

ENGL 3327.002/350 (honors embedded)

Dr. Andrew Donnelly

MW 12:40-2:05pm

American Literature to 1865

At the 250th anniversary of American independence, the nature of American identity as well as the goals of the American national experiment remain deeply contested. These contested ideas—about freedom, citizenship, rights, economic opportunity, and shared values—often refer back to the moment of the nation's founding. This course explores the literature of that moment, from the European colonization of the New World through the Civil War. We will examine imaginative literature, activist arguments, political documents, and other cultural artifacts in order to understand the history and legacy of colonization, the writing of the U.S. Constitution, slavery, expansionism, 'Manifest Destiny', the abolitionist movement, and the Civil War. What, the course asks, is the meaning of American identity then and now?