“Lovejoy, the first Martyr to American Liberty” Liberty Bell magazine (1839)

Declaring America, Inventing Literature
English 3327 // U.S. Literature to 1865 // Fall 2018

Professor: Donal Harris
Contact: (e) donal.harris@memphis.edu
Class Information: T/Th, 9:40-11:05a

This course is designed to familiarize students with some of the important literary texts written in or about the Americas from the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. Our readings will cover a wide swath of historical, generic, and thematic ground, covering material from early European exploration to abolitionism. We will read both fictional and non-fictional works related to colonial settlement, American Puritanism, slavery, women’s rights, and New England Transcendentalism. Throughout the course, we will focus on how the related concepts of “America” and “American literature” get invented and revised in the hands of different writers in specific historical moments. Assignments include: in-class midterm and final, a close-reading essay, and a primary research-based final paper.

Texts: