

English 2359
American Literature Before 1865

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This syllabus supplements the Sophomore Literature Program Syllabus, available online at www.english.txstate.edu.

Required Text

Baym et al., *Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Shorter 8th Edition, Volume 1: Beginnings to 1865, 2012. ISBN: 978-0-393-91886-1

Course Description

English 2359 is a survey of North American literature written between the mid-16th century and the mid-18th century. During that span of approximately 200 years, a loose band of colonies evolved into a formidable union of states. This course examines how the literature written during those 200 years reflected and influenced the emergence of a single national identity that has its roots in a religious heritage of divine calling as well as in individual expressions of self-hood. Specifically, this course will explore how different eras of American writers employed essays, letters, speeches, poetry, short stories, and other types of writing to define and redefine a single narrative of American identity distinct from the many voices that converged at the formation of the rapidly developing country.

Learning Outcomes

The Department of English has adopted student-learning outcomes for general education courses in writing and literature and for degree programs in English. These outcomes are available for your review at www.english.txstate.edu. On that page, pull down the *Student Resources* menu and go to "Learning Outcomes."

If you are a student with a disability who will require accommodation to participate in the course, please contact me as soon as possible. You will be asked to provide documentation from the Office of Disability Services. Failure to contact me in a timely manner may delay your accommodations.

Course Assignment Requirements

- Five (5) quizzes based on assigned selections from *Norton Anthology of American Literature*
- Two (2) short answer tests
- Two (2) approximately 500 word essays

Grade Breakdown

- Quizzes (1-5): 10%
- Midcourse Short Answer Test: 15%
- Final Short Answer Test: 15%
- Essay #1: 30%
- Essay #2: 30%

Assignment Details

The required assignments are given to assess students' retained knowledge of the text as well as initiate critical reflection upon the themes presented by the various authors. Students may use the course textbook to complete each of the course's assignments, including the short answer tests and essays.

The five quizzes are timed multiple choice assessments (30 minutes permitted per quiz) that cover the material from each of the five main lessons. Students who read the assigned texts should perform well on the quizzes.

The two short answer tests invite students to critically engage with the course material. While the quizzes are objective in their scope, the short answer tests are subjective in that there are no absolutely right or wrong responses. The short answers (which will range in length between 1-3 to 3-5 sentences) are intended to challenge students to make connections between the texts and the larger themes surrounding the respective historical periods. Students must complete each of the short answer tests (in the 2.5 hour time limit) before proceeding to write the respective essays.

The two essays (approximately 500 words each) require students to craft a formal, extended interpretation of one or two of the assigned texts. In some cases, students may choose to expand one of their short answer responses into the longer essay form. Each of the essays should be written in the tone of and with the same academic rigor of the standard college essay.

Course Progression

Students will complete each of the five main lessons one at a time, following the below progression of assigned readings and required assignments:

Lesson 1 - The Roots of Freedom & Oppression

Reading: Iroquois Creation Story, William Bradford, Anne Bradstreet

Assignments: Lesson 1 Quiz

Lesson 2 - Founding Fathers and Farmers

Reading: Thomas Jefferson, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, Benjamin Franklin

Assignments: Lesson 2 Quiz

Lesson 3 - Slavery & Oppression

Reading: Margaret Fuller, William Lloyd Garrison, Angelina Grimke, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass

Assignments: Lesson 3 Quiz

Lessons 1-3 Writing Assignments:

- Midcourse Short Answer Test
- Essay #1

Lesson 4 - The American Short Story

Reading: Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville

Assignments: Lesson 4 Quiz

Lesson 5 - Humanity and Nature

Reading: Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson

Assignments: Lesson 5 Quiz

Lessons 4-5 Writing Assignments:

- Final Short Answer Test
- Essay #2

Supplemental Instructional Materials

I've included an introductory video (in which I casually introduce each lesson's content) and a screencast (that lays out the lesson's central themes and points to consider) at the beginning of each lesson. Students who watch the introductory videos and view the screencasts will have a clear understanding of what to expect in the short answer tests and essay prompts.

Students also should read the three introductory essays in the Norton Anthology that provide commentary on the literature of this period. They are "Beginnings to 1700," "American Literature 1700–1820," and "American Literature 1820–1865." I strongly suggest you read them before you undertake Lesson 1 and that you refer to them again as you go along through the course.

Finally, I included essay-writing resources that provide a clear understanding of my expectations for the essay assignments.

Faculty-Student Contact

According to "Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education," faculty-student contact is very important. Even though this is a correspondence course, I encourage you to contact me if you have any concerns, questions, or problems. You are welcome to e-mail me by using the Mail tool in the left menu bar. (It is important to keep all mail related to this course contained within this TRACS site.) My policy is that during non-holiday breaks or announced away times, any email I receive between Monday morning and Friday at noon will receive a reply within 48 hours. Emails received between Friday at noon and Sunday night will receive a reply on the next business day.

Free Tutoring Resources

A variety of free tutoring resources are available for students enrolled in correspondence courses. All correspondence students have access to several hours of free online tutoring from Smarthinking for subjects ranging from grammar and writing to mathematics and Spanish. Free online tutoring for writing-related assignments is also available from the Texas State Writing Center. For information on accessing these resources, please visit the Office of Distance and Extended Learning's [Free Tutoring](#) page. Currently-enrolled, degree-seeking students able to visit the Texas State campus are eligible for free in-person tutoring from the [Student Learning Assistance Center \(SLAC\)](#) on the fourth floor of Alkek Library and from the [Math Lab](#) in Derrick 233.

TRACS Technical Support

Texas State's Information Technology Assistance Center (ITAC) provides phone and LiveChat technical support for TRACS 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. To take advantage of these services, visit [ITAC online](#) or call 512.245.ITAC (4822). Note also that a number of online TRACS tutorials are available from [TRACS Facts](#).

Before beginning this online course, it is recommended that you review the minimum hardware and software requirements and other important information available on the ITS [Course Information page](#).

Correspondence Course Information

As a correspondence studies student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with

correspondence-related policies and services. To this end, I encourage you to review the [Correspondence Course Information \(.pdf\)](#) page as well as the [Correspondence Studies Student Handbook](#).

Students with Special Needs

The Office of Distance and Extended Learning is committed to helping students with disabilities achieve their educational goals. A disability is not a barrier to correspondence study, and we strive to provide reasonable accommodations to individuals in coursework and test taking. Students who require special accommodations need to provide verification of their disability to the [Office of Disability Services](#), Suite 5-5.1 LBJ Student Center, 512.245.3451 (voice/TTY). Students should then notify the [Office of Distance and Extended Learning](#) of any disability-related accommodation needs as soon as possible to avoid a delay in accommodations.

Academic Integrity

The [Texas State Academic Honor Code](#) applies to all Texas State students, including correspondence students. The Honor Code serves as an affirmation that the University demands the highest standard of integrity in all actions related to the academic community.