

ENGL 4400: Early American Literature
Early American Women's Writing

FALL 2011
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REQUIRED TEXTS:

Anne Bradstreet, **To My Husband and Other Poems**
Mary Rowlandson, **The Sovereignty and Goodness of God**
Phillis Wheatley, **Complete Writings**
Unca Eliza Winkfield, **The Female American**
Hannah Webster Foster, **The Coquette**
Various websites

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

When we think of colonial America, we think of Founding Fathers--men braving the wilderness, fending off the dangers of a new and unexplored continent, and struggling to defend the principles upon which our nation is founded. But what about the women? What were they doing? It turns out that they were writing—journals, poems, novels, travel narratives, and letters. And it wasn't just upper class white women who were writing, either—Native Americans, free African Americans, slaves, and indentured servants all left texts through which we can explore early American lives. Women's experience and writing expands and enriches our sense of America and the complicated ways in which a nation is born.

In this course we will look at the evolving nature of American identity in the colonial period, focusing on texts by and about women. By the end of this course you will be familiar with some of the earliest works defining American womanhood and American identity as well as contemporary materials (web sites, images, etc.) that are shaped by those earlier materials. You should come to class fully prepared to write about and discuss the assigned work every day.

ASSIGNMENTS:

The primary format of this course will be **discussion**. For this to be successful, you must do the assigned reading carefully and **ON TIME**. To facilitate discussion and to insure that everyone is in fact keeping up with the reading, I may begin class with a short (5 minute) writing assignment based on the reading you have done for class that day. This will also be my way of taking attendance. If you cannot complete the writing for the day, you will be considered unprepared, and therefore you will be counted absent for the day. Remember, though, that merely showing

up for class having done the reading does not assure good participation; instead, you must actively engage with the questions and concerns of the course. Each student must come to class fully prepared to discuss (and/or explore in writing) the reading assignment for the day.

You will have **two exams** in this class: a midterm and a final. You will also complete one **8-10 page research paper** based on a comparison of two or more works related to our syllabus (see assignment below). Finally, you will complete a group assignment and individual paper based on your work for the group project.

You should feel free to talk with me at any point if you have questions or concerns about any of the assignments.

GRADING:

Keep in mind that **you must complete and hand in all assignments on time to pass the course**. If you do not show up for the exams or your oral report, or if you do not hand in the paper on the assigned due date you will automatically fail the class unless you have an excuse as defined in the *Tiger Cub* **and you have contacted me within 24 hours of the assignment's due date**. Also keep in mind that **with four or more unexcused absences you may fail the course**.

Oral Report and accompanying writing...	25%
Final Paper.....	25%
Midterm.....	25%
Final Exam.....	25%

Once this grade is tallied, **participation** will be evaluated as follows:

- If you attended class regularly, participated reasonably, and generally did what was expected of you in terms of contributions to the class, your participation grade will not impact your final grade.
- If you attended class regularly, participated thoughtfully and enthusiastically, and consistently improved the level of the class discussion with your insights, your participation grade will **RAISE** your final grade by 1/3 of a grade.
- If your attendance was uneven (3 or more unexcused absences), you came to class late or under-prepared, you remained consistently silent and unwilling to share your insights in class activities, or you often distracted the class with irrelevant or uninformed comments (i.e. about your weekend plans, or comments that indicate you have not read for class) your participation will **LOWER** your final grade by 1/3 of a grade.

Your **FINAL GRADE**, then, will be a **combination of the percentage breakdown and participation**.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Please feel free to stop by after class or in my office hours to discuss any learning disabilities, physical disabilities, or special circumstances of which you feel I should be aware. Students who

need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. Bring a copy of your Accommodation Memo and an Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

Group Project

This assignment is composed of two parts: a class presentation (group project) and an independent short paper that emerges from the research you will have done for the class presentation.

Your responsibilities as a group will be to design a useful and thought-provoking class presentation on a topic assigned for one of the presentation days. Besides the group presentation you will write a **3-page paper** on your own that draws connections between the research you did for the group presentation and some of the ideas of the course.

CLASS PRESENTATION:

- You will do as much background research on your topic as possible, and you will present that information to the class in an engaging and interesting manner in a 10-15-minute classroom presentation. The emphasis here is NOT on a dry reading of research notes, but instead on making your topic accessible to the class.
- In addition to the verbal presentation, the group must compile a **handout** (no more than a single front-and back page) for the class with at least **three** useful bibliographical sources and a brief summary of relevant information (depending on your topic, this might include a chronology, a map, definitions of key terms--use your judgment and feel free to consult with me).

DUE DATE: variable; bring copies of the handout for everyone in the class

PAPER:

- In addition to the presentation you will produce a **paper (3 pages)** relating the issue you examined in your group to an issue from the course. This is NOT a group assignment; each of you will write your own paper. Again, let your own interests be your guide--I want to see YOU make connections and analyze those connections on your own. Remember, too, that this is a literature class, and I will expect close attention to the particular text you have chosen to discuss. I am NOT interested in a summary of your research, but rather an analysis with specific evidence of the connections you want to make between the research you did for your group report and some of the ideas we've been talking about as a class.

HAND IN YOUR PAPER ONE WEEK AFTER YOU DO YOUR IN-CLASS REPORT

REPORT DUE DATES:

Paper due:

Pocahontas report	Friday, September 2	Friday, September 9
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Weetamoo report	Friday, September 2	Friday, September 9
Anne Bradstreet Report	Friday, September 16	Friday, September 23
Anne Hutchinson Report	Friday, September 16	Friday, September 23
Salem Witch Trials Report	Friday, September 23	Friday, September 30
Salem Witch Trials Report	Friday, September 23	Friday, September 30
Infanticide Report	Friday, September 30	Friday, October 7
Servitude Report	Friday, September 30	Friday, October 7

Research Paper Assignment

Length: **8-10 pages, double spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font.**

Conference: **Required**

Sources: a minimum of **2 properly documented outside sources** must be used in conjunction with your primary text(s).

Due Date: **Friday, November 18**

For your paper you will develop an original argument about a work on our syllabus (or one you and I agree upon together). You will base your argument on an interpretation of the work using textual evidence (examples from the work itself), but you will contextualize the work you analyze through outside research. The possibilities for discussion are almost endless. Be sure to use at least two outside sources in your argument **BESIDES** the work(s) you are interpreting. Use proper MLA format to document your research.

Tips:

- 1) Be sure to create an argument, not a report. Use your research to help you make an original argument. **YOU** must decide how the pieces of your argument work together or struggle against each other.
- 2) Document all sources used for your paper. My expectation is that the work you turn in will be your own and the ideas that you present will be original. Please see me if you have any questions about documentation, research, and/or the kinds of sources that are appropriate for this paper.

SYLLABUS

Come to class prepared to discuss the reading listed for that day

August

W-17 First Day of Class (John Donne “To His Mistress Going to Bed”)

PART ONE: ENCOUNTERS

F-19 John White drawings/De Bry images of Native women (course materials)

M-22 Pocahontas material at

http://www.preservationvirginia.org/rediscovery/page.php?page_id=1 go to “Jamestown’s History”
http://www.preservationvirginia.org/rediscovery/page.php?page_id=6 and read “Captain John Smith” “Pocahontas” “John Rolfe” “Timeline” and “Lists” of early settlers

W-24 Pocahontas material (course materials)

F-26 Mary Rowlandson introduction

M-29 Mary Rowlandson captivity narrative; pp. 63-91

W-31 Mary Rowlandson captivity narrative; pp. 92-112

September

F-2 **Pocahontas and Weetamoo reports

PART TWO: SETTLING IN

M-5 Labor Day-no classes

W-7 Anne Bradstreet “To My Dear Children” (course materials)

F-9 Anne Bradstreet, poems

M-12 Anne Hutchinson; John Winthrop journal entries (course materials)

W-14 Anne Hutchinson; trial transcript (course materials)

F-16 **Bradstreet and Hutchinson reports

PART THREE: COURTS AND CRIMINALS

M-19 Salem Witch Trials-introduction

<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/salem.htm> read the chronology, biographies of the Mathers, Samuel Parris, Tituba, and Ann Putnam

W-21 Salem Witch Trials,

Tituba <http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/BoySal3.html>
“Case # 13: Tituba”

F-23 **Witch trial reports

M-26 infanticide narratives Rebekah Chamblit and Katherine Garrett (course materials)

W-28 **infanticide and servitude reports

F-30

October

M-3 review

PART FOUR: REVOLUTIONARIES

W-5 (mid-semester) Midterm Exam

F-7 Phillis Wheatley, introduction, and pp. 1-13

M-10 Phillis Wheatley poems, pp. 39-41; 59-64; 73-76; 88-90

W-12 Phillis Wheatley letters, pp. 152-3; 158-60

F-14 Phillis Wheatley, discussion

M-17 John and Abigail Adams letters

<http://www.masshist.org/digitaladams/aea/letter/> at this website
next click on “[Letters during Continental Congress, 1774 - 1777](#)” and
read “Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 31 March - 5 April
1776”; “Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, 14 April 1776”;
“Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, 7 - 9 May 1776” and
browse the letters in between.

W-19 John and Abigail Adams letters, continued

PART FIVE: FICTIONAL BOUNDARY CROSSING

F-21 The Female American, pp. 31-52

M-24 The Female American, pp. 53-98

W-26 The Female American, pp. 101-155

F-28 The Female American discussion

M-31 The Surprising Adventures of Almira Paul #

PART FIVE:

November

W-2 The Coquette, pp. 106-127
F-4 The Coquette, pp. 127-149

M-7 The Coquette, pp. 149-172
W-9 The Coquette, pp. 173-202
F-11 The Coquette, pp. 202-228

M-14 The Coquette, pp. 229-242
W-16 draft workshop
F-18 Final Paper Due

Thanksgiving Break

M-28 TBA
W-30 TBA

December

F-2 Last Day of Class

Final Exam: **Monday, December 5, 12-2:30**

*Bring a blue book and come to our regular classroom at the scheduled time