

**ENGL 3340-003 SYLLABUS: AMERICAN LITERATURE
SPRING 2016**

Meets Tu-Th 11:00 am-12:20 pm in Preston Hall (PKH) 103

Professor: Dr. Erin Murrah-Mandril (call me Dr. Mandril)

e-mail: erin.murrahmandril@uta.edu

phone: 817-272-2692

Office: Carlisle Hall, Room 612

Office hours: Tu-Th 1:00-2:30

TEXTBOOK

Print Books available at the bookstore:

Apess, William. *A Son of the Forest*. Ed. Barry O'Connell. U of Massachusetts P: Amherst, 1997. (originally 1829)

Ridge, John Rollin (Yellow Bird). *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murrieta*. U of Oklahoma P: Norman, 1977. (originally 1854)

Other texts you can find online or in many bookstores:

Mary Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative

Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*

Poetry posted on Blackboard

COURSE CONTENT

We will begin the course by interrogating the title "History of American Literature" as we read works that question what it means to be American, how we define literature, and how history and literature shape each other. At the center of these questions lies the process of canon formation, or which texts we chose to read and which we ignore. Throughout the semester, we will read texts that push the boundaries of literature and identity as we survey fiction, poetry, drama, and autobiography composed by a range of authors both inside and outside of the traditional literary canon. We will look at movements in American literature, including colonial literature, Romanticism, Realism, Naturalism, Modernism, and Postmodernism, and the cultural and historical circumstances that helped produce these movements. At the same time, we will explore how these genre boundaries are fluid as the texts and periods influence and define each other. In light of cultural contexts, we will explore how concepts of class, race, and gender have

shaped American literary production. Surveying the entire canon of American literature in one semester is impossible, and for this reason our meta-critical study of canon formation will supplement and compensate for our inability to read the full canon of American literature and free us to look outside the canon in our analysis of American identity and history. Students will deepen their skills in critical analysis through in-class discussion, performative analysis (acting, tableaux, character portrayal) cooperative learning, and individual writing assignments.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- Students will demonstrate strong analytical skills and an understanding of key concepts in American literary production.
- Students will demonstrate critical reading skills.
- Students will be able to write analytical essays, developing effective thesis statements and using appropriate evidence to support arguments.
- Students will develop strong oral communication skills, learning how to present analytical arguments in a professional manner

READINGS AND WEB CONTENT

Reading Material outside of our textbooks will be posted on our Blackboard page. Try to read a work in its entirety before we discuss it, keeping in mind that there is much more time to read a text over the weekend for a Tuesday class than in the brief interim between Tuesday and Thursday. We will discuss texts in their entirety because you cannot fully understand the beginning of a text without knowing its end-point. I strongly recommend printing out short essays, articles and poetry so that you can highlight, underline and write in the margins. If you are reading the text on a tablet or laptop please bring that equipment to class.

RESPONSE PAPERS

You will need to write 3 papers throughout the semester, one for each of the three major sections of this course. You will post your final draft to our Blackboard site. Each one should be at least 1300 words (about 4 pages) typed in 12pt Times New Roman font with 1-inch margins using MLA, citation style. My instructions for these papers are designed to let you explore your own interests and come up with your own thesis within the topic we have studied as a class.

Responses should be academic-style, thesis-driven short essays (ie. make a point in your paper and then prove that point through analysis of the text). They should not be stream-of-consciousness writing. This is not a writing course. If you are concerned with your ability to write at the sophomore college level, see me BEFORE your essay is due. I strongly recommend visiting the Student Writing Center on the fourth floor of

Central Library, whatever your writing skill level is. They provide high quality advice for writers from freshman English through graduate school.

Papers will be due online before the beginning of class on the due date listed in the syllabus. I will take one point off for each DAY a paper is late. I will not accept paper copies. We will go over essay assignments in more detail about two weeks before they are due, because that's about how long I expect you to work on them (from the time you begin thinking of what you want to write to the time you write it). I am happy to look at rough drafts along the way.

EXAMS

You will have a midterm and a final, each worth 10 points. They will be essay question tests that you will take in-class. You will need to demonstrate a clear understanding of the texts we have read and the material we have discussed in class. You will be asked to make a cohesive argument using evidence from our readings. If you are unable to take an exam on the day that it is administered, please contact me *ahead of time* to schedule a make-up exam.

QUIZZES

I will give random pop-quizzes throughout the semester to insure that everyone is reading the material for class. These quizzes will not be difficult in that if you have read the material you will easily pass the quiz. These quizzes will total 10 points by the end of the semester. You cannot make up a missed quiz.

GRADING:

The final grade for this course will be based on a 100-point scale 90-100 equals an A, 80-90 equals a B, 70-80 equals a C, 60-70 equals a D, 60 and below equals an F. Borderline grades may be assigned a + or -. Participation and attendance will factor strongly in the determination of + and - grades.

Essays	(3 x 15 pts. each)	45 pts.
Mid-Term		15 pts.
Final		15 pts.
Reading Quizzes		5 pts.
Participation and attendance		20 pts.
Total		100 pts.

ATTENDANCE:

At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop her or his own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of

this section, I **DO** require regular attendance. Much of our course is based on content from class discussions. You are an active participant in this course, not a passive receptor of knowledge. If you have four absences (that's two whole weeks' worth of instruction!), you will lose 10 attendance points, which is one full letter grade for the course. Additional missed courses will place you in danger of failing the course. Furthermore, exam questions will be based on class discussions. Reading quizzes missed due to absence cannot be made up. If you are experiencing an ongoing issue that interferes with your attendance, please contact me so we can discuss your options. Expectations for out-of-class study: A general rule of thumb is that for every credit hour earned, a student should spend 3 hours per week working outside of class. Hence, a 3-credit course might have a minimum expectation of 9 hours of reading, study, etc. Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional 6 hours per week of their own time in course-related activities (and sometimes more!), including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

DROP POLICY

Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS

UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental

Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364.

Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT, AND VIOLENCE (TITLE IX)

The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

UTA's Title IX Coordinator is: Jean Hood, Vice President for Human Resources 1225 W. Mitchell Street, Ste. 212 Arlington, Texas 76019-0132 Telephone: 817-272-7091 jmhood@uta.edu

For information regarding Title IX at UTA, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX. For help from outside the university with filing a complaint, and for survivors resources, visit <http://endrapeoncampus.org/>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Plagiarism, is presenting someone else's writing as if it were your own work, and it will not be tolerated. Plagiarism is intellectual theft. If you do it, the result will be failure of the assignment and possible failure of the course. I will report all incidences of plagiarism to the University. Students who plagiarize repeatedly face expulsion from UTA. When in doubt, cite your resource! Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are also expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work

that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code. UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

STUDENT FEEDBACK SURVEY

At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

FINAL REVIEW WEEK

A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no

instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

EMERGENCY EXIT PROCEDURES

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located in the back of the room. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

COURTEOUSNESS:

You will be working closely with your class members to develop and share ideas and to critique each other's work. Some of the material we analyze and discuss in class covers sensitive issues that are politically charged. Please be considerate.

It is the joint responsibility of instructors and students to foster and maintain a positive environment.

SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change upon notification by instructor.

Tues Jan 19 Welcome!

Thurs Jan 21 Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative

Tues Jan 26 Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative

Thurs Jan 28 Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative

Tues Feb 2 Apess's *A Son of the Forest*

Thurs Feb 4 Apess's *A Son of the Forest*

Tues Feb 9 Apess's *A Son of the Forest*

Thurs Feb 11 **Scholarly Article Analysis Due**

Tues Feb 16 Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*

Thurs Feb 18 Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*

Tues Feb 23 Ridge's *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*

Thurs Feb 25 Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

Tues Mar 1 **No Class**

Thurs Mar 3 Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Tues Mar 8 Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Thurs Mar 10 **Midterm**

Tues Mar 15 **Spring Break**

Thurs Mar 17 **Spring Break**

Tues Mar 22 Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Thurs Mar 24 Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Tues Mar 29 Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*,

CMAS Film 3 pm

Thurs Mar 31 Melville's *Benito Cereno*

Tues Apr 5 17 Melville's *Benito Cereno* **Essay 2 Due**

Thurs Apr 7 Poetry on Blackboard

Tues Apr 12 Poetry on Blackboard

Thurs Apr 14 Poetry on Blackboard

Tues Apr 19 Poetry on Blackboard

Thurs Apr 21 Poetry on Blackboard

Fri Apr 22 **Extra Credit Symposium**

Tues Apr 26 Poetry on Blackboard

Thurs Apr 28 Poetry on Blackboard

Tues May 3 **Final Essay Due**

Thurs May 5 **Final Exam**