

American Survey 1

ENGL 381 | Section A | Eisenhower Hall 21 | MWF 9:30 | Fall 2007
Course Website: www.ksu.edu/english/eiselei/engl381/
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Office Hours: MWF 10:30-11:20, Tue 12:00-1:00, plus many more by appointment

Course Description

Designed for English majors, American Survey 1 is an examination of American literature from the earliest accounts of colonization to the poems and stories of the Civil War era. Tracing the development of selected literary styles and periods, we will read texts that reflect some of the variety of cultural and historical experiences in the U.S. from 1492 to 1865. The authors to be studied have been selected for their considerable influence on the future directions of American life and thought and their ability to startle and compel contemporary readers.

American Survey 1 takes a literary-historical perspective on American writing.



Literary: we will read texts carefully, paying close attention to what is said and how it is being said. Such close reading will help us to discover not only what texts mean but also *how* they mean and how they come to have different, sometimes contradictory meanings in different contexts.

Historical: we will read texts to learn about past ideas, cultures, societies, peoples, events. We will consider questions such as: What was the significance of those writings in their original contexts? What did those writings *do* in the past? What is the importance of those past writings to us in the present? Historical literary analysis means figuring out how literary texts relate to other texts and events of the same period; it also means figuring out how literary texts relate to the larger course of American literary history.

As we explore the ways historical knowledge enriches our understanding of literary texts and examine the divergent meanings and various functions of literary texts at different moments in history, this literary-historical perspective will enhance our understanding and appreciation of American literary texts.

Course Goals

When they finish ENGL 381, students should be able to do the following:

- Demonstrate familiarity with American literary traditions from 1492 to 1865, including prominent authors, literary movements and styles, and the historical and cultural contexts important to those traditions.
- Identify the place of a text in American literary history using an understanding and appreciation of its style.
- Draw on relevant historical knowledge to analyze and interpret the literary works studied.

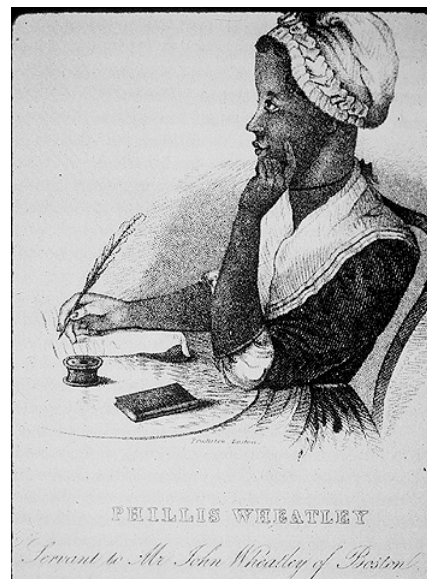
This course also aims to intensify students' proficiency in the skills fundamental to a university education: the ability to reason, think critically, communicate effectively, and appreciate excellent writing and thinking.

ENGL 381 builds upon the writing skills learned in Expository Writing and Honors English and the critical-analytical skills learned in Introduction to Literary Studies; this course is preparation for 600 and 700-level courses in American literature.

Course Work and Course Policies

Reading. The most important work in this course will be careful, patient, thorough reading of the assigned texts. You will need to finish the assigned readings by the time indicated on the reading schedules. I encourage you to keep a reading journal or take reading notes on each text.

Attendance and Participation. In addition to careful reading, I expect active participation and good attendance from everyone. I absolutely believe in the educational benefits of a dynamic, interactive classroom. Students learn more, absorb more, and remember more in classes where they are expected to respond actively to the course materials and to participate in the classroom activities and conversations. Lack of preparation for class and irregular attendance will hurt your grade; good attendance and active participation in class discussions will improve your grade.



Because students have different ways of actively contributing to the class, I am flexible about how I evaluate participation. In general, I generously reward students who contribute week after week to the discussions with intelligent, thought-provoking comments that demonstrate careful reading of the texts and thoughtful attention to what others have said. Students who skip a lot of class or don't seem to listen to what others have to say or never ever say anything should expect a lower grade for participation.

Your attendance is absolutely essential to the learning that happens in this course. I do understand, however, that every once in a while circumstances may make it impossible for you to attend. If you miss one or two classes during the semester, don't worry about it. If you miss more that, you may want to start worrying about how your attendance might hurt your grade. To be specific, students who miss no class will earn five extra credit points. Students who miss two weeks of class or six class sessions will receive zero points for attendance (10% of your grade). Students who miss more than three weeks of class (nine or more classes) automatically fail the course.

Papers. The writing in our course will consist of two major essays and several informal and in-class writing assignments. The two major papers will focus on developing skills related to the third course goal (learning how to draw on historical knowledge to analyze and interpret literary texts). In these two papers, we will work on articulating the connection between a literary text and the following:

- its era of publication
- its literary-historical style
- its reception since initial publication
- relevant historical events, developments, or documents

During the semester, I will distribute handouts describing these assignments in more detail. I don't usually accept late papers, but in certain, limited circumstances I will accept papers after the due date. Assignments will lose a letter grade for every class period that they are late. I collect papers at the beginning of class on the due date.

Exams and Discussion Project. I will also ask you to take a midterm examination and a comprehensive final and participate in a small group class discussion project. These assignments will provide you with an opportunity to demonstrate skills related to the first two course goals.

Revisions. If you would like, you may revise your two major papers. Each revision is due exactly one week after I return the initial draft. A revision does not automatically receive a better grade. The revision must be substantially improved. It must demonstrate significant change in ideas and focus, arrangement and organization, or evidence and development. Simply correcting typos or making editing corrections will not change the grade.

To submit a revision, you need to:

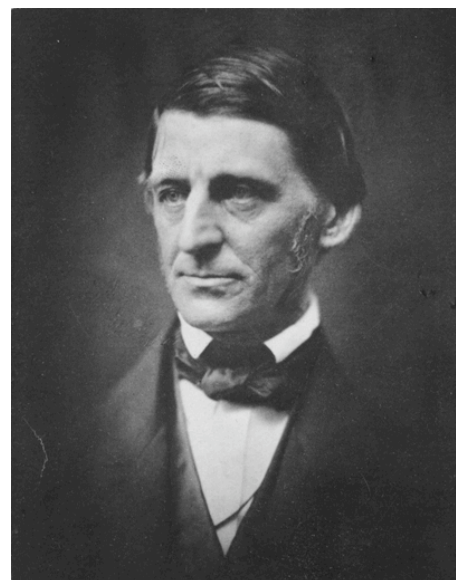
- Write a summary explaining why and how you revised—for example, how and why you decided to change the focus and organization; why you deleted or added a certain part; why and how you rearranged information; and so on.
- Hand-in your revision, your original paper, and my original comments along with your summary explaining the changes.

Revisions that don't meet these criteria (arriving by the deadline, offering substantial change, providing a summary of changes, and enclosing the original version) will be returned.

Extra-Credit and Make-Up Assignments. If you miss class on a day we do in-class writing, you can make up the missed assignment by writing a review of a poetry or fiction reading, play, film event, or lecture related in some way to American culture. If you miss no assignments, you may write such a review for extra-credit. During the semester I will announce as many of these events as I hear about. If you know of others, please tell the rest of us.

The first step is to attend such a reading, play, or lecture. Compose a brief summary of the event; describe what happened with *details*. Then give us your thoughtful opinion of the event: Did you enjoy it? What did you dislike about it? Was any particular part of the event moving, brilliant, or clever? What was it like to be there? The review should be about one (typed, double-spaced) page or so.

This assignment is worth five points: 5 is for one of the best reviews I ever read (I rarely award this score); 4 is for a detailed, specific, insightful review; 3 is the score I will award most often; 2 is for reviews that are pretty vague; and 1 is the score you will earn if I'm not sure you even attended the event. You may hand in as many as three reviews. You may turn in a review anytime before December 10. A maximum of 20 extra-credit points are available: 15 for reviews + 5 for perfect attendance.



Grades. When I figure final grades, I will consider all of your class work: attendance, participation, class discussion project, in-class writing assignments, longer writing assignments, midterm, and final. In determining final grades, each course requirement carries the following weight:

Midterm Examination	10%
Final Examination	20%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Class Discussion Project	10%
Attendance	10%
Participation and In-Class Writing Assignments	10%

If at any point during the semester you'd like to discuss your work and your performance in the class, please drop by to see me in my office. I enjoy talking with students, and I don't want anxiety or uncertainty about grades to interfere with more important questions ("Why does Walt Whitman think a mouse is a miracle? Why is Ahab so very upset about that white whale? Why does Mary Rowlandson spend so much time talking about food?")

The Honor Code. Kansas State University has an Honor and Integrity System based on personal integrity, which is presumed to be sufficient assurance in academic matters that one's work is performed honestly and without unauthorized assistance. Undergraduate and graduate students, by registration, acknowledge the jurisdiction of the Honor & Integrity System. The policies and procedures of the Honor and Integrity System apply to all full and part-time students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate courses on-campus, off-campus, and via distance learning. The Honor and Integrity System web site can be reach via the following URL: www.ksu.edu/honor. A component vital to the Honor and Integrity System is the inclusion of the Honor Pledge, which applies to all assignments, examinations, or other course work undertaken by students. The Honor Pledge is implied, whether or not it is stated: "On my honor, as a student, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work." A grade of XF can result from a breach of academic honesty. The F indicates failure in the course; the X indicates the reason is an Honor Pledge violation. Perhaps the most serious violation of the Honor Code in an English course is plagiarism—taking or copying someone else's words or ideas as if they were your own. Plagiarism and cheating are serious offenses and may be punished by failure on the exam, paper, or project; the truly gnarly XF grade for the course; and/or expulsion from the university.

Course Listserv. You will all soon be subscribed to a course listserv, and we can all post comments, information, and queries by sending messages to american1@k-state.edu. The purpose of this listserv is to try out ideas and facilitate communication among class participants outside of class. Posting to this listserv is not required; it is here for our convenience. The only rule is this: all postings to the list should be related to our class in some way or another. If you have your K-State e-mail forwarded to another address, the University will subscribe you to that address also so that you can send messages to this list from either address. If you have technical questions about using a listerv, you might want to check out K-State's listserv information page www.ksu.edu/cns/services/listserv or contact the Help Desk: helpdesk@k-state.edu or 532-7722.

Students with Disabilities. Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible. You may also want to contact Disability Support Services in Holton Hall 202 (532-6441), so that they may assist us in making any needed arrangements.

Illustrations: Frederick Douglass (page 1), Phillis Wheatley (page 2), Ralph Waldo Emerson (page 3).

The Reading

The Texts. The following books are available at the K-State Union Bookstore and Varney's:

- Nina Baym, ed., *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, 1, Beginnings to 1865*
- Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Norton Critical Edition)

The Reading and Assignments Schedule 1

Part 1: Beginnings to 1700

Aug 20 M Introductions
 Aug 22 W Introduction: Beginnings to 1700, 1-16
 Stories of the Beginning of the World, 17-31
 Aug 24 F Christopher Columbus, 31-35
 Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, 40-48
 Aug 27 M John Winthrop, 147-58
 Aug 29 W Anne Bradstreet, 187-89, 202-17
 Aug 31 F Mary Rowlandson, 235-50
 Sept 3 M Labor Day (no class)
 Sept 5 W Mary Rowlandson, 250-67
 Sept 7 F Hannah Dustan, 343-53
DISCUSSION PREFERENCE SHEETS DUE

Part 2: American Literature 1700-1820

Sept 10 M Introduction: American Literature 1700-1820, NAAL, 357-67
 Jonathan Edwards, 384-404
 Sept 12 W Jonathan Edwards, 425-36
 Sept 14 F Native Americans: Contact and Conflict, 437-449
 Sept 17 M Benjamin Franklin, 449-451, 472-518
 Sept 19 W Benjamin Franklin, 518-34
 Sept 21 F Thomas Jefferson, 649-57
The Federalist, 665-74
 Sept 24 M Olaudah Equiano, 674-709
 Sept 26 W Phillis Wheatley, 751-64
PAPER #1 DUE

Important Upcoming Dates

Oct 1 M Fall Break (no class)
 Oct 10 W **MIDTERM EXAMINATION**

Nov 12 M In-Class Writing Workshop
 Nov 16 F **PAPER #2 DUE**
 Nov 21 W Thanksgiving Break (no class)
 Nov 23 F Thanksgiving Break (no class)

Dec 7 F Conclusions
 Dec 10 M **FINAL EXAMINATION**, 11:50 a.m. – 1:40 p.m.