

ENGL 3327-M50 – Fall 2017 - American Literature to 1865

Professor: Michael Compton
Email: mjcomptn@memphis.edu

Office: Patterson 324

Required texts:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, 8th Edition, Volumes A and B, edited by Nina Baym. (ISBN 978-0-393-91309-5.)

Additional materials available online.

Catalog Course Description

Survey of major authors, themes, and movements in American literature from the colonial period through the Civil War 1865.

Extended Course Description

Designed to familiarize students with important American literary texts and movements from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, this course covers a great deal of historical, generic, and thematic ground. Examining fictional and non-fictional works, we will consider issues of colonial settlement, American Protestantism, identity and autobiography, slavery, women's rights, Romanticism and Transcendentalism, and the development of American poetry and fiction. Throughout the course, we will focus on how the idea of "America" has been understood and represented.

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

1. Identify and explain key intellectual and historical movements of the period, including colonization, American Protestantism, the Civil War, abolitionism, and feminism.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the ways in which writers respond to their precursors and contemporaries.
3. Interpret important American writings from the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.
4. Discuss, both orally and in writing, the works of important American writers before 1865.
5. Apply the ideas learned in the course to a greater understanding of the beliefs and ideologies that constitute America today.

The Work

In addition to assigned readings, students will be expected to view videos of lectures to aid in the understanding of the material. Each week, students will complete brief 1-2 page reflective papers based on prompts and participate in online discussion forums on a variety of questions. There will be three essay/exams, each based on a single in-depth question that draws on several works.