. 1 and 16, + 2 student essays

Apr 17 *The Lamplighter*, Chaps. 22-41; **Research prospectus due in class**

Apr 24 *The Lamplighter*, chaps. 42-50; **R:** Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity" (eres)

**Final Research Essay, due date to be announced**

**Grading:** Comparison essay = 20%; Interpretive Summary = 15%; Class report = 15%; Modern sentimentalism report 15%; Final research essay=25%; Participation = 10%.

#### Goals and scope of course:

American life has had a love/hate relationship with sentimentalism. In this course we will read three of the bestselling novels of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as three case studies by which to assess the role that sentimentalism has played in American culture.

- As a survey of cultural criticism on the topic. This is designed as a senior research seminar in which we will read and respond to what literary critics have to say about these novels and how they interface with their culture and times.
- To study of how one aesthetic literary tradition permeates throughout the entire culture: its religious practice, everyday objects, styles of discipline, definitions of childhood, kitchen design, advertising, the role of emotion, the role of women and of mothers, social relations between people who aren't like one another—rich and poor, white and black, its poetry, its politics, and more.
- To use these first two goals to guide toward becoming cultural critics, in our own right, of sentimentalism in our day. Throughout the course of the semester you will be collecting examples from newspapers, music, television, magazines, objects, etc. of sentimentalism at work today. For a final project, you may, if you choose, apply this research as part of a larger project on what our course readings have told you about this major trend in our culture.

#### Class Policies:

- Be prepared for a few changes to the syllabus as we see how the course evolves.
- Plagiarism: Plagiarism means presenting other people's ideas or words as your own. If you summarize, paraphrase, or use language from another source you must provide the proper

citation. If you do not quote the exact words, you must recast the sentences entirely in your own words; you may not even follow the original pattern or syntax of the sentence. We will go over this in class but you are responsible for making sure you fully understand and abide by this code of academic honesty. Any essay caught plagiarizing any amount of material will receive an F and a note will be sent to your class dean. Please review the College policy on plagiarism.

- Late papers: 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-.