

620:188g sec. 08
Seminar in Literature:
The Captivity Narrative in America

Instructor: Dr. Anne Myles

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Hours: TTh 11:00-12:15

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Office hours: Tuesday, 1:00-2:30 p.m.; Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. I can also stay to talk Thursdays after class. 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 any time you see my door cracked open.

Course Prerequisite:

620:034, Critical Writing about Literature or the equivalent, or consent of instructor + English advisor; junior standing.

Course Description:

Captivity narratives are first-person nonfictional accounts written by people who have survived experiences of being taken captive – most typically, although not exclusively, writings by white Americans about experiences of captivity among Native Americans. Such narratives were an immensely popular and important form in early America, and the captivity motif is perpetuated and transformed throughout later American literature and film. Gripping accounts of individual experience and extremity, these narratives also encode and comment on core issues in American culture and identity. This course invites you to think and write about the formations and transformations of genre and theme that captivity entails, and, beyond that, to consider the ways that texts do cultural work in shaping and challenging images of American national identity.

We will read a range of captivity narratives written before 1800: Indian captivities from the English, Spanish, and French traditions; examples of an important subgenre, the Barbary captivity narrative, which contains the earliest responses of white American writers to encounter with the Muslim world; and a prisoner of war account. In the latter half of the course, we will examine how the form and concerns of the captivity narrative get transformed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when the captivity experience becomes a popular subject in both fiction and film.

Although you will be drawing on your skill in literary analysis, this is not strictly a literature class, but a venture into the interdisciplinary domain of cultural studies. Throughout the semester we will consider such questions as, how have Americans

thought about difference, and dealt with the possibility of culture-crossing? How have they handled the issues of race (and racism), religion, gender, violence and sexuality that experiences of captivity entail?

Texts to purchase:

1. Gordon Sayre, ed., *American Captivity Narratives* (Houghton Mifflin)
2. Kathryn Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* (Penguin)
3. Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account* (Arte Publico)
4. Thomas Dring, Albert Greene, *Recollections of the Jersey Prison Ship* (Applewood Books) [backordered at publisher]
5. Susannah Haswell Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers: A Struggle for Freedom* (Copley)
6. Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (Penguin)
7. Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest* (Bantam)
8. Small packet of additional primary texts (available at CopyWorks)

Other required material:

There will be frequent secondary readings (articles and book chapters) assigned in the course (plus some optional readings). To save the expense of a large course packet, I have put these on 2-hour reserve in Rod Library's Multi-Service center (the reserve list is attached to this syllabus); the articles are also available through Electronic course reserve, from which they may be downloaded and printed out as PDF files (go to the Rod Library "Assistance" page, then to "Electronic Course Reserves," and search by instructor). I will also have a binder with copies of the articles available outside my office, from which you can make copies.

If you are not able to get hold of the reserve texts in time for class – which I understand may happen from time to time – it is your responsibility to get them when you can. Assigned secondary/critical readings, unless otherwise noted in the syllabus, are considered required class readings, and you can expect exams to cover these as well as readings in the primary texts you've purchased.

There will be three films that we will watch in class. The videos of these will also be placed on reserve. If you are absent on a screening day, it is your responsibility to view the film on your own time; the two feature-length films count as primary texts in the course.

Required work:

1. **Brief responses.** Each week or so, you will turn in a brief (1-2 page) analytic response to the material you are currently reading for the course. I expect to receive a total of 10 responses, which allows you to miss a few weeks or to finish early. By an *analytic* response, I mean that I do not want random jotting of thoughts or feelings, but an intellectual engagement with the material. For example, what issues seem important in the primary or secondary text(s) you are

reading – in themselves or in relation to texts read earlier? How would you relate the critical material to the primary texts? You may raise questions, but if these involve matters of fact you should attempt to research the answer; interpretive questions may be left open-ended. I would prefer these responses to be typed, but I will accept them handwritten on an occasional basis.

2. **Presentation on secondary criticism.** Early in the semester, everyone will sign up for a short (no more than 10 minute) presentation on secondary material. For undergraduates, this will be either one of the assigned articles/chapters or an additional article on a writer you're interested in. For graduates, the presentation should bring together 2-3 related articles/chapters beyond the assigned class reading, or should address the overall argument and content of a relevant scholarly book (graduate presentations may run longer than 10 min.). These presentations will involve summarizing the argument of your critical text, with particular emphasis on identifying and explaining the author's thesis, and then discussing its points of interest, usefulness, or what you perceive as its strengths/weaknesses, and relating it in some way to other primary or secondary material we've read.
3. **Two exams.** There will be two exams, an in-class one in October and a take-home one due at the beginning of December. These will ask you to demonstrate your familiarity with the texts we've read and the issues they raise. They will *not* involve passage identifications or recalling precise narrative details. The first exam will focus on your understanding of early captivity texts and their contexts, and on the main arguments articulated by the assigned critical readings. The second, take-home exam will be more open-ended, asking you to cite a range of class texts (both primary and critical) as you discuss continuities in and transformations of the captivity tradition across the texts we've considered. Graduate students will probably have a slightly different set of questions than undergraduates for one or both of these exams, though the emphases will be the same.
4. **Final project.** For the final project, I want you to research and interpret a text (or possibly several closely related texts) that we did not cover in class. This can be a traditional captivity narrative, a fictional or filmed treatment of the captivity theme (including novels written for younger readers), or any written or filmed text that you can make a case for as reflecting elements of the captivity genre (alien abductions, anyone?). I will accept, and encourage, creative interpretations of the genre, and creative approaches to what you produce in the way of a project, so long as you discuss your ideas with me beforehand; a variety of genres and/or media might be acceptable. Of course, traditional scholarly essays are very welcome as well – there are many narratives out there that have not received a lot of commentary, so you have the change of doing significant original work. If you are doing an essay, the length for undergraduates is around 9-15 pages, for graduate students 15-20 pages. Whatever approach you take, I want to see an annotated research bibliography in the week before finals.

In the last weeks of the semester, everyone will have five minutes to share the text they've chosen and their project ideas with the class. The idea is not to have your work finished by that point, but for us to share our findings and enjoy the range of captivity texts you've found and what you've done with them.

Grading:

Your course grade will be determined by the percentage of points that you earn, minus any subtractions for repeated absences 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 performance in the course. The total number of points possible for the semester may vary slightly from this estimate.

Exam 1	100 points
Exam 2	100 points
Final Project	100 points
10 response papers	50 points (<i>5 pts. each</i>)
Presentation on criticism	20 points
Participation	25 points
Final paper sharing	5 points
<u>Total</u>	<u>400 points</u>

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 by 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, November 2.

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 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.

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. On rare occasions papers do get misplaced during the grading process – or your hard disk may crash. Don't let this become a crisis.

Class Policies:

Attendance:

Expected and required. I generally take attendance, though I am not counting absences in any specific numerical way. Good or poor attendance will be factored in as part of your overall participation score for the class (25 points). 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. See above under Grading for my policy on Incompletes. 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: according to University policy, the final date you may receive a W on your transcript is Friday, October 31. Every semester a few students have problems and ask for Incompletes; few of them ever complete their coursework later. You will spare yourself and me many future headaches by not getting yourself into this situation. There is no stigma attached to withdrawing from a course.

Deadlines

You may turn in weekly response papers on either Tuesdays or Thursdays (I'd prefer to receive them in class, but I'll accept them at any time – *though I cannot guarantee I won't misplace papers received out of class!*). I will *not* accept papers dealing with a

particular week's reading after that week has ended, however. If for any reason you have a response ready but can't easily make it to school, I'll accept your response by e-mail (preferably as a Word attachment).

The take-home exam and the final project are due on the dates specified unless you make specific advance arrangements with me for an extension. I do accept late work, but there will be a deduction from your final grade.

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>. We will also be discussing in class how to work with secondary sources in a literature paper; I am assuming you have covered the basics of documenting research in 620:005. 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 produce all the sources you have 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 – a laborious and humiliating experience. *Final essays* that are plagiarized in whole or part *cannot* be redone. 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

ACN = Sayre, ed., *American Captivity Narratives* anthology

WICN = Derounian-Stodola, ed., *Women's Indian Captivity Narratives* anthology

Secondary readings indicated by author's last name and brief title; see accompanying Reserve List for full references.

August

T 26 Introduction

Th 28 Read Pearce, "The Significances of the Captivity Narrative"; Edward Griffin, "Patricia Hearst and Her Foremothers: The Captivity Fable in America" (these will be distributed as photocopies on the first day of class). Share historic and modern captivity examples (mini-research assignment will be explained in first class). Recommended general background for those who want to read further (this week, or when you can get to it): Derounian-Stodola and Levernier, *The Indian Captivity Narrative, 1550-1900*, chap. 1 (reserve).

September

The Defining Narrative -- And Its Tensions

T 2 Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* [please read this in the version found in ACN chap. 4, but read WICN intro to the text as well]. The links on this website are also worth exploring:

<http://guweb2.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl310/rowland.htm>

Th 4 Rowlandson, continue discussing text plus required critical readings: Derounian, "Puritan Orthodoxy and the 'Survivor Syndrome'"; Burnham, "The Journey Between: Liminality and Dialogism in Mary White Rowlandson's Captivity Narrative."

T 9 I will be away for jury duty. In class you will watch a good video, *Captives*, that should help answer questions you may have about why people were taken captive, what really happened to them, etc.

Th 11 Rowlandson, continue discussing text plus required critical readings: Logan, "Mary Rowlandson and the 'Place' of the Woman Subject"; Arnold, "'Now Didn't Our People Laugh'"; for grad students, Toulouse, "The Sovereignty and Goodness of God in 1682"

Cultures of Early American Captivity

- T 16 Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Account: Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca's Relacion*
- Th 18 Cabeza de Vaca, continue. Required critical reading: Adorno, "The Negotiation of Fear"
- T 23 Jesuit Missionary Martyrs [ACN chap. 3]
- Th 25 Hannah Duston narratives [ACN chap. 5]. Required critical reading for all: Fitzpatrick, "The Cultural Work of the Puritan Captivity Narrative"; for grads, Toulouse in *A Centre of Wonders: The Body in Early America* (on reserve).
- T 30 John Marrant [ACN chap. 6, 198]; Briton Hammon (packet). Critical reading: Zafar, "Capturing the Captivity" and Sekora, "Red, White, and Black"

October

- Th 2 Olaudah Equiano [ACN 225].

War and the Captivity as Romance

- T 7 Dring and Greene, *Recollections of the Jersey Prison Ship*. [or something else, if this book doesn't come in in time]
- Th 9 Michel René Hilliard d'Auberteuil, *Miss McCrea: A Novel of the American Revolution* [ACN]. Required critical reading: Sieminski, "The Puritan Captivity Narrative and the Politics of the American Revolution"; also required for grads (and recommended for undergrads), Namias, *White Captives*, chap. 5.
- T 14 "The Panther Captivity" [WICN]; critical reading, Kolodny, "Turning the Lens on the Panther Captivity." Recommended for grads: Amy Pratt, "The Pleasure of Being Lost: The Panther Captivity and the Metaphysics of Commerce," *Mosaic* 34.1 (2001), full text online through Expanded Academic ASAP. There will also be time for midterm review today.

- Th 16 In-class midterm exam

Barbary Captivity: White Americans and the Muslim as Other

- T 21 John D. Foss, "A Journal of the Captivity and Sufferings of John Foss"; Maria Martin, "History of the Captivity and Sufferings of Maria Martin" (both in packet); required critical reading, Baepler, "The Barbary Captivity Narrative in Early America."

- Th 23 Susannah Rowson, *Slaves in Algiers*. Intro to volume is required critical reading.
- T 28 [Betty Mahmoody] / dir. Brian Gilbert, *Not Without My Daughter* [film in class; no required reading]
- Th 30 Film continued, discussion; possibly read excerpt from Dayna Curry et. al *Prisoners of Hope: The Story of our Captivity and Freedom in Afghanistan* (2002)

November

White Indians, Wild Women: Nineteenth-Century Revisions

- T 4 James E. Seaver, *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison* [WICN].
Critical reading: Axtell, “White Captives.”
- Th 6 I will be away at a conference. Finish Jemison, get started on Sedgwick, and think about your final project. While I am *requiring* final project proposals by 11/25, I would like to be talking with you now about your ideas and would prefer to receive your proposal earlier.
- T 11 Mary Jemison, finish. Critical Reading: Susan Walsh, ““With Them Was My Home””; Karen Oakes, ““We Planted, Tended, and Harvested Our Corn”” – Oakes available online through Expanded Academic ASAP; recommended for grads, Namias, *White Captives*, chap. 5
- Th 13 Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie: Or Early Times in the Massachusetts*
Take-home exam questions distributed today
- T 18 *Hope Leslie*
- Th 20 *Hope Leslie*. Critical reading: Carolyn Karcher introduction to volume.
- T 25 *Hope Leslie*. Critical reading: Ross, ““(Re)Writing the Frontier Romance””; Castiglia, ““In Praise of Extra-Vagant Women””
Final project proposal due before you leave for Break.
- Th 27 **Thanksgiving holiday**

December

'Freedom's Just Another Word...': Twentieth-Century Revisions

- T 2 Conrad Richter, *The Light in the Forest*. English Teaching majors may want to check out these teachers' resources: <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/richter.htm>
- Th 4 Angela Carter, "Our Lady of the Massacre" (packet). Critical reading, required for grads, optional for undergrads: Castiglia, *Bound and Determined*, chap. 1 (reserve)
Take-home exam due by Friday 5 p.m.
- T 9 Arthur Penn, dir., *Little Big Man* [film in class]. Suggested critical reading: Gary Ebersole, *Captured By Texts*, chap. 6. You should definitely read this if you're planning to work on a film for your final paper!
- Th 11 *Little Big Man*. No required reading: work on your final paper!
- Th 18 Official exam time 10:00-11:50 a.m.; no class meeting, but I'll be in my office.
The final paper is due at this time (by noon). I will also be available earlier in the week for consultation, to look at drafts, etc.