

620:188g Seminar in Literature: Revolution to Republic:
American Literature, 1750-1800

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:

Available Tuesday 3:30-4:30 p.m., Wednesday 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m., Thursday 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. If this doesn't fit your schedule, please contact me and I'll be happy to arrange another time. I am often in my office at other times besides scheduled office hours; please feel free to knock anytime.

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Description:

In this course we will consider the literature that helped to define, create, and contest emerging understandings of national identity in the years before, during, and after the American Revolution. We will encounter the diverse genres of this period as we consider the modes of thought that shape the period's ideas of private virtue and the public good. We'll also explore how these systems of belief and expression get taken up on behalf of the new causes of anti-slavery activism and women's rights. A particular focus in the middle of the course will be how the genre of the captivity narrative comes into renewed popularity and serves multiple ideological uses for both white and Black writers. Finally, this the period when the novel emerges as a genre in America, and we will spend at least a third of the class looking at how novels in several different literary modes serve as a means for reflecting on the fortunes of and tensions in the new republic, including such issues as: does the Revolutionary ideal of freedom extend to women? How can the nation deal with its heritage of Indian oppression? Are humans really rational beings – and what does it mean for America if they're not?

A secondary goal of this course is to give you an opportunity to bring your writing to the most accomplished level you're capable of – and to write an extended essay that you'll be able (expected!) to revise with feedback and to polish before the final graded version. To this end several classes will be suspended to give you research and writing time, and there will be no assigned reading in the final weeks of the course.

Books to Purchase (books marked * currently have a number of cheaper used editions available on amazon.com, and you have time to order them):

- Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820*
- Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* [continued]

- Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*
- Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English Speaking World of the 18th Century* *
- Susannah Haswell Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers: or, A Struggle for Freedom* [on order]
- William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy*, and Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* *
- Judith Sargent Murray, *Selected Writings* *
- Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly, or Memoirs of a Sleepwalker* *

There will be additional required primary and secondary texts provided in xerox form, online, or on reserve.

Required Work:

In addition to regular attendance and active participation in discussion (this is a small, intensive seminar class, and regular verbal participation from *all* members will be expected!), you will have the following written assignments:

- **Three short response papers.** These will all be due before Spring Break – see the Reading & Assignment Schedule for dates (though these are subject to modification), and see the end of this syllabus for writing prompts for each response. I am looking for well-written responses of 2-3 pages each that show your thoughtful engagement with the questions we've been discussing and the text(s) you are writing on, including using quotations as appropriate. 10 points each.
- **Book Review.** By the second week of class, you will choose a book of literary criticism or historical scholarship related to the period we are covering (a provisional list of texts to choose from is included in this syllabus). You will turn in a "review" of about 4-5 pages, including a survey of the contents of this book, a summary of the key arguments of at least two chapters (or the introduction plus one chapter, if the introduction is long; I'd like you to read carefully at least 40 pages of text), and an analytic discussion of how this book might illuminate what we are studying or be useful to someone in a final essay. I will provide more detailed guidelines once we're underway. I will gather these reviews and make copies of them for all class members: in essence, you are writing this not just for me but to provide an introduction for everyone in the class to some major scholarship in the field, which may be helpful to draw on as you prepare your final essays. 30 points.
- **Take-home essay midterm.** This midterm, worth 80 points, will be distributed over a week before Spring Break and will be due the week following Break. It will be designed to give you an opportunity to show your mastery of the primary and secondary (critical/historical) readings to date. Most likely there will be one or two essay topics (or a choice of two out of

three) that ask you to respond to a fairly broadly stated topic by drawing from a range of different texts we've covered.

- **Final extended essay (12-15 pp.) and annotated bibliography.** This will be your only, but important and ongoing, written project in the last third of the semester. My goal here is for you to write a substantial, analytic and researched essay that represents the best, most polished work you are capable of doing. You will have a wide range of topics, either taking off from works/authors we've studied, or list of some suggested others that I think people might be interested to explore. You will work on this essay in several stages, with feedback from me at each stage: a topic proposal, an annotated bibliography, a reasonably complete essay draft due two weeks before the end of the semester, and then the final draft (which, I will expect to be revised in light of comments received on the draft) due at the beginning of Finals Week. Several classes will be cancelled to give you research and writing time, and our final three class sessions will be devoted to presentations of your papers-in-progress in a panel and discussion format. 120 points (grade will factor in to what extent meaningful revision was done between draft and final version).

Grading:

Your course grade will be determined by the percentage of points that you earn, minus any subtractions for 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.

3 responses @ 10 pts. each	30 points
Midterm	80 points
Book Review	30 points
Bibliography	20 points
Final Paper	120 points
Attendance & Participation	20 points
Total	<hr/> 300 points

Your semester grade will be based on the following standard percentage scale:

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 without a word for most

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 14.

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.

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 descriptive 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. I expect you to know how to do this correctly at this point in your studies; if you need refreshing, you can find guidelines in any writer's handbook and many websites.

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). If you are uncertain about how to do any of this correctly, consult a writer's handbook and/or ask me.

Proofread your paper carefully (spell-checkers help but won't do the hole 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 a couple of honest mistakes in syntax will.

Also, be sure to save all your work on a disk. On rare occasions papers do get misplaced during the grading process – or your hard disk may crash. Don't let this become a crisis!

Attendance:

Expected and required. I take attendance. 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 (subject to change)

January

- M 13 Introduction; as time permits, look at Benjamin Franklin, “A Witch Trial at Mount Holly” (1730); Phillis Wheatley, Letter to Samson Occom (1774); “Petition of the Young Ladies” (1787) [xeroxes]
- W 15 Ferguson, chap. 1; Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part I
- M 20 Ferguson, chap. 2; Franklin, *Autobiography*, Parts II-IV
- W 22 Ferguson, chap. 3; Jonathan Edwards, “An Account of the Revival of Religion in Northampton in 1740-42” <<http://www.JonathanEdwards.com/text/jeacnt.htm>>; Samson Occom, *A Short Narrative of My Life* [xerox]
- M 27 Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*; from *The Age of Reason* [xerox]; Bernard Bailyn, “Thomas Paine,” from *Faces of Revolution* [xerox]
- W 29 Ferguson, chaps. 4 & 5 (OK just to skim chap. 5); Declaration of Independence; selections from *The Federalist Papers* [xerox]; recommended, Stephen Lucas, “The Stylistic Integrity of the Declaration of Independence” <http://www.archives.gov/exhibit_hall/charters_of_freedom/declaration/declaration_style.html>

February

- M 3 Other perspectives on the Revolution: Martha Milcah Moore, “The Female Patriots”; selected John-Abigail Adams letters; Ann Eliza Bleecker, “Written in the Retreat from Burgoyne”; J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, “The Man of Sorrows”; possibly additional brief text(s) [all xeroxed]; Ruth Bloch, “The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America” [reserve]
Response 1 due
- W 5 Michel René Hilliard D’Auberteuil, *Miss McCrea: A Novel of the American Revolution* (don’t worry, it’s short!) [xerox]; recommended, Greg Sieminski, “The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution” [reserve]
- M 10 Ferguson, chap. 6; Crèvecoeur, “Letter IX” from *Letters from an American Farmer* [xerox]; from *Unchained Voices*: Briton Hammon, John Marrant; Lucy Terry, “Bars Fight” <<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/aia/part2/2h1592.html>>; please also read Vincent Carretta’s introduction to *UV* by the end of this week

- W 12 Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia* <<http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/v1ch15s28.html>>; from *UV*: Jupiter Hammon, Phillis Wheatley; recommended, James Levernier, “Style as Protest in the Poetry of Phillis Wheatley” [reserve]
- M 17 From *UV*: Quobna Ottobah Cuguano, Benjamin Banneker, begin Olaudah Equiano
- W 19 Equiano; there’s an interesting (though fairly theoretical) debate on Teaching Equiano in *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 34.4 (2001), available through Project Muse < http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/eighteenth-century_studies/toc/ecs34.4.html>
- M 24 Susannah Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers*; Benjamin Franklin, “On the Slave Trade” <<http://www.jmu.edu/madison/historicus.htm>>
Response 2 due
- W 26 William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy*
Book Review due by Friday, 2/28

March

- M 3 Brown, *The Power of Sympathy*; Elizabeth Barnes, “Affecting Relations: Pedagogy, Patriarchy, and the Politics of Sympathy” [reserve]
- W 5 Judith Sargent Murray, read Sharon Harris introduction plus “On the Equality of the Sexes,” “Desultory Thoughts...”
Response 3 due
Midterm essay-exam distributed
- M 10 Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*
- W 12 Foster, *The Coquette*
- F 14 *Last day to drop course without an F*
- M 17 Spring Break
- W 19 Spring Break
- M 24 Judith Sargent Murray, *The Story of Margareta*
- W 26 Murray, *The Story of Margareta*; Cathy Davidson, “Privileging the *Feme Covert*: The Sociology of Sentimental Fiction” [reserve]
Midterm essay-exam due by Friday, 3/28

M 31 Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*

April

W 2 Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*
Paper proposals due by Friday 4/4

M 7 Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*

W 9 Research and writing time (no class)

M 14 Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*; Jared Gardner, "Alien Nation: Edgar Huntly's Savage Awakening" [reserve] (or a different work of criticism)

W 16 Research and writing time (no class); individual meetings scheduled
Annotated bibliographies due by 3 p.m. Friday 4/18

M 21 **Essay drafts due**; class evaluation; closing discussion of period [possible final critical article; will be announced]

W 23 Paper presentations

M 28 Paper presentations

W 30 Paper presentations

May

M 5 3:00-4:50 p.m. [Exam time]: I will be in my office to collect your final revised papers.

Topics for Response Papers

For each of these responses, I am looking for 2 to 3 (or more!) pages of reflective, textually-aware writing. Your writing should be clear and well-organized, not “off the top of your head,” but it need not have a thesis, nor an introduction/body/conclusion structure. Use these questions as starting points; as long as you’re dealing with these issues in some way, at a level of complexity comparable to that of the questions, you need not adhere rigidly to what I’m asking (although the questions are already designed to allow you considerable latitude in responding).

These responses are due by 5 p.m. on the dates specified; if you’re unable to make class I’ll accept them via e-mail as Word attachments (or I’m willing to negotiate an extension if you know you’ll be away). If they’re late I’ll deduct points – not a big deduction if they’re just one class late, but more after that. Grading: 10 points each, calculated as 2 x 5 points where 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = fair, 2 = below average, 1 = truly awful. (I often give half-point scores, e.g. 4.5.)

Response 1.

How do you understand the dynamics of Enlightenment as it manifests itself in the writing of Franklin and/or Paine, and/or the Declaration of Independence? I’m looking for you to articulate your own working/applied understanding here, not to parrot Ferguson or another source.

In addition, please focus on one of the following extensions to the question: **A)** What image(s) of selfhood are possible/encouraged within the terms of the Enlightenment? What is the role of the passions within the model of the Enlightenment self – to what degree/in what ways are they accepted/ resisted? **B)** Alternatively, how does Enlightenment thinking envision the public sphere? Are there parallels between the model of the private self and the model of the public sphere -- what? **C)** To what degree does Enlightenment discourse function as an inclusive, democratizing tendency (“all men are created equal”), and to what degree does it function to exclude some people from its categories of citizenship? Who seems to get excluded and how?

Response 2.

Besides the ways it allows writers to engage with issues of the presence or absence of freedom, what do you feel makes the captivity narrative (including the slavery narrative) such a resonant and popular genre in the Revolutionary period? What makes it effective politically and/or socially? What are some important similarities and/or differences you see between white and Black writers’ use of captivity narrative? Do you think it is more useful to emphasize the connections in the fact that both groups are using this the discourse and structure of the captivity genre, or to emphasize and analyze the differences? Why? Feel free to focus on specific narratives to make your point.

Response 3.

By this point we will have discussed the important place of sympathy (or its correlaries, sensibility and feeling) within the eighteenth century's codes of morality and aesthetics. Discuss the role of sympathy in at least two works we've read up to this point in the semester. How do these texts draw on, illustrate, or make political use of sympathy? In what ways does sympathy serve to unite – or to enforce distinctions? Be specific and bring out any important comparisons/contrasts you see. If you're discussing *The Power of Sympathy*, what dangers does Brown's novel suggest inhere within the power he evokes?

List of Books for Review (this is also an overview of some of the most important recent, or classic, scholarship in the field)

These books are all available in Rod Library, except for a few followed by (AM), which I have and can lend you.

Books by literary scholars:

- Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America*
- Cathy Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*
- David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America*
- Elizabeth Barnes, *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel*
- Julia Stern, *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel*
- Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority*
- Jay Fliegelman, *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and the Culture of Performance*
- Christopher Looby, *Voicing America: Language, Literary Form, and the Origin of the United States*
- Shirley Samuels, *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation*
- Dana D. Nelson, *The Word in Black and White: Reading "Race" in American Literature*
- Jared Gardner, *Master Plots: Race and the Founding of an American Literature, 1787-1845*

Books by historians or others:

- Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*
- Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*
- Mary Beth Norton, *Liberty's Daughters: The Revolutionary Experience of American Women, 1750-1800*
- Linda Kerber, *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*
- Susan Juster, *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England* (AM)
- Karin A. Wulf, *Not All Wives: Women of Colonial Philadelphia* (AM)
- Mark Kann, *A Republic of Men: The American Founders, Gendered Language, and Patriarchal Politics*
- Andrew Burstein, *Sentimental Democracy: The Evolution of America's Romantic Self-Image*
- Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (there's also a film and associated website, www.dohistory.org)