

FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE

Prof. Andrew Delbanco Phone: (212) 854-6698. e-mail: ad19@columbia.edu
Office hours: Wed., 2:00-4:00 and by appt. Hamilton 415/418 (American Studies office)

Teaching Assistant: John Hay, email: jah2159@columbia.edu

This course is an introduction to American thought and expression from the first English settlements to the eve of the Civil War. The course will proceed through a combination of lecture and discussion—with the aim of deepening our understanding of the origins and development of literature and culture in the United States.

In addition to the lectures (M., W., 10:35-11:50; Hamilton 516), each student will register for a discussion section. These sections are an **integral** and **required** part of the course. They will take place at the following times and places:

- 1) Wednesday, 12:00-12:50 411 Hamilton
- 2) Thursday, 4:10-5:00 404 Hamilton
- 3) Thursday 5:10-6:00 404 Hamilton
- 4) a section may be offered on Fridays at 11:00 if there are students registered for the course who are unable to attend section at any of the times listed above.

SCHEDULE OF LECTURES

Wed., Jan. 21	Introduction
Mon., Jan. 26	Errand into the Wilderness
Wed., Jan. 28	What did the Puritans Believe?

Reading:

Heimert & Delbanco, eds. *The Puritans in America*, pp. 1-58, 81-92, 149-170, 185-188, 275-315, 337-350, 359-365

Mon., Feb. 2	The Fate of Belief
Wed., Feb. 4	Benjamin Franklin: The Last Puritan, the First American

Reading: *Jonathan Edwards Reader*, pp. 1-21, 57-171, 244-297
Franklin, *Autobiography*

Mon., Feb. 9
Wed., Feb. 11

The Early South: Another Country
Thomas Jefferson: Inventing America

PAPER DUE IN SECTION (3-4pp.): Write a short account of what “sin” meant to the Puritans and what “erratum” meant to Benjamin Franklin. How are these concepts related? Please use specific examples.

Reading: Readings from Beverley & Byrd in course packet
The Portable Jefferson, pp. 177-200, 214-217, 235-241

Mon., Feb. 16 Declarations of Literary Independence
Wed., Feb. 18 Emerson: The American Newness

Reading: Emerson, *Nature*, *The American Scholar*, *Self-Reliance*, *The Divinity School Address*, *Experience*, *Circles*

Mon., Feb. 23 Emerson: Language and Belief
Wed., Feb. 25 Thoreau: Transcendentalism Applied

Reading: Thoreau, *Walden*

Mon. Mar. 2 Dickinson: The Last New Englander
Wed. Mar. 4 Whitman: Welcome to New York

Reading: Dickinson, from *Final Harvest* (poems no. 46, 103, 112, 126, 186, 196, 278, 302, 307, 403)
Whitman, *Song of Myself*, *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry*

Mon. Mar. 9 Hawthorne: Civilization and its Discontents
Wed., Mar. 11 The Gathering Storm

Reading: Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” and
The Scarlet Letter

PAPER DUE IN SECTION (3-5 pp.) Write a short paper answering the following question: If we regard Dimmesdale as a Puritan, and Hester as a transcendentalist ahead of her time, would this interpretation help to explain their attraction and the fate of their affair?

HAPPY SPRING BREAK!

Mon., March 23 Frederick Douglass: Testimony of a Fugitive Slave
Wed. March 25 Harriet Beecher Stowe: Call to Arms

Reading: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*
 Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Mon., March 30 Lincoln and the Ideal of America
Wed., Apr. 1 Melville: The Shape of a Career

Reading: Lincoln, "House Divided Speech," Fragment on Slavery,
 Gettysburg Address, Second Inaugural Address
 Whitman, "When Last in the Dooryard Lilacs Bloom'd"
 Selections from *Specimen Days*, *Democratic Vistas*

Mon., April 6 The Great American Novel: *Moby-Dick*
Wed., April 8 *Moby-Dick*

Reading: Melville, *Moby-Dick*

Mon., April 13 *Moby-Dick*
Wed., April 15 *Moby-Dick*

Reading: Melville, *Moby-Dick*

Mon., April 20 "Bartleby, the Scrivener"
Wed., April 22 *Benito Cereno*

Reading: Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener," and *Benito Cereno*

Mon., April 27 Melville: *Billy Budd*
Wed., April 29 Conclusion

Reading: Melville, *Billy Budd*

Mon., May 4 Q & A

All students will have a choice between taking the final exam or writing an 8-10 pp. paper on a topic to be chosen in consultation with your instructor.

STUDENTS WHO DO NOT SUBMIT A FINAL PAPER BEFORE THE START OF THE FINAL EXAM MUST TAKE THE FINAL EXAM.

Readings (texts available at Book Culture):

Alan Heimert and Andrew Delbanco, eds., *The Puritans in America* (Harvard)
John E. Smith, et al., eds., *A Jonathan Edwards Reader* (Yale)
Merrill Peterson, ed., *The Portable Jefferson* (Penguin)
Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography and other Writings* (Bantam)
Washington Irving, *The Sketchbook* (Signet)*
Stephen E. Whicher, ed., *Emerson: An Organic Anthology* (Houghton-Mifflin)
Henry David Thoreau, *Walden* (Penguin)
Edgar Allan Poe, *Complete Poetry and Prose* (Library of America)*
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Signet)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave* (Harvard)
Andrew Delbanco, ed., *The Portable Abraham Lincoln* (Penguin)
Emily Dickinson, *Final Harvest* (Little, Brown)
Walt Whitman, *Poetry and Prose* (Oxford)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *Tales* (Norton)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Penguin)
Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (Penguin)
Herman Melville, *Billy Budd and other Stories* (Penguin)

*Texts marked with an asterisk are recommended rather than required.