

620:053:01 Major American Writers Spring 2004  
*American Journeys*

**Instructor:** Dr. Anne Myles  
**Time:** MW 2:00-3:15 p.m.  
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**My home phone:** 833-7094 (OK for weekends or emergency, before 10:30 p.m.; I'd prefer you to contact me via my office phone or e-mail otherwise)

**Office hours:**

My regular office hours are Weds. & Thurs. 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and by appointment. If these times don't fit your schedule, please contact me and we can arrange something else. I am frequently in my office at other times besides scheduled office hours; feel free to knock anytime you see my door cracked open.

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Description:

This course will introduce you to major periods and trends in American literature, and give you a taste of the work of some of the major writers of this tradition. It is of course impossible to do justice to American literary tradition(s), let alone individual writers, in a one-semester survey of 400 years. I try to design the course as a balance between writers I regard as essential for you to encounter (and whom you may be less likely to have studied before), and an ongoing theme to help bring some coherence to your very diverse readings and our discussions. This semester, the theme of the course is how journeys to America, and journeys (literal or figurative) *within* America, have both shaped the nation's literature and been a resource through which Americans have understood themselves, mythified themselves, and beheld themselves through others' eyes.

Prerequisites:

620:034, Critical Writing About Literature (or the equivalent), is a pre- or co-requisite.

Required Texts:

- Lauter et al, eds. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature*, Concise Ed.
- Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine* (novel, 1989)

Required Work:

1. **5 response papers.** On the schedule of readings, you will see a series of “responses” listed at various points. The questions and guidelines for these relatively informal 2-3 page writings appear later in the syllabus (pages 12-13).
2. **Midterm Take-Home Exam.** This will involve some paragraph-long response questions and a choice of two longer essay questions covering the first part of the course. You are allowed to consult with other class members and get feedback from me as you work on this exam, so, while the does ask you to synthesize quite a bit of material, it need not be a high-pressure experience.
3. **Pairing Essay.** A comparative essay, 5-9 pages, involving a limited amount of library research. You will choose one writer we have covered in class, plus a second writer whose work you think has an interesting relationship to that of the first writer. Your essay will focus on the issues raised by considering these writers as a pair. With your paper you must submit an annotated bibliography of at least six critical sources (books or articles) related to your writers and the issue you are considering, and you should refer to at least three of these sources in the paper itself. See the assignment description at the end of this syllabus (page 14) for fuller information.
4. **Participation in group research/interpretive project.** In the final weeks of the semester, you will work in groups to select additional 20th-century writers found in our anthology to add to our syllabus. Each group will assign a reading to the rest of us, present background on your writer and text and hopefully lead some discussion of the text, produce a written collection of background, research, or interpretive material to hand out.
5. **Final Exam.** The exam will include A) a short-answer section in which you will be asked to *identify* and *answer questions on* a number of key passages from works covered throughout the syllabus; B) an essay section with two questions asking you to make more sustained comments on or connections between works, periods, and issues we have covered. There will be a choice of essay topics in this section, and you will have considerable freedom in choosing the works you use as examples.

Grading:

Your course grade will be determined by the percentage of points that you earn, minus any subtractions for poor attendance or late work. Especially strong class participation will strengthen your final grade if your grades for written work do not seem to me to fully reflect your overall performance in the course. The total number of points possible for the semester may vary slightly from this estimate.

5 response papers	100 points total (20 pts each)
Midterm	100 points
Essay	100 points
Final Exam	100 points
Group project	15 points
Attendance/participation	15 points
	<hr/>
Total	430 points

Your semester grade will be calculated based on the following standard percentage scale out of the total points possible:

A	95%	B-	80%	D+	67%
A-	90%	C+	77%	D	64%
B+	87%	C	74%	D-	60%
B	84%	C-	70%		

If you are unable to complete all the work by finals week and wish to receive a grade of I (Incomplete) you must request this of me specifically before the beginning of finals week. However, I will *not* give Is to people who have vanished for much of the semester and make a sudden late reappearance. According to University policy, the final date you may drop the class and receive a W on your transcript is Friday, March 12.

Grading Criteria:

The midterm exam will be graded on accuracy and full, coherent expression in your commentary, and the degree to which your answers reflect an understanding of the texts and issues discussed so far in the course. Your essay will be graded on clarity and persuasiveness of the argument, effectiveness of the close reading and research that supports the argument, coherence of the paper's organization, clarity and correctness of the language, and use of correct form for quotations and citations. The final exam will be graded on accuracy of identifications and appropriateness of comments in the short-answer section, and completeness and persuasiveness of argument in the essay section.

### Deadlines:

Work is due on the date specified. Papers are normally due at the beginning of class, but I will not penalize you so long as they are in by 5 p.m. on that day. (Do not skip class because you're having trouble with your printer, etc.) There will be subtractions from your grade for late work, increasing with the length of time the paper is late. In those cases I will give the paper a "merit grade" which lets you know how I responded to the paper in itself, and the official "recorded grade" which factors in the lateness. I am willing to negotiate extensions requested at least one class in advance, preferably more. Except in special circumstances where you've made a specific arrangement with me, I will not accept short response papers more than a week after they are due. E-mail submission is acceptable if you can't make it in to campus.

### Revision Policy:

Yes, you are welcome to revise the pairing essay if you are dissatisfied with the grade -- although there will not be a lot of time left in the semester to do so. If I give the revision a higher grade, it replaces the old grade. However, you need to meet with me first to go over my comments and your revision plans. I expect substantial rethinking/rewriting in a revised paper; except in special, mutually agreed-upon cases, I will return unmarked a revision that contains only mechanical or sentence-level changes. When you submit a revised essay, you must also attach the original copy of the first version along with my comments and grade sheet; I cannot evaluate your changes otherwise. I will accept revisions of the essay until Friday of the last week of regular class (i.e. prior to finals week).

If you are unhappy with your marks on other written work you have submitted, please consult with me and we'll determine whether, and how, you might improve your score on these or your ultimate grade in the class. Obviously, the earlier in the semester we discuss this, the more opportunity there is for you to make a meaningful difference in your grade.

### Format for Submitting Class Work:

All essays must be word-processed/typed in a plain, average-sized font, double-spaced, with approximately 1" margins on all sides, on 8 1/2" x 11" plain paper. I recommend Times Roman 12-pt. font (as in this syllabus) or something similar.

No separate title page is necessary. At the top of the first page of your paper (I don't care which corner[s]), include your name, the name of this course, and the date. Centered beneath that, give your paper a title that gives some idea what it is about -- do not use just the title of the work you are writing about. Double-spacing between the title and the beginning of the text makes it easier to read. Also, please number your pages -- do so by hand if you forget to do it on the computer.

In a separate page at the end of your paper, list all the texts you have used in the paper in correct MLA style. If you are not familiar with MLA style, or need a refresher (as we all do), it is covered in any writing handbook and many websites. Don't forget there are style guidelines for citing websites as well as books and articles!

All quotations from the text or direct references to passages in the text of the work(s) you are writing about must be followed by page references. I expect prose, poetry, and dialogue to be quoted in the correct form(s).

Proofread your paper carefully (spell-checkers help but won't do the whole job [*see?*]); numerous typos and other errors you could easily have fixed make you look careless or indifferent and will detract from your grade, probably more than one or two honest mistakes in syntax will.

**Also, be sure to save all your work on a disk, both completed papers and important writing in progress. On occasion papers do get misplaced during the grading process – or your computer may crash. Don't let this become a crisis!**

Attendance:

Expected and required. I do take attendance in class. Legitimate reasons for missing class include your own illness; a death or medical emergency in your immediate family; your required attendance at an official University-sponsored event; or dangerous driving conditions. If one of these pertains to you, please notify me by e-mailing me or leaving a message on my office voice-mail, if possible before the class you will miss.

If a situation arises that will cause you to miss a number of classes, notify me as soon as you reasonably can so that we can discuss how we will handle it. If you are going through a personal or family crisis that wreaks havoc with your ability to participate in the class, I strongly urge you to withdraw from it: see the reading and assignment schedule for the last date this semester on which you may withdraw with a "W." Every semester a few students have problems and ask for Incompletes: in my experience few of them ever complete their coursework later. You will spare yourself and me future headaches by not getting yourself into this situation. There is no stigma attached to withdrawing from a course.

Academic Ethics:

All students are expected to abide by the University's official policy on academic ethics. You can review this policy at <http://www.uni.edu/pres/policies/301.html>. If you have any question about what would constitute plagiarism in relation to your use of a particular source, please consult with me or, if I am not available, with another faculty member. Keep a record of the sources you consult while doing research for a piece of writing; you should be able to retrieve all sources consulted if an issue should arise.

**Any work you submit that appears intentionally plagiarized (you attempt to pass off language, ideas, or a complete text from another source as your own, assuming or hoping I won't be able to tell) will be graded F, and you will have to redo the assignment from the beginning on another topic, under close supervision.**

**In addition to the above penalties, I reserve the right to automatically fail any student from the course for wholesale or repeated plagiarism.**

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability requiring special accommodation in the classroom or for exams or other assignments, please contact me early in the semester so we can work out the appropriate adjustments. Please bring some kind of official documentation if possible; I should receive this directly from the university, but I may not have it at hand.

## Reading and Assignment Schedule

### January

M 12 Introduction

W 14 Christopher Columbus, from *Journal of the First Voyage to America*, 48-57 [date: 1492-93]; John Smith, from *A Description of Virginia*, 125-26, 132-35 [date: 1616]; J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, from *Letters to An American Farmer*, read intro p. 435 plus sections on 441-453 [date: 1781; note that the “I” who speaks here is not Crèvecoeur himself but a fictive persona, Farmer James].  
**Focus question: how would you compare and contrast how these three writers (from different centuries and cultures) understand the meaning or promise of coming to America?**

M 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Day -- no class

W 21 Read “New England” intro, 136-140; John Winthrop, from “A Modell of Christian Charity,” 147-157; William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, 164-179; Mary Rowlandson, from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration...* 206-232 [OK to skim the Preface section 208-211]; Anne Bradstreet, “Upon the Burning of Our House,” 197-198. [Recommended for cultural comparison, though we won’t have time to discuss it in class: Writings from New France, from *The Jesuit Relations*, 109-116.]  
**Q: These writers, all 17th-c. New England Puritans, understand themselves as being among God’s chosen people. What does this mean for them in terms of God’s responsibility to them (individually or collectively), and in terms of theirs to God? How do these understandings shape the various journeys narrated here?**

M 26 Benjamin Franklin, begin *Autobiography*, Part I, 381-424; also take a look at “The Way to Wealth,” 367-373.  
**Q: How would you characterize BF’s view of the world, and of himself? How does this contrast to Puritan values? Can you find evidence of his sense of humor?**

W 28 Read Eighteenth Century introduction, 261-275. Continue Franklin, *Autobiography* Part II, 424-434; Thomas Paine, from *Common Sense*, 453-461; Phillis Wheatley, intro 569-70, “To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth...,” 572-3; “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” 575; Letter to Samson Occom, 578-79.  
**Q: All of these writers reflect facets of the Enlightenment and Revolutionary-era American culture. What similarities or differences of beliefs, values, or style can you trace between them?**

## February

- M 2 Journeys on the margins: Elizabeth Ashbridge, from “Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life...” 339-349; Samson Occom, “A Short Narrative of My Life,” 520-526 [work in groups]  
**Response 1 due by Wednesday (but you can certainly hand it in today).** See section towards the end of this syllabus for guidelines and topics for all response papers.  
**Q: Think about the journey taken by each of these writers. What is it a journey from, and to? How do constraints of gender, race, and economics shape these journeys? To what degree do the writers represent themselves as surmounting these constraints -- and so what?**
- W 4 Begin reading “Early Nineteenth Century, 1800-1865” intro, begins p. 605; Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self Reliance,” 689-91 plus 707-724  
**Q: Come to class having chosen at least one sentence from Emerson’s essay that you particularly like, or that you think expresses the core of his message.**
- M 9 No class; I will be out of town. Spend some time exploring the website *The Transcendentalists*, <<http://www.transcendentalists.com/>>. See if you can develop a working definition of Transcendentalism that you are more or less happy with; I’ll ask about this on Wednesday. You also have a response to work on, due by Friday (can be handed in Wednesday).
- W 11 Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, “Where I Lived, and What I Lived For,” 765-775.  
**Q: In what ways does Thoreau’s outlook connect to Emerson’s? How would you characterize what is distinctive in T’s voice, persona, or style?**  
**Response 2 due by Friday**
- M 16 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, 866-931  
**Q: “You have seen how a man was made a slave; you shall see how a slave was made a man” (p. 904 top). Can you find several incidents, forces, or developments that reflect each side of this process in Douglass’s narrative?**
- W 17 Read “The Development of Narrative” intro, 937-940; Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* 1033-1055. Also, explore the history of *UTC* through the website *Uncle Tom’s Cabin and American Culture*, <<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/>>  
**Q: Stowe’s novel (a very short excerpt here) is also dedicated to making white readers care about the problem and effects of slavery. How does she shape her fictional treatment to be effective? Who in particular is she trying to reach?**



M 23 Selections from “Issues and Conflicts in Antebellum America,” section begins p. 801. Groups will be assigned the day before to work on David Walker, Grimké sisters, Lydia Maria Child, Fanny Fern, and Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (if you miss getting assigned to a group, e-mail me for directions, or just choose and read selections from one of these writers)

**Q: For your assigned writer: What is this writer trying to accomplish? Whom do you see as the target audience? What strategies is the writer using to be effective?**

W 25 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, “A Psalm of Life,” 1205-07; Walt Whitman, from *Leaves of Grass*, intro 1209-11, “Song of Myself,” begins p. 1225; get as far as you can (you have until Monday to finish it)

**Response 3 due by Friday**

**Q: Can you find evidence that Whitman was influenced by Emerson? In what ways does he go beyond him? Besides his content, what makes the form or style of his poetry radical?**

## March

M 1 Whitman, continue with “Song of Myself”; “Beat! Beat! Drums,” “Vigil Strange I Kept in the Field One Night,” 1284-1286; Emily Dickinson, introduction, 1295-97, poems [listed by “J.” number, the standard numbering of the editor Thomas Johnson -- see below each poem for its number -- the poems don’t have titles]: J. 613 (p. 1306); J. 1308 (p. 1308); J. 1129 (p. 1313)

**Q: Come to class having found multiple sections of “Song” that show the work as: a religious or spiritual poem; a sexual or erotic poem; and a political poem. You are encouraged to interpret all of these categories as broadly as possible!**

W 3 Dickinson, read over all the poems, and the letters, but we’ll focus discussion on these: J. 324 (p. 1300), 401 (1302), 435 (1302), 465 (1303-4), 709 (1309-10), 732 (1310-11), 1461 (1315).

**Q: In one way or another, these are all poems of rebellion/resistance. What social conventions or beliefs do you see ED transgressing here? How is her writing style part of that transgression – or a way of “telling things slant”?**

M 8 Nathaniel Hawthorne, “My Kinsman, Major Molineux,” 953-968

**Midterm Exam due by 5 p.m. today**

**Q: How would you describe the journey the protagonist takes in this story? How do you interpret his laugh near the end?**

- W 10 Hawthorne, "Young Goodman Brown," 968-977  
**Q: What happens to the protagonist spiritually or emotionally in the course of this story (and how/why)? Do you see him as a better or worse person when he returns to the village -- and why, or so what?**
- M 15 Spring Break
- W 17 Spring Break
- M 22 Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Tale of Wall Street," 1055-1083  
**Q: How many walls (literal or symbolic) can you find in this story? Do you have any ideas about how it might be read as a piece of social criticism?**
- W 24 Regionalism and vernacular: Look at African-American folktales, 1349-1359; Joel Chandler Harris, from *Uncle Remus*, 1401-1405; Charles Waddell Chesnutt, "The Goophered Grapevine" and "Po' Sandy," 1405-1422; Mark Twain, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," 1359-1365  
**Q: All of these stories prominently feature vernacular, dialect speech. What do you see as similarities or differences in how they do so? In what different ways do they use or portray folk culture?**
- M 29 Henry James, "Daisy Miller," 1454-1496  
**Q: This story revolves around a question of judgment on Winterbourne's part about Daisy's character. What is the issue? What does he come to think? Is he right or wrong? And which character, ultimately, does James want us to sympathize with?**
- W 31 Women's New England regionalism: Sarah Orne Jewett, "A White Heron," 1634-42; Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "The Revolt of 'Mother,'" 1642-1655  
**Q: What do these stories have in common? What are their visions of gender? What are key images or symbols in each?**  
Response 4 due by Friday

## April

- M 5 Modern poetry: Robert Frost, 1799-1805; William Carlos Williams, 1850-1856  
**Q: What would you say makes each of these poets "modern"? Pay special attention to RF's "The Oven Bird" and "Design" and WCW's "Spring and All" as nature poems that resist tradition/conventions.**
- W 7 William Faulkner, "Barn Burning," 1960-1974  
**Q: Why does Abner do what he does? Why does Sarty do what he does? Collect textual evidence for both of these points. What makes this story so difficult to read?**

- M 12 Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants," 1949-1954; Djuna Barnes, "Smoke," 1889-1895.  
**Q: How does Hemingway's distinctive style fit the story he's trying to tell? How would you compare style or issues in the Barnes story?**  
**Pairing Essay due by 5 p.m.**
- W 14 Organization for final group projects  
 Begin Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*, chaps. 1-7
- M 19 Group work for projects  
 Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*, chaps. 8-20
- W 21 Group work for projects  
 Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*, finish  
**Response 5 due by Friday**
- M 26 Group-directed readings  
**You will each prepare *one page* of information or interpretation on your group's text, as part of a packet each group will present.**
- W 28 Group-directed readings
- May**
- M 3 **Final exam 3:00-4:50 p.m.**

## Response Papers

Responses are due on the dates specified in the reading and assignment schedule (or as otherwise agreed upon in class). I would like them to be about 2-3 pages in length, and I would very much prefer them to be typed, although I'll accept them neatly handwritten.

These are not meant to be formal essays (no introduction or conclusion is necessary, and you need not write in a high academic style). What I am looking for is thoughtful reflection on the question you choose to address and on the reading(s) you choose to discuss: show me you're reading attentively and thinking in some engaged way about the texts, periods, issues, themes, etc. we've been covering. I do expect basic good writing, both in terms of grammar etc. and in terms of bringing some kind of order or sequence to how you develop the piece (as opposed to scribbling whatever comes into your head fifteen minutes before class). Please quote from the text(s) you're discussing where fairly short quotations help make your point. Cite page numbers.

Here are a choice of starting points for the responses; feel free to adapt the questions if they don't quite fit what you want to talk about. Do try to avoid just rehashing the substance of class discussion on a particular author.

### Response 1

Option A. It is all too easy for us as 'enlightened' modern people to be critical and dismissive of the Puritans (the authors we read on 1/21; note that "Puritans" is not a term applying to all earlier American Christians). Yet the people we're reading endured great sacrifices to live out a vision of life they found urgent, compelling, and beautiful. How do you cross the gap of time and beliefs to understand them sympathetically, or connect to their feelings? Or, if you do share elements of the Puritans' religious faith and find them easy to connect with, how do they remain foreign as well?

Option B. Contrast at least two different ways you see the motif or experience of journeying shaping this early American literature we've been reading. Or to put it another way, what does journeying mean for two (or more) of the writers in this section? And what factors shape his/her experience?

### Response 2

Option A. Whose version of human success or fulfillment appeals more to you, Franklin's or the Transcendentalists'? Why? If aspects of both versions appeal to you, do you think there is any way of reconciling them, or are they to some degree fundamentally opposed?

Option B. Spend a day reflecting on your own life in the spirit of either Franklin, Emerson, or Thoreau, and write about what you've observed (about yourself or anything else). This means thinking about your life in the terms they thought about theirs. Feel free to be creative in how you write this response (Emerson and Thoreau were committed journal-keepers, so you could for example use the journal form; or you could play around with imitating the style of the writer you've chosen).

### Response 3

Option A. Share your final ideas about the text(s) you discussed with your group on the “Issues and Conflicts” day. Your response can be based on your own ideas, what you came up with in the group, or any combination thereof.

Option B. Douglass’s *Narrative* is a work that is designed to stir the hearts, minds, and consciences of white Americans (and, most would agree, does so pretty effectively). What elements of the narrative do you think are particularly effective? How would you compare and contrast the strategies of persuasion used in another text from this section (for example Stowe’s fictional anti-slavery work, or something from the “Issues and Conflicts” selection)?

### Response 4

Option A. Choose an Emily Dickinson poem that interests you that we did not discuss in class. Try to do as much of a close reading of it (i.e. detailed, piece-by-piece analysis) as you can manage in 2-3 pages. It’s fine to be open-ended about things that seem unclear or ambiguous (even professional literary critics often have radically different understandings of what some of these poems mean). Do any connections or contrasts to other things we’ve read suggest themselves to you as you work with this poem?

Option B. Jewett, Freeman, Twain, and James all fall into the broad category of “realist” writers. Maybe we could even consider Dickinson in this light, though this is not a traditional way of categorizing her. But even at the time (as now), people had very varied conceptions of what realism was -- or even what “the real” is that writers should try to get at. Discuss what you think “the real” or “realism” means for one or more of these writers, and pointing to specifics in their work.

Option C. Quite a few works that we’ve read recently (and we can extend that back to the fiction writers we read before the midterm) deal in their plot and/or theme with some kind of rebellion. Choose two texts that present forms or issues of rebellion that you think can be interestingly compared. Discuss the similarities and differences that seem significant.

### Response 5

I’d like you to write about *Jasmine* in this response, but I’ll leave up to you how you choose to do so. Some possibilities: discuss your response to the book overall; discuss your response to the novel’s ending; discuss the novel as a late- 20<sup>th</sup>-century variant on the idea of the American journey; choose a particular passage in the novel that interests you and explore how it reflects/comments on themes in the novel; if you’ve taken Multicultural Literature, contrast Mukherjee’s stance as an ethnic American writer with writers you’ve read in that class.

620:053 sec.01 Major American Writers  
Myles

**Pairing Essay (plus annotated bibliography)**  
**5-9 pages**  
**Due Monday, April 12**

Choose one writer we have covered in class, plus a second writer from either the same or a different period whose work you think has an interesting relationship to that of the first writer. This second writer may also be from our syllabus, or may be another writer from our anthology or elsewhere whose work you have read or discovered. One good strategy might be to choose two writers grouped in the same section in the *Heath Anthology*, as this may suggest some ways of talking about them in connection to one another.

Do some research on both of these writers and their period(s), both to learn more about them individually and to discover influences, issues, etc. that connect them. In some cases you may find your pair discussed as related, in others not. Don't despair if you don't find them discussed together – if *you* can make a good argument for considering them as a pair, that's fine.

Prepare an annotated bibliography of at least six critical sources (books, articles, or websites) related to your writers and the issue you are considering. Generally, I would prefer no more than two of your sources to be websites (remember, getting into the habit of doing all your research on the web is like eating potato chips for dinner -- easy, but you're kidding yourself if you pretend it's decent nutrition). Remember that you may perceive a number of ways your writers might be connected, but you will need to focus on one or two in order to write a coherent paper. Try to clarify for yourself what your focus is going to be as you are in the research process, before you sit down to write the paper.

Write a coherent, well-supported essay that makes an argument for why it is worthwhile to consider the two writers you've chosen in relation to one another. Support your claim with discussion of the texts you've read by these writers and with reference to your research sources.

**In the conclusion to your essay**, I would like you to offer some comment on/speculate about what, as you see it, your chosen pairing reveals about connections and/or differences within one period of American literature, about continuities and/or changes across different periods, or about the overarching theme(s) we have been discussing during the semester. In other words, I don't want you just to conclude your points about your writers as a pair, but to set them in the broader context of American literature.

This project will take some time, so don't leave it to the last minute. I encourage you to consult me early about possible pairings that will pick up on interests you'd like to pursue, and about secondary works it might be fruitful to consult. (I will ask you to turn in an indication of which pairing you're planning to pursue and what you think your focus will be a couple of weeks before the essay is due.)

I will happily provide feedback on rough drafts, preferably received at least 48 hours before the papers are due. Coming to office hours or e-mailing your draft to me as a Word attachment generally works best.

**Major American Writers**  
**Pairing essay grade sheet -- SAMPLE**

Name:

Topic:

Quality of argument (appropriate to topic and works selected, paper has a clear thesis, reflects accurate understanding of each writer chosen)

(5 x 5=25)      5    4    3    2    1

Quality of support (evidence and effective use of secondary research, good use of primary texts)

(5 x 5=25)      5    4    3    2    1

Coherence of organization (at overall level and paragraph level)

(5 x 4=20)      5    4    3    2    1

Clarity and correctness of the language (includes editing and proofreading)

(5 x 4=20)      5    4    3    2    1

Textual citations incorporated according to MLA style; bibliography in correct form; paper has appropriate title, etc.

(5 x 2=10)      5    4    3    2    1

Total:            \_\_\_\_\_ out of 100 points

5	4	3	2	1
excellent	good	fair	below average	poor

Comments: