

## English 3327-001 American Literature to 1865

Fall 2025 CRN 11899 T/Th 1:00-2:25 in PT 329

Dr. Theron Britt, Patterson 453; [tbritt@memphis.edu](mailto:tbritt@memphis.edu)

Office Hours: T/Th 2:32-3:30 p.m.

### TEXTS:

Robert Levine, et al. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*

**Shorter Tenth Edition, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1865**

ISBN: 9780393696837. [Please be sure to purchase [this particular edition.](#)]

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course will trace through a variety of literary and cultural documents the development of American literature from the beginnings of European settlement up to the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> 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-19<sup>th</sup> century American Realism.

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

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

**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**. The midterm exams and final exam will be based on the assigned readings and class discussions.
- **Frequent quizzes over the reading**, worth a total of **100 points**.
- **Discussion posts via Canvas** in response to a specific prompt about the weekly readings, worth a total of **100 points** (10 points each).
- **Attendance and participation** are required. Students may miss three classes without penalty, but for every absence beyond three unexcused absences 10 points will be deducted from the student’s total points.

- **Optional or Bonus Paper Assignments.** 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. The optional short papers for extra credit will be on assigned topics. These short papers are expected to conform to the *MLA Handbook, 9<sup>th</sup> edition* Works Cited citation format. You can either buy the *Handbook* or look up what you need online. See: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)
- **Plus/minus grading.** 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.
- **Your written work** may be submitted to **Turnitin.com** for an evaluation of the originality of your work and, where appropriate, 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.

**GENERATIVE AI:** As we all now know, various generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are widely available. These tools can help you in your coursework but they cannot replace your own careful engagement with the course material. To help guide you, here are some guidelines for using Generative AI in your coursework for this class:

- First, students are welcome to use generative AI tools like ChatGPT as supplementary invention and editing aids. *But such tools are NOT approved for completing entire assignments.*
- In general, AI-generated content must be revised for clarity, correctness, and audience appropriateness. Please note that these tools may not be used in ways that violate the university’s policy on academic integrity.
- **SO, what this means in practice is this:** first, don’t rely on GenAI tools alone to complete assignments. Second, be careful not to use GenAI tools to violate academic integrity. And third, don’t assume GenAI output is always correct or appropriate.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS:** In general, late assignments will suffer point reductions, or if very late, not be accepted without prior arrangements, though exceptions may be made for medical, financial, or familial emergencies. If a problem arises that makes it difficult to impossible for you to finish an assignment on time, the earlier that you are able to contact me about it 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/>.

**UNIVERSITY POLICIES:** For further information on University policies regarding both online and 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](http://www.memphis.edu/drs). DRS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**WRITING AND COMMUNICATION SERVICES** serves all members of the University of Memphis community (undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff) as they work to become better writers and speakers. Consultants are trained in writing- and speech-tutor methodologies and can provide one-on-one feedback on any writing or speech in any stage of development. While Writing and Communication Services welcomes the opportunity to assist in writing and speaking, it does not function as an editing service. Writing and Communication Services is located on the first floor of the Ned R. McWherter Library, with a satellite writing-only location in Patterson 223. Appointments are strongly recommended, especially during midterms and finals. Visit [memphis.mywconline.com](http://memphis.mywconline.com) to schedule an in-person appointment using your U of M login credentials. For virtual appointments, go to [memphis.upswing.io](http://memphis.upswing.io), login with your U of M credentials, and search for “Writing” to find available consultants. If you have any problems with making an appointment or your MyWC account, please email [casa-writecomm@memphis.edu](mailto:casa-writecomm@memphis.edu) or call 901-678-1694 for assistance. For technical assistance with online appointments, please contact Jamion McNeil ([jgmcneil@memphis.edu](mailto:jgmcneil@memphis.edu) or 901-678-3528), Student Success Resources Coordinator.

## SYLLABUS

WEEK 1 Jan	20	Introduction: The Promise of “America”
	22	John Smith “A Description of New England” (66-69)
WEEK 2	27	William Bradford “Of Plymouth Plantation” Bk 1: (73-82); Bk 2: (82-87); and “Mr. Morton of Merry . . .” (87-90).

	29	John Winthrop "A Model of Christian Charity" (93-104).
WEEK 3Feb	3	Mary Rowlandson "A Narrative of the Captivity . . ." (132-151)
	5	Anne Bradstreet, poems t.b.a. (112 and following)
WEEK 4	10	Jonathan Edwards "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" (192-203)
	12	<b>First Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 5	17	Benjamin Franklin "The Way to Wealth" (208-214)
	19	"Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" (216-220)
WEEK 6	24	J. Hector St. John De Crèvecoeur "What is an American?" (323-332)
	26	Thomas Paine "Common Sense" (339-345)
WEEK 7Mar	3	Olaudah Equiano "The Interesting Narrative . . . of ... Equiano" (372-405)
		Phillis Wheatley, poems, t.b.a. (420 and following)
	5	<b>Second Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 8	10	<b>Spring Break March 9<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup></b>
	12	<b>Spring Break</b>
WEEK 9	17	Washington Irving "Rip Van Winkle" (516-527)
	19	James Fenimore Cooper "The Last of the Mohicans" Ch. III (530-536)
WEEK 10	24	William Apess "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man" (545-550)
	26	Nathaniel Hawthorne "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (655-668)
WEEK 11	31	Henry David Thoreau from <i>Walden</i> Ch. 1, "Economy" (920-962)
Apr	2	Edgar Allan Poe "The Tell-Tale Heart" (762-766)
WEEK 12	7	Edgar Allan Poe "The Black Cat" (766-772)
	9	<b>Third Midterm Exam</b>
WEEK 13	14	Margaret Fuller "The Great Lawsuit" (806-814)
	16	Frederick Douglass "What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?" (1040)
WEEK 14	21	Ralph Waldo Emerson "The American Scholar" (532)
	23	Walt Whitman "Letter to Ralph Waldo Emerson" (e-copy)
		Walt Whitman "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (1135)
WEEK 15	28	Summary and Review
		<b>FINAL EXAM Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup> from 10:30-12:30 p.m.</b>