

ENG 233.01 American Literature to 1865

Professor Timothy Conley

Spring 2010

Course Description: ENG 233 is one of two required survey courses in American Literature, intended as introductory courses for English majors. As such, the course provides an overview of literary texts and movements from Native American oral literatures to the poetry of Whitman and Dickinson. We will focus on both cultural and aesthetic cultural issues: our goal will be to examine the terms by which "America" and "literature" have been understood by diverse writers for diverse communities. In addition, we will explore the ways contemporary readers/writers have interpreted these texts. Writing/reading/interpretation are themselves considered as negotiations of meaning and effect within particular groups.

We will make frequent use of computer-assisted technologies, both in and out of class, and so you must have an active e-mail account and access to *Blackboard*, Bradley's web-based teaching/learning program. I usually answer e-mail very promptly; take advantage of this opportunity to extend our exchanges beyond the given office hours.

Please note: the course does not satisfy the General Education-Human Values requirement.

Texts:

Lauter, Paul, ed. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature: Volumes A-B*

St. Martin's Handbook, or comparable grammar text with explanation of MLA Style.

Evaluation:

Participation: attendance and daily class activities. Note: if you must miss class for either illness or authorized (in advance) event, you must still participate in class via e-mail. (10%/20 points)

Tests: In each of the three tests, you will provide brief identifications for twenty terms drawn from the editors' introductions to the periods. The terms themselves are listed (in order of their appearance in the introductions) in an attachment to this syllabus. Notes: on each test, you may substitute two terms for any one term you do not recall.

Test #1: Colonial Period to 1700 (10%/20 points)

Test #2: The Eighteenth Century (10%/20 points)

Test #3 The Early Nineteenth Century (10%/20 points)

Essay #1: Introduction of Literary Group—in an essay of at least 1500 but no more than 1750 words, introduce to the class any text and author (or group of texts/authors) from the Colonial Period or the Eighteenth Century in the anthology but not on the syllabus. In your introduction, you must address both the American cultural value and the literary value of specific texts by members of the group. You must refer to one scholarly article you should cite textual evidence to support your argument, and you should relate the writings to texts and issues we have discussed in class. (16%/32 points)

Essay #2: Defining 19th-century American Literature. In an essay of 1500-1750 words, use the texts from the early 19th century to construct a definition of American Literature. You must include references to at least five texts, and you must organize your essay according to clearly identified aspects of both culture and literature. (16%/32 points)

Discussion Boards: group response in class and individual response out of class to question posed on Blackboard discussion board. Questions/responses based on class discussion of texts. Four chats; each worth 7%--4% in-class group submission; 3% out-of-class individual submission. (28% total/56 points)