

# Early American Literature

online

## INSTRUCTOR

Theron Francis, PhD

## EMAIL

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## OFFICE

Morelock 112c

## OFFICE PHONE

837-8283

## OFFICE HOURS

MW: 12-2 pm  
TT 11am-12pm  
or by appt

## TEXTS

### In order of reading

Cabeza de Vaca, Alvar Nunez. *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*. Translated by David Frye, Edited by Ilan Stavans, Norton Critical Edition, 2012.

ISBN: 978-0-393-91815-1

Franklin, Benjamin. *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. Edited by Louis Masur, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Bedford, 2016.

ISBN-13: 978-1-319-04899-0

Gates, Henry Louis, Editor. *The Classic Slave Narrative*. Signet, 2012.

ISBN 9780451532138

Hogeland, Lisa Maria and Mary Klages, Editors. *The Aunt Lute Anthology of U.S. Women Writers, 17<sup>th</sup> through 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Vol. 1*, Aunt Lute Books, 2004.

ISBN: 1-879960-68-0

Melville, Herman. *Moby Dick*. Edited by Hershel Parker, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., Norton Critical Edition, 2017.

ISBN: 978-0-393-28500-0



J.M.W Turner. "Whalers." 1845. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Early American Literature is divided into periods that show turning points in intellectual and social history: the age of exploration, the colonial period, the Federal period, and the American Renaissance. An oral literature in indigenous culture already existed in America before Captain John Smith's *True Adventures* or Cabeza de Vaca's *Chronicle of the Narvaez Expedition*. The age of reason, empiricism, and neo-classicism opened the way for a democracy to grow out of the Puritan societies of colonial America. Although the new American government was founded on the principle of natural laws and equality, it condoned slavery. We will read Cabeza de Vaca's *Chronicle*, which takes us across the Texas borderland; Antebellum slave narratives (Frederick Douglass, Olaudah Equiano, Harriet Jacobs); and the Melville's *Moby Dick*. We will also read a cross-section of women writers, who can take us through the early periods of American literature in the *Aunt Lute Anthology of Women Writers*, including Anne Hutchinson, Mary Rowlandson, Fanny Fern, Phoebe Cary, Margaret Fuller, and Emily Dickinson.

## STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Students will be able to

1. Develop an awareness of the Early American literary tradition.
2. Understand issues in democracy, education, race, class, gender, and the environment in the development of American Society expressed through literature.
3. Use literature of the past as a means of critically understanding American society today.
4. Apply techniques of literary research and criticism to write about writing.
5. Use theoretical concepts in early American literature as a lens for interpretation and grasp current scholarship on the American literary tradition.
6. Understand the formal features, figurative language, and tropes used in Early American Literature.

## GRADUATE PROGRAM IN ENGLISH LEARNING OUTCOMES

7. ENGLISH (GRADUATE)
8. Graduate students will be able to
9. **SLO 1** – Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
10. **SLO 2** – Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and interpret literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.
11. **SLO 3** – Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct and utilize research methodologies in the study of literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

## **DISTANCE EDUCATION STATEMENT**

Students enrolled in distance education courses have equal access to the university's academic support services, such as Smarthinking, library resources, such as online databases, and instructional technology support. For more information about accessing these resources, visit the SRSU website. Students should correspond using Sul Ross email accounts and submit online assignments through Blackboard, which requires secure login information to verify students' identities and to protect students' information. The procedures for filing a student complaint are included in the student handbook. Students enrolled in distance education courses at Sul Ross are expected to adhere to all policies pertaining to academic honesty and appropriate student conduct, as described in the student handbook. Students in web-based courses must maintain appropriate equipment and software, according to the needs and requirements of the course, as outlined on the SRSU website.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class participation is shown through meeting with the instructor in online conferences, dialog through email, the discussion boards, and the timely submission of projects. There is no separate grade for class participation.

## **PROJECTS**

### **I. Discussion Posts (300 points) (Weekly—10 posts dues; 30 points each)**

Let's submit weekly posts to the discussion board. I think the two main purposes for the discussion post are to build a small community of readers and encourage all of us to read regularly. Some of the posts will be on topics other than the reading: the term paper project, research, and course feedback and reflection.

I would like students to hone their skills in integrating outside scholarly criticism with their own arguments. Some of the books I assigned are "critical editions," which contain important scholarship on the text, which can provide a lens for interpretation and raise questions for interpretation. For other texts, you and I will have to find criticism through databases, like MLA. In general, when you write a post on a work of literature, also comment on one piece of criticism.

The length of each post should be around 300 words, which should be about three paragraphs. Although summarizing is one step in analysis, focus on raising questions, interpreting, and responding critically. To develop your ideas use quotes. Another good strategy is to consider the reading through reference to other literature you know: inter-textual reading. I would like our posts to function like a conversation in which we respond to each other's ideas as well. When other projects are due, no blog post will be due.

### **III. Annotated Bibliography (200 points) Due April 15**

Submit an annotated bibliography with at least five sources, which can be found on the MLA database. I encourage you to make one source theoretical, so that you use a tool for interpretation.

An annotated bibliography provides bibliographical references in MLA, alphabetically arranged, hanging indent style with each source followed by a critical summary. Beyond summarizing, one should comment on the critical perspective or methodology of the source and its relevance to the questions you are answering in your term paper. A discussion of the form of the annotated bibliography and models in MLA can be found on Purdue's OWL:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/annotated\\_bibliographies/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html)

A specific example of an Annotated bibliography in MLA style can be found here on OWL:

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/annotated\\_bibliographies/annotated\\_bibliography\\_samples.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/annotated_bibliography_samples.html)

### III. Term Paper (400 points)

The term paper can focus on one aspect of one work of literature or compare two works of literature. Send a brief statement of purpose to me a month before the paper is due (3.31). We will share ideas for papers and help each other through peer review and editing. Format: 10-15 pages; MLA style; analytical close reading—use quotes; consult scholarship on your topic and juxtapose your ideas to theirs.

### IV. Conferencing

I would like to conference with students one time per unit—roughly every three weeks to talk about their reading and the course projects. The reason for this is to develop an online intellectual community.

#### Peer Feedback and Editing

I will give up to 25 points extra-credit to any student who carefully responds to and proofreads another student's term paper. The best means of proofreading is by using the review functions in Word. This allows you to "track changes" and make marginal "comments," then accept or reject the changes when you receive your paper from the proofreader. Email the proofread copy to the classmate, and cc the instructor in order to receive extra-credit.

PROJECTS	Due Date	%	Points
Posts to the Class Reading Blog (10 in number)		30	300 30 pts each
Annotated Bibliography	April 15	20	200
Term Paper 12-15 pages in length	May 8	40	400
Conferencing	5 sessions; once every 3 weeks	10	100
Total Points Available		100	1000

### DEADLINES

Unless otherwise specified, all assignments will be turned in at the beginning of class on their due dates. All alternative arrangements must be approved before the relevant deadline. Late work without previous arrangement with me will only be accepted upon demonstration of extenuating circumstances.

### BLACKBOARD

If you confront technical issues which interfere with your ability to use Blackboard, contact the LTAC (Lobo Technology Assistance Center) at 432-837-8888 or <https://techassist.sulross.edu>

**ACCOMMODATING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Accessibility Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Accessibility Services has been provided.

For additional information, please contact

Mary Schwartze M. Ed., L.P.C.  
Accessibility Services in Ferguson Hall 112,  
or call 432 837-8203.  
E-mail: [mschwartze@sulross.edu](mailto:mschwartze@sulross.edu).

**TUTORING & LEARNING CENTER AT THE WILDENTHAL LIBRARY AND SMART THINKING**

Writing tutors are available in the library’s new Tutoring & Learning Center. An additional source for feedback and tutoring is Smart Thinking. Smart Thinking provides immediate access to tutors online and quick responses to written work. The link to Smart Thinking can be found on the course’s Blackboard site.

**PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Dishonest acts, such as plagiarism (using words or a specific author’s ideas from another source without acknowledging the source) or collusion (having other people write parts of your paper for you), may result in an “F” on the assignment and may lead to a disciplinary hearing conducted through the office of the Dean of Students, which could result in suspension or expulsion from SRSU. If you have questions about whether your use of other sources (such as books, websites, friends, or Writing Center tutors) is fair or not, please ask before turning in the work that you have a question about.

**COURSE CALENDAR**

DATES	TOPICS	READINGS	PROJECT DUE DATES AND NOTES
M 1.21 Martin Luther King Holiday			
<b>Unit 1 Exploration and Colonialism</b>			
Week One			
T 1.22		<i>Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition</i> pp 1-45 and one other “account” of exploration and conquest, PP 95-160 (These accounts are 5-15 pages in length)	

Week Two			
M 1.28		<i>Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition</i> pp 45-90 and one piece of "criticism" from the critical edition pp 163-216 (These critical essays are 10-15 pages in length)	<b>Discussion Post 1 Cabeza de Vaca, exploration, conquest and criticism</b>
Week Three			
M 2.4		<i>Aunt Lute Anthology of U.S. Women Writers</i> Anne Bradstreet pp 24 – 34 and Mary Rowlandson 42-59	1.31: Last day to drop a course without creating an academic record
<b>Democracy and Empiricism</b>			
Week Four			
M 2.11		<i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	<b>Discussion Post 2 Bradstreet or Rowlandson and criticism</b>  <b>Conference 1</b>
Week Five			
M 2.18		<i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	
Week Six			
M 2.25		Hannah Griffitts 125-26  Mercy Otis Warren 127-30	<b>Discussion Post 3 Franklin</b>
<b>Women Writers</b>			
Week Seven			
M 3.4		Judith Sargent Murray "On the Equality of the Sexes." 162-70  Catharine Maria Sedgwick. "Cacoethes Scribendi" 271- 79	<b>Conference 2</b>  <b>Discussion Post 4 Griffitts or Warren and criticism</b>

Week Eight		<i>Midterm</i>	
M 3.11		<p>Margaret Fuller 430-432</p> <p>Fanny Fern 447-459</p> <p>Seneca Falls Woman's Rights Convention, "Declaration of Sentiments." 703-</p>	<p><b>Discussion Post 5</b></p> <p><b>Sedgwick or Murray and criticism</b></p>
Week Nine			
3.18/22	Spring Break		
<b>Abolitionism</b>			
Week Ten			
M 3.25		<p>Frederick Douglass</p> <p><i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i></p> <p>299-404</p> <p>See also Henry Louis Gate's introduction</p>	<p><b>Conference 3</b></p> <p><b>Discussion Post 6</b></p> <p><b>Term Paper Statement of Purpose: submit by email to instructor and on discussion board to fellow students</b></p>
Week Eleven			
M 4.1		<p>Frederick Douglass</p> <p><i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i></p> <p>299-404</p>	<p><b>Discussion Post 7</b></p> <p><b>Fuller, Fern or the "Declaration of Sentiments."</b></p>
Week Twelve			
M 4.8		<p>Harriet Jacobs</p> <p>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl 405-615</p>	<p><b>Discussion Post 8 on Research and the annotated bibliography</b></p> <p>4.8: Instructor initiated drop for lack of participation</p> <p>4.12: Last day for instructor initiated drop for excessive absences.</p>

<b>The American Renaissance</b>			
Week Thirteen			
M 4.15		Melville <i>Moby Dick</i> 1-100	<b>Conference 4</b> <b>Annotated Bibliography</b> <b>Due April 15</b>
Week Fourteen			
M 4.22		Melville <i>Moby Dick</i> 100-200	<b>Discussion Post 9</b> <b>Frederick Douglass or</b> <b>Harriet Jacobs and</b> <b>criticism</b>
Week Fifteen			
M 4.29		Melville <i>Moby Dick</i> 200-300	<b>Conference 5</b>  <b>Discussion Post 10</b> <b>on Melville</b>  Submit Proofreading of term paper by Sunday 5.1 for 25 pts EC
Week Sixteen			
W 5.8	Last class day	Melville <i>Moby Dick</i> 300-410	<b>Due May 8</b> <b>EC Discussion Post 11:</b> <b>Reflection on term</b> <b>Paper and the course</b>  <b>Term Paper</b> 12-15 pages, grounded in theory and criticism.
No Final Exam			