

English 3327-002 American Literature to 1865
Fall 2019 Patterson Hall 307 T/Th 12:40-2:05 CRN 81662
Professor Theron Britt
Patterson 453; email: tbritt@memphis.edu

TEXTS:

Robert Levine, et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*
Shorter Ninth Edition, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1865
ISBN: 978-0-393-26452-4

Course syllabus and other materials will be posted on UMDrive; go to the appropriate course section (3327 Spring 2019) at: umdrive.memphis.edu/tbritt/public

AIMS AND ORGANIZATION:

This course will trace through a variety of literary and cultural documents the development of American literature from the beginnings up to the second half of the 19th century. We will examine how American writers, faced with the prospect of inventing new ways to understand and represent a new and quickly changing social order, constructed, critiqued, and then constantly revised competing ideas of “America” and American identity. We will begin with colonial settlement and then explore a large body of literature that includes the Puritans, the European engagement with America’s first “others”—Native Americans, the American Revolution, the American Transcendentalists, issues of slavery and race, and mid-19th century American Realism.

ASSIGNMENTS, WRITTEN WORK, and GRADES

The course will be graded on the basis of **1,000 points as follows:**

- **Three midterm exams and a final exam** of equal weight, each worth **200 points**.
- **Frequent quizzes and/or short response papers** (two pages) over the reading material, worth a total of **200 points**.
- **Attendance and participation** are required. Students **are allowed three** unexcused absences. After that, **10 points will be deducted for each absence**. **No use of phones or laptops during class (exception will be made for those who wish to use a laptop if that person is sitting in the front row)**. Violation of this rule will result in points being deducted from one’s total. Attendance and participation are important, so unexcused absence from a class **or part of a class** (i.e. those who take a quiz but then leave) will **cost 10 points**.
- To substitute for a missed quiz or just to improve your grade you will have two options to write short papers (3-5 pages) on the material that was missed, or for extra credit (25 points each), one in the first half of the semester, and one in the second half. *Also, extra credit can be earned via a class presentation on an assigned topic.*
- *Note that final grades will be rated on the plus/minus scale as follows: an “A+” 966-1000; an “A” 935-965; an “A-” 900-934; a “B+” 866-899; a “B” 835-865; a “B-” 800-834, and so on.*

This is a survey course that will cover a broad range of issues and texts and consequently means that you have a good amount of reading to do. You should of course do your reading *before* class.

Response papers will be approximately two pages (double-spaced) and will be on assigned topics designed to encourage you to think about the reading material *ahead of class* and formulate a response that you can share with others. Response papers will not be accepted after the class for which they are due.

The midterm exams and final exam will be in-class and based on the assigned readings and class discussions. Your exams will ask you to identify the work and the author of specific passages from the reading and then relate that passage to larger themes in the work.

The optional short papers for extra credit will be on assigned topics. You will be expected to do scholarly research and to engage with issues or themes brought up in the course. Papers should conform to the *MLA Handbook* Works Cited citation format. You can either buy the *Handbook* or look up what you need online. Late papers will be penalized 10 points for each day late (exceptions granted for valid medical excuses). All optional short papers (but not response papers) must be submitted in hard copy and also in electronic format (an email copy will do). Your written work may be submitted to **Turnitin.com** (details on this process will be given in class) for an evaluation of the originality of your work and proper use and attribution of sources. By taking this course, you agree that all written assignments may undergo this review process and that the assignment may be included in Turnitin.com's restricted access database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Any assignment not submitted according to the procedures given by the instructor may be penalized or may not be accepted at all.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS

Late assignments will not be accepted without prior arrangements, though exceptions may be made for emergencies. The earlier that you are able to contact me the better, as this class moves quickly through the reading material and the writing assignments.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All work submitted for the class must be your own, and you are not allowed to use previously submitted academic work to fulfill requirements. If you use the work of others in your assignments (including anonymously published analyses, comments, or postings on websites), you must acknowledge and accurately cite their contributions. Plagiarism of any kind or extent will result in failure on the assignment and other consequences as per University policy, which can include failure in the course, suspension, and/or expulsion from the university. For further information, please see "Academic Dishonesty" at the website for Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the development of American literature from the first English explorations of North America in the sixteenth century, through to the middle of the nineteenth century.
- Understand the relationships between different generations of American writers.
- Have a critical understanding of how “America” has been variously defined through and in relation to the course readings.
- Identify important American writings from the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and relate these works to their historical context.
- Interpret and analyze, both orally and in writing, the works of important American writers before 1865, with attention to issues of both breadth of coverage and depth of analysis.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES: For further information on University policies regarding classroom conduct, plagiarism, and other issues, please see the website for the Office of Judicial and Ethical Programs: <http://saweb.memphis.edu/judicialaffairs/>.

DISABILITY RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS

Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to students with disabilities. Students who have a disability or condition that may impair their ability to complete assignments or otherwise satisfy course criteria are encouraged to contact ***Disability Resources for Students*** (DRS) to identify, discuss, and document any feasible instructional modification or accommodations. Reasonable and appropriate accommodations will be provided to all students with disabilities who present a memo from DRS. Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to discuss your specific needs with me in private. Students with disabilities should also contact DRS at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880 or at www.memphis.edu/drs. DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND COMMUNICATION

The CWC serves all members of the University of Memphis community (undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become successful writers and speakers. CWC consultants can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing in any stage of development. While the CWC welcomes the opportunity to assist clients with their writing, it does not function as an editing service. The CWC is located on the first floor of Ned R. McWherter Library. The CWC welcomes walk-ins but appointments are strongly recommended, especially during the busiest times of the semester (mid-terms and finals). Visit <http://www.memphis.edu/cwc/> to schedule an appointment online.