University of Massachusetts Lowell
Department of English

Syllabus for 42.312: Literature of Colonial America

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:
Instructor: Dr. Melissa M. Pennell, Professor of English
Instructor Availability: Mon/Wed 12:30 to 1:15; Wed 3:30 to 4:30, and by appointment
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COURSE INFORMATION:
Course Number/Title/Credits: 42.312 Literature of Colonial America, Sect. 201 (3 Cr.)

Meeting Time and Place: MW 2:00 to 3:15 p.m. Coburn 203, South Campus.

Catalog Description: This course will explore the literatures (including some selections in translation) written during America's colonial era. The periods of exploration, first encounters, settlement, the rise of Anglo-America, the emergence of a national sensibility, and the years of transition in the new republic will be considered. The course will also treat a small selection of texts that present visions and re-visions of the colonial past.

Prerequisites for the course: 42. 101 and 102--College Writing I and II

Students for whom course is intended: Undergraduates at the sophomore level and above who are majoring in English, who may be considering an English major or minor (or an English concentration in the BLA program), who are fulfilling a course for the American Studies major or minor, who are interested in American history, or who simply enjoy reading American literature.

COURSE PURPOSE, GOALS, AND OBJECTIVES:
We will read from a variety of genres, including histories, poetry, captivity narratives, slave narratives, sermons, autobiographies, drama, and fiction.

The editors of our main text suggest that we ask the following questions of the readings that we will do:

1. What does it feel like to read this?
2. Whom does the text address, and to what end?
3. Is there a pattern to the figures of speech, or to its narrative movement?
4. What does it leave out, or forget, or revise?
5. What are its driving tensions or contradictions?
6. Does the tone shift?
7. What is the speaker like?
8. How does the text achieve a sense of ending? (M. J. & M. W., xxii)
In addition, there are other questions we will ask of these texts:

1. What are the assumptions and/or values that shape the perspective of the author?
2. What relations of power and/or authority are developed in the text?
3. How is the concept of “Englishness” developed in the new world setting? How does it change over time? How does it depend upon definitions of the Other?
4. How do events occurring in England affect sensibilities and expectations in the colonies?
5. How does the introduction and perpetuation of slavery promote racist sensibilities?
6. In what ways do class and gender expectations from the “old world” continue in the new?
7. How are elements from these texts reshaped to form the myth of America? How do later American authors re-inscribe or challenge these myths?

This course is also designed to encourage students to develop or improve skills and habits of thought that will contribute to personal learning and to successful performance in other courses and/or disciplines. Thus students will be encouraged to:

--articulate observations clearly
--trace a thought to its logical conclusion in discussion and in written work
--read texts critically
--write organized and accurate responses to exam questions
--present thoughtful, analytical, well written essays that reflect critical reading

Relationship of Course to General Education Requirements:
This course does not fulfill Gen Ed requirements in the Gen Ed 2000 program.

Relationship of Course to Program in English:
This course fulfills an upper level (300/400) literature requirement for students in the literature major (and is a period course), the creative writing major, and the journalism and professional writing major. It also serves as an upper level English course for English minors and BLA Literature concentrators. It will fulfill one of the requirements for a 300 level course outside the major for students who are majoring in fields other than English.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES
This course relies heavily upon class discussion and group discussion as well as background notes/lectures to cover material. You are responsible for any material assigned or discussed. Your attendance is important; if you miss class discussions and activities, you will find it difficult to prepare for exams and develop the material for your paper.

You are expected to read all of the assigned material. You are encouraged to keep a reading/discussion journal to assist you in preparation for class and for papers. In this journal you should record your responses to individuals, characters and personas, ideas you have about themes, insights you have about symbols, motifs, etc. You can also jot down questions you have as you are reading and that come to mind as you reflect upon material.
Short writing activities (response papers) will occur during class (sometimes as group work) or be assigned for outside class. Brief quizzes on assigned readings may be given at any time; these are intended to encourage completion of reading assignments and class attendance. There are no "make-ups" on these quizzes.

There are two take-home exams during the semester. The format of the exam will be discussed in advance. The exams will be due on February 25 and April 8. There will be a final exam given during the exam period. It will follow the same format as the other exams, but will be written in the 3-hour exam block. The date and location for the exam will be announced on the registrar's exam schedule.

There is a formal paper required. The paper is to be 10-12 pages and is due Monday, April 27. A handout of suggested topics will be distributed. A handout on documentation style (MLA format) and helpful hints will be distributed to assist you in preparing your essay. Final drafts must be word-processed. Late papers will be penalized; no paper will be accepted after the last day of class unless you have taken an incomplete in the course.

In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will provide accommodation for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Their office is on North campus, University Crossing Suite #300, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: Disability@uml.edu. This documentation is confidential. I cannot provide accommodations without an official notification.

I assume that all students in my classes are adults and will behave accordingly. This means exhibiting professional and respectful behavior that is conducive to a beneficial learning environment in the classroom. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: text messaging, listening to music, cell phone use (other than the campus alert system), late arrivals, early departures, use of laptops for other than class purposes, disrespectful comments or behavior, intentional disruptions, failure to follow faculty directives. Students in violation of these standards may be asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action.

Emerson says: “There is a time in every man’s education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground which is given to him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what that is which he can do, nor does he know until he has tried.”

Needless to say, plagiarism and cheating violate this principle and will not be tolerated. Please see the UML catalog for additional explanations of academic integrity and academic dishonesty and the penalties that may be incurred:

http://www.uml.edu/Catalog/Undergraduate/Policies/Academic-Integrity.aspx

A helpful resource on documentation and style
The Purdue Owl: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl
GRADING POLICIES:
Your grade will be determined as follows: quizzes and response papers = 5%
first exam = 20%
second exam = 25%
paper = 30%
final exam = 20%

Required Texts:

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*.

Morrison, *a mercy*.

Additional materials supplied on our wiki at [http://amer-lit-studies-resources.wiki.uml.edu/home](http://amer-lit-studies-resources.wiki.uml.edu/home)

COURSE CALENDAR: Approximate Discussion and Evaluation Schedule for Course

**Wk 1**
Jan 21  **Intro to Course**

**Wk 2**
Jan 26 - 28  The Age of Exploration: Claims, Assumptions, Speculations, Early Encounters

For Monday: 11-30; 90-96
Columbus; Vespucci; King Manuel I; some early encounters

For Wednesday: 64-90
Hariot

**Wk 3**
Feb 2-4  The Concept of “Plantation” and the Beginning of English Settlement

For Monday: 58-63; 97-101; 108-128; 146-148
Diverse voices; Captain John Smith

For Wednesday: 104-107; 164-175; 176-193
Strachey; Wood; Morton; Bradford
Wk 4
Feb 9-11  The Two English Cultures of North America: Virginia and the Indies
For Monday: 129-146; 201-219; 544-5
Waterhouse; Ligon; Marvell

The Two English Cultures: New England
For Wednesday: 151-159; 308-315; 316-318; 535-6 and handout
Winthrop; Shepand; Herbert; Johnson;

Wk 5
Feb 16   UML Closed – Presidents’ Day

Feb 17-18  The Two English Cultures: New England

Jeremiads
For Tuesday: 461-473; 563-75; and handout
Danforth; Wigginsworth

Captivities
For Wednesday: 325-48
Radisson

Wk 6  
Feb 23-25  Captivities
For Monday: 349-382; Handout
Rowlandson; Williams

Antinomians and Witches,
For Wednesday: 434-442 and handout; 475-483 and handout
Hutchinson/Winthrop & Vowell; Lawson, Calef, Mather

FIRST HOUR TEST Due– February 25

Wk 7
March 2-4  Pirates and Executions
For Monday: 292-97; 404-407; 643-659; and handout
Esquemeling, Rogers; Occom

Women’s Voices
For Monday: 322-325; 548-563 and handout
Bradstreet
Wk 8  
March 9-11  An “English” View of the Colonies: Bacon’s Rebellion and *The Widow Ranter*

For Monday: 224-232; 233-260  
Bacon; Beverly; Behn, Acts I and II

For Wednesday: 261-291  
Behn, Acts III, IV, V

March 16-22  Spring Break

Wk 9  

For Monday: 605-627; 631-638; 907-911

More Women’s Voices

For Wednesday: 415-427; 659-667; 874-880; 852-54;  
Knight; Ashbridge, Murray; Adams

Wk 10  
Mar 30-Apr 1  Great Lives and Small

For Monday: 725-771  
Franklin

For Wednesday: 781-91; 801-812  
Filson (Boon); Burroughs;

Wk 11  
Apr 6-8  The Issue of Slavery

For Monday: 718; 792-798; 817-825; 880-885; handout  
Equiano, Sewall, Saffin; Cugoano; Spear

The Argument for Independence

For Wednesday: 858-862; 868-873; and handouts  
Jefferson and Paine

SECOND HOUR TEST – Due April 8

Note 4/8: Last day to drop with W
**Wk 12**  
*Apr 13-15*  
Revisiting/Revising the Past  
For Monday: Chapters 1-10 of *The Scarlet Letter* (skip the Custom House Sketch – we’ll discuss it at the end)  

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter*  
For Wednesday, Chapters 11-15

**Wk 13**  
*Apr 20*  
UML closed – Patriots’ Day

*April 22*  
Revisiting/Revising the Past  
*The Scarlet Letter*  
For Wednesday, Chapters 16-24 and “Custom-House Sketch”

*April 25*  
**Note Friday class meeting!**

Revisiting/Revising the Past  
Morrison, *a mercy*

**Wk 14**  
*Apr 27-29*  
Revisiting/Revising the Past  
Morrison, *a mercy*

**Paper due – April 27**

**Wk 15**  
*TBA*  
Final Exam