General Description of the American Literature Course


![Familiar Quotations](http://www.columbia.edu/acis/bartleby/bartlett/index.html): An amazing site: find any famous original quotations from the classical works of literature. A site you must visit.

**Early America-1750**
1. **Puritanism (1620-1730s):**

   a. Knowledge: comes from grace, scripture, typological history
   b. World view is God directed
   c. Social view: governmental theocracy, mutual suspicion
   d. Self Concept: self loathing, very self conscious
   e. View of Nature: emblematic of God's purposes, the living work of God. Earlier: fearful woods, Satan, Later: beauty
   f. Representative Persons: Bradford/J.Edwards

   John Smith: [http://www.cnu.edu/library/libhome.html](http://www.cnu.edu/library/libhome.html) - the library of Capitan John Smith

   Anne Bradford

   Edward Taylor

   William Byrd


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### **Reason and Revolution** (1750-1800)

2. **Colonialism/Enlightenment (1740s-1820):**

   - a. Knowledge: Lockian empiricism, through senses and reason (Empirism: the practice of relying on observation and experiment especially in the natural sciences; a theory that all knowledge originates in experience)
   - b. World view: natural laws are discoverable, Deism (celestial clockmaker)
   - c. Social view: democracy, common man is more moral, closer to truth, Constitution is "machine" to set government in motion
   - d. Self concept: social, member of a community, be a good citizen, social works
   - e. View of Nature: mechanical, scientific, follows laws/rules, hierarchical separation of God, Man, Nature
   - f. Representative Persons: Franklin, Jefferson

   Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography


   Thomas Paine: [http://www.mala.bc.ca/~mcneil/cit/citlcpaine.htm](http://www.mala.bc.ca/~mcneil/cit/citlcpaine.htm) - Library of Congress Citations
3. Romantic Period (1820-1860/65)

- a. Knowledge: genius, intuition, the sublime
- b. World view: individual directed, only know through own mind
- c. Social view: autocracy of the soul
- d. Self concept: self discovery of your true self
- e. View of Nature: organic, God, Man, Nature fused
- f. Representative Persons: Emerson, Hawthorne

Critique of Slavery--some common elements of slave narratives [1820-1865] Jacobs, Douglass

- a. emphasis on family and attempts to destroy or deny family ties
- b. undulating hope and hopelessness
- c. dehumanization, animal imagery of both slave and slaveowner
- d. preference for death rather than slavery
- e. power and powerlessness, often tied to food imagery/hunger
- f. religious/political hypocrisy of slave owners

Elements of Transcendentalism:

- -- combines world of senses with a world beyond the senses
- -- triumph of feeling/intuition over scientific reason
- -- exaltation of individual over society
- -- impatience of bondage to custom and habit
- -- thrilling delight in nature

Transcendental Doctrines:

- a. living close to nature
- b. dignity of manual labor
- c. strong need of intellectual companionship and interests
- d. great emphasis on "spiritual living"
- e. Men's relation to God personal, not intermediation of ritualistic church
- f. self-trust and self-reliance practiced at all times
- g. intense individualism

Philosophy and Tone of Transcendental writings:
• 1. worth of the individual
• 2. revolutionary bent towards action
• 3. rejection of the past, especially European traditions
• 4. call for a new American literature (Insist on yourself, never imitate)

Homework #1 How are the transcendental doctrines still reflected in our society and our life?

Homework #2 What are your attitudes toward how these doctrines are still affecting our lives?

Southwestern Humor [1830s-1880s]:
• a. anti-intellectual bias
• b. avid interest in "native" vernacular characters
• c. exaggeration/hyperbole often used
• d. interest in representing actual spoken dialects/vernacular
• e. often uses a Frame structure [genteel narrator vs vernacular]

Local Color/Regionalism [1870-1910]:
• a. folklore, local customs fading, need to be preserved
• b. response to complexity of day, loss of pastoral
• c. nostalgic
• d. particular regional setting
• e. simple, deceptive quality; best work becomes universal

Realism [1865-1910] -- Twain, Howells, James, Wharton
• a. fidelity to actuality, reality as it appears through observation
• b. objectivity, neutrality
• c. social awareness, critical appraisal of society/institutions
• d. vernacular/dialect, spoken language verisimilitude
• e. greater concern over character over action (as in romanticism)
• f. absolute opposition to sentimental fiction

Naturalism [1880-1900] -- Crane, London

Naturalism [1880-1900] -- Crane, London
• a. attempted objectivity
• b. frankness
• c. amoral attitude toward material
• d. philosophy of determinism
• e. pessimism
• f. projection of "strong" characters, animal or neurotic natures
Early 20th Century Awareness

- Carl Sandburg
- Robert Frost

Harlem Renaissance

- Claude McKay
- Langston Hughes

Postwar Consciousness

- T.S Eliot

Washington Irving:

- Link to the Anthology of the Best Work of Washington Irving
- How did Washington Irving use historical events in his writing?

James Cooper: http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/Library/special/exhibits/clastext/clspg134.htm-the classic text of James Cooper

Edgar Allen Poe:


New England Renaissance (1840-1855)

Romanticism [1830-1865] Hawthorne, Poe, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, Dickinson

- a. emphasis on the individual, center of life/experience
- b. extraordinary characters in unusual circumstances
- c. concentration on Nature over world alter/affected by man -exalt wild/natural, scorn the urban/artificial
- d. often set in distant/historic/exotic past
- e. importance of the imagination/intuition
Ralph Waldo Emerson: works, essays, quotes, poems, biography, and other related materials: http://miso.wwa.com/~jej/1emerson.html

Henry David Thoreau: essays, quotes, poems, biography, and other related materials http://miso.wwa.com/~jej/1thorea.html

Nathanial Hawthorne: 19th century literature-

- http://history.hanover.edu/19th/literatu.htm

- A Scarlet Letter

Herman Melville: 19th century literature-a collection of his most famous books, such as, Moby Dick, Billy Bud, etc.

- http://books.mirror.org/gb.melville.html
- http://www.melville.org/
- http://history.hanover.edu/19th/literatu.htm

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

The Biography of Longfellow: http://okemos.k12.mi.us/~henry/text/longfeba.html

- The Anthology of his Poetry Online- http://www.auburn.edu/~vestmon/longfellow.html

Conflict and Celebration (1855-1880)

Robert Lee

The largest selection of biographies in an interactive 3d vr (vrml/VRML type VRT virtual reality) cemetery setting including photos, life time biography from birth through death, ... http://www.tombtown.com/bios/frost.htm

Walt Whitman

Leaves of Grass
- Walt Whitman "Leaves of Grass":
- Poetry Wall--Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carrol, Robert Bridges

**Emily Dickinson:**

- ![Emily Dickinson](image)
  - [http://english.cla.umn.edu/Courseweb/1017/PoetryWall](http://english.cla.umn.edu/Courseweb/1017/PoetryWall)

**Mark Twain:**

- [Everything about Mark Twain](http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/pages/facultypages/schmidt/Mark_Twain.html)
- [MarkTwain Resource on the World Wide Web](http://books.mirror.org/gb.twain.html): Mark Twain's Writing
- [http://salwen.com/mtcyber.html](http://salwen.com/mtcyber.html): The Best Site of Mark Twain
- [http://www.non.com/books/Twain_Mark_r.html](http://www.non.com/books/Twain_Mark_r.html): Mark Twain's Recent and Upcoming Works
- [Life on the Mississippi](http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/pages/facultypages/schmidt/Mark_Twain.html)
- Feel like sharing your opinions about Twain's works with other readers?
  - [Click here to communicate with other Mark Twain fans](http://www.tarleton.edu/activities/pages/facultypages/schmidt/Mark_Twain.html)

**Regionalism, Realism and Naturalism (1880-1916)**

Jack London-
- Full-text Works of Jack London on the Internet
  - The Call of the Wild

  http://www.loc.gov/nls/reference/london.html

Stephen Crane:

A COLLECTION OF HIS MAJOR WORKS-
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/treasures/american/amer.html

- significant events in Stephen Crane's life-
  http://www.uakron.edu/english/richards/edwards/crane1.html
- The Red Badge of Courage

Henry James: the Henry James scholar's Guide to Web Sites-
http://www.newpaltz.edu/~hathaway/

  Daisy Miller by Henry James

(The Harlem Renaissance, 1890-1848)

Claude Mckey

Langston Hughes

New Directions (1916-1930)

Imagism

- Ezra Pound
- William Carlos Williams
T.S.Eliot (modern poetry): A collection of his works -
http://www.helsinki.fi/kasv/nokol/reading.html

E.E.Cumming (poetry)

Sinclair Lewis: Babbitt (fiction)

Robert Frost (poetry)

Ernest Hemingway:

Upton Sinclair: The Jungle

  - http://www.atlantic.net/~gagne/pol/oldman.html
  - Hemingway Sites on the Net

E.Scott Fitzgerald

Midcentury Voice (1930-1960)

W.H.Auden

Robert Lowell: http://english.ela.umn.edu/Courseweb/1017/PoetryWall

John Steinbeck

Williams Faulkner: a collection of his novels
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/treasures/american/amer.html

Carson McCuller

Tennessee Williams: a collection his plays
http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/treasures/american/amer.html

Eugene O'Neill
Richard Wright

Our Time (1960-present)

Arthur Miller: Links to Arthur Miller's Works

- A Biography
- The Crucible
  1. the script of the play
  2. literary criticism
  3. summary of the play
  4. "Why I wrote The Crucible"

Elinor Wylie

William Stafford

James Wright

James Baldwin,

Alice Walker: http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/alicew/

http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/walker.html: The Study of Women's Writing Links

Toni Morrison.

(The above-information is cited from http://www.millikin.edu/aci/crow/basics/amlitintro.html)

You are required to write a book report for this class and it's due on Nov. 2, 2004.
Quiz based on Act III of *The Crucible*

Answer the following questions?

1. What news does Danforth tell John Proctor about Elizabeth?
2. What does John Proctor do to discredit Abigail?
3. Who is called to back up John’s testimony? What happens?
4. When Marry Warren was brought to the court to testify against the girls, what act did Abigail and all other girls put on?
5. How has Hale changed in this act?

Dictation:

6. abundant: amply supplied
7. probity: adherence to the highest principles and ideals: **UPRIGHTNESS**
8. ipso facto: by that very fact or act: as an inevitable result
9. effrontery: n. shameless boldness: **INSOLENCE**
10. perturbed: disturb greatly in mind: **DISQUIET**
Conversion Chart

Book Report

1. Choose a book from the list- Pulitzer.org Click the Pulitzer Prize Winners for Literature. Look for a literary work listed under the category Letters, Drama & Music. Pick a book from the genres of Fiction, Drama, Biography & Autobiography.
2. Follow the Book Report Format to write your report.
3. Due date: Nov. 21, 2005 (Monday)

Composition: Think carefully about the following statement. Then read the assignment below it and plan and write your essay as directed.

“Crisis, it said, does not so much build character as reveal it”.

Assignment: Do you agree with this statement? Plan and write an essay in which you develop your position on this issue. Support your point of view with reasoning and examples taken from your reading, studies, experience, or observations.

Please register in our online American Literature class. Go to Nicenet.org

Class Name: American Lit

Class Name: E5 Pd 1 & 2 Fall '05
Your Class Key: 5Z40Z03E2

Class Name: E5 Pd 7 Fall '05
Your Class Key: 5Z40Z08E80

Grading Policy
1. Attendance, Lateness (20%)
2. Class/Group Participation (20%)
3. Homework & class assignments, projects, performances, book reports, journals etc. quizzes and tests (50%)

Classroom Rules
1. All school rules apply to this room.
2. Follow the IAUP (Internet Acceptable Usage Policy)
3. Don't write on the desk and the computer.
4. Respect and help each other.
5. Remember you are here to learn and be rewarded by your learning not to be punished.
4. Respect and help each other. No one knows
who you are until you demonstrate yourself.

**Test One Based on Act I, The Crucible**

**Part I.** Dictation of new vocabulary words

1. abomination: -extreme disgust and hatred n.
2. deference: noun -respect and esteem due a superior or an elder
3. intimation: n.( intimate v.) -to make known especially publicly or formally ;to communicate delicately and indirectly : hinting, suggestion

4. trepidation: n.-a tremulous motion , apprehension
5. prodigious: adj.-strange, unusual
6. anarchy: n. -having no ruler
7. licentious: adj.-lacking legal or moral restraints; especially : disregarding sexual restraints
8. calumny: n. a misrepresentation intended to blacken another's reputation
9. diabolism: n.-belief in or worship of devils; evil character or conduct
10. inculcation( inculcate v.): n.-to teach and impress by frequent repetitions or admonitions

**Part II.** Short-Answer Questions

1. **Use at least five words to describe Puritanical Salem in 1692.**

   Any of the five words from the list
   
   - repression
   - joyless life
   - exclusively religious
   - biased
   - suspected/watched
   - isolated
   - under the Indians' threats`
   - superstitious
   - bigots( deny any other sect its freedom)
   - deprived freedom/ individuality
   - self denial/self purposefulness
   - different time period and under different regime
   - changes
   - confusions
   - paradox ( the state and the church are united to run people)
   - panic
   - hatred for each other
   - vengeance
   - land-lust
2. What has Elizabeth Proctor said about Abigail? How did Abigail describe Elizabeth Proctor?
   - According to Parris, Elizabeth said that she rarely came to the church this year because she wouldn't sit so close to something soiled indicating Abigail.
   - Abigail described Elizabeth as "bitter, lying, cold, sniveling woman".

3. How would you describe the relationship between John Proctor and Abigail (What happened in the past between John Proctor and Abigail? How do each of them feel about it now? What comments could be added on both characters?)
   - John and Abigail had an affair in the past, which is the reason of Abigail being dismissed from their house. John is over with Abigail and realized his sinful act while Abigail is still hopeful for the affair to continue.
   - Once John realized he had done something terribly wrong, he would correct himself without being urged by anyone else but himself who was compelled by his "own vision of decent conduct".
   - Abigail is the kind of girl who would say and do anything to please and protect herself. She counter-pointed her finger at Elizabeth and accused her of lying without any realization of her own sin. She is insistent on carrying on the affair with John beside the fact that John has already determined to stop the relationship. Her personality foreshadows the imminent evil fate that will fall upon John and Elizabeth.

4. What does Betty Parris reveal about what happened in the woods?
   - Betty revealed that Abigail drank blood- she drank a charm to kill John Proctor's wife.

5. What's John Proctor's attitude toward Parris? Why?
   - John despises Parris because he feels that Parris is more of a mercenary than a God's servant.
   - John also feels that Parris only mentions devil in his preaching.
   - Every meeting John attends, Parris talks about the mortgage for the meeting house instead of God.

6. What is the conflict between Nurse and Putnam?
   - The conflict between the Nurses and the Putmans is originated from
     - power struggle
     - Land ownership
     - family prosperity-the Nurse family is growing larger while the Putnams is dwindling (7 out 8 children died).
     - Mrs. Putnam was accusing Rebecca Nurse of murdering her seven children that Rebecca had delivered for her.

7. Name three main characters encountered. Describe in details one of them.
   - John Proctor, Parris, Putnam, Abigail, Rebecca Nurse
Reverend Paris is the current reverend of the Salem congregation. He has joined the community in the recent years and has made changes within the church to the dismay of many people. Paris is not liked by some because they see him straying away from the traditional ideals of the Puritan church/lifestyle examples: his placing of gold within the Puritan church which broke away from Catholicism due to their extravagance, his wanting to own the house the congregation has provided he and his family with, this is something no reverend before him has done; and also requesting for higher pay which already included all of his yearly expenses. Paris appears to be an egotistical man who is more concern with his reputation rather than the "illness" of his child. Paris' personality causes many to turn away from him and his church which will ultimately affect their fate.

John Proctor is the protagonist in this play. He is a man in his thirties who seems not to be like the other men in his town. He has a had a brief secret history with Abigail and has made it his duty to stop this ludicrous witch hunt which has his wife also mixed up within it. Proctor serves as a guiding light of hope for good amongst these evils. His strong demeanor and popularity amongst many makes him a target of reverend Paris who he openly shows his discontent for.

Thomas Putnam is one of the wealthiest men in Salem. His greed which stems from his wealth has made him one of the main driving forces behind this witch hunt. His ulterior motives leads to the condemning of many innocent people. He has let his own person problems supersede not only his own but the moral beliefs of the susceptible people who are backing him. He seems to always find himself in the middle of a discussion injecting his opinions and ideas for his benefit.

Mrs. Putnam the wife of Thomas Putnam, is depicted as a bitter woman due to the loss of her seven children. With this current witch hunt taking place Mrs. Putnam ceases the opportunity to make accusations against her family rivals the Nurses. Mrs. Nurse served as the midwife of all of Putnam's deceased children, because her children died shortly after birth Mrs. Putnam believed that Mrs. Nurse had something to do with it. This accusation aids as evidence to her husbands already existing claims which stems from land disputes.

Francis Nurse is the head of one of Salem's most affluent families. His family and the Putnam's family has had an on going rivalry for many years. This rivalry has put his wife amongst the dozens of accused during this witch hunt.
Rebecca Nurse is the wife of Francis Nurse. Mrs. Nurse is kind elderly woman who is widely cared for and respected by the townspeople. Mrs. Nurse has acted as the midwife of Mrs. Putnam's seven children who all have perished shortly after. This continuous pain has created a hatred in Mrs. Putnam towards Mrs. Nurse. This hatred has driven Mrs. Putnam to the extreme measures of identifying Mrs. Nurse as one of the many witches that reside in Salem.

Giles Corey serves as the comical relief character within this play he seems to always find himself in trouble or amidst a conversation where he interjects smart-alecky comments. Corey has a habit of speaking without fully thinking the content through, this habit adds his wife to the list of the accused.

Abigail Williams is the leading force behind the witch hunt. She is the niece of Paris who seems to be singled out by many of the other townswomen due to her behavior. Abigail a teenage girl who had a brief affair with John Proctor cannot seem to fathom the fact that John is not willing to leave his wife for her and she becomes spiteful. When seeing she has an opportunity to seek revenge on those who she believes have done her wrong she uses the then obscure suggestions of their being witches involved in the mysterious illness of her cousin Betty to strike. Abigail serves as the leader of these victims who claim to be possessed as they pick.

8. What is the main plot as developed in Act I? And subplots? Describe.

The major conflict in the Act took place between Abigail and John Proctor in the act. As we could see the witch-hunt crisis was started by Abigail who wanted to protect herself of getting accuse of. After Proctor came to the house, he was alone in the room with Abigail. Proctor wanted to end the adultery between him and Abigail, his conscience’s telling him that he should quit. After spending eight months to avoid being together with Abigail, things still didn’t go in the way he wanted to, Abigail won’t let him. If the conflict between Proctor and Abigail didn’t started, or Proctor’s wife Elizabeth didn’t found out her husband was having an affair with Abigail, there won’t be that many innocents who were being accused of practicing witchcraft or maybe the Salem Witch-Hunt won’t even exist.

9. Name three literary elements/techniques used in Act I.

The setting, conflicts and characterization of the main characters.
10. Why does Abigail start accusing people at this point (in the end of Act I)?
   o Abigail was inspired by Mr. Hale's questioning that if you could reveal who
     the witch or the devil was, your soul would be cleansed and saved.
   o She also took this opportunity to shift blame from her to other innocent but
     weak scapegoats.
   o Her sense of vengeance soared.