

ENGL 4125-01 (Early American Literature)

TR 02:00 pm - 03:20 pm / HUM 206

Fall Semester 2015

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Office Hours:

TR 9:00 am -12:30 noon; 3:30 - 5:30 pm
and by appointment

Course Description: This course covers a 300-year period that begins with the dynamic cultural encounters that dramatically altered Europe and the New World and concludes with the literature of the new American republic during the first half of the nineteenth century. Our readings will include early exploration narratives, captivity narratives by women and men, and short stories and novels from the early republic. To develop thematic and theoretical coherence among these writers and texts, we will focus on representations of monsters and monstrosities in early colonial and American culture. Along with its allure as a land with unimaginable riches and opportunities for new freedoms, Europeans imagined the New World as a location filled with monstrous dangers. Harrowing accounts of encounters with malicious landscapes, monstrous animals, savages, cannibals, witches, demons, among others become the focus of many early narratives and imaginative fiction from this era. Our use of different theoretical perspectives will allow us to more fully understand the complexities and contradictions that governed the (mis)representation of cultural “others” during this era and how these representations influenced the historical and mythological construction of what becomes American national identity. We will also examine how these monstrous representations from the colonial and early American past remain a source of fascination and intrigue within contemporary American popular culture. This fascination with the monstrous origins of American culture and identity can be found in movies (John Ford’s *The Searchers*, Tim Burton’s *Sleepy Hollow*), television dramas (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Supernatural*), investigative “reality” shows (*Monsters and Mysteries in America*, *Mountain Monsters*, *America Unearthed*), and in contemporary fiction (Mat Johnson’s *Pym*), some of which provide insightful ways to revise and reimagine earlier textual precursors.

Learning Outcomes: 1) Students will be able to demonstrate a representative knowledge of early American literary works; 2) Students will be able to describe specific theoretical and critical principles used in the interpretation of colonial and early American literature; 3) Students will reveal in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of course-related material; 4) Students will become familiar with a range of literary works representing different genres this literary era, and they will understand how these works are related to each other and to the historical literary traditions of European and world literature; 5) Students will understand how social, political, economic, and historical conditions influence the production of colonial and early American literary works; 6) Students will display their command of academic English and of the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose, including at least eight pages of research-based writing.

Relationship of Course to Program Goals: 1) This course fulfills one of the departmental requirements in literary history for the completion of the English major; 2) This course will contribute to the larger goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture; 3) In this course, students will develop the analytical, oral and written skills needed to pursue graduate study or careers in teaching, writing, business and a variety of other fields; 4) In this course students will be able to define and pursue independent research agendas.

Discipline Specific Writing (DSW) Requirement: This is writing intensive course. If you complete this course with a grade of C or higher, you will receive Discipline Specific Writing (DSW) credit toward graduation. DSW goals encourage students to use writing as a way to learn, to show students how to write effectively in their disciplines, and to improve students’ writing skills. All students majoring in disciplines in the College of Arts and Humanities are required to satisfy the DSW requirements to graduate. These requirements include at least two 3000/4000 level W courses for a total of 6 hours with at least 3 of these hours in the major (see the UWG catalog for details).

Required Texts (Available at the UWG Bookstore):

Brown, Charles Brockden. *Edgar Huntly, Or, Memoirs of a Sleep-Walker*. Penguin Classics, 1988. Paperback. ISBN-10: 0140390626 or ISBN-13: 978-0140390629

Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie: or, Early Times in the Massachusetts*. Penguin Classics; Reprint edition, 1998. Paperback. ISBN-10: 0140436766 or ISBN-13: 978-0140436761.

Poe, Edgar Allan. *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. Penguin Classics, 1999. Paperback. ISBN-10: 0140437487 ISBN-13: 978-0140437485

Johnson, Mat. *Pym: A Novel*. Spiegel & Grau, 2012. Paperback. ISBN-10: 0812981766 or ISBN-13: 978-0812981766

Other reading assignments will be available electronically on CourseDen. You will be required to print these out and bring them with you to class on the dates listed in the syllabus.

Grading Scale: Students are assigned a letter grade for each assignment ranging from A+ to F based on the numerical scale below. This grade will be used when calculating the final average at the end of the semester.

97-100 = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+	67-69 = D+	below 60 = F
94-96 = A	84-86 = B	74- 76 = C	64-66 = D	
90-93 = A-	80-83 = B-	70- 73 = C-	60-63 = D-	

Course Evaluation

20%	Quizzes and Homework Assignments	15%	Midterm Examination
20%	Analytical Essay	15%	Final Examination
05%	Research Prospectus	25%	Research Essay

Attendance Requirements: I expect you to be present and on time for all class meetings. Readings and homework assignments should be completed in advance of each class. You should be prepared to participate actively in class discussions OR by simply *asking* questions. Remember: if you do not understand something presented in class, *ask*. If you are going to be absent from class, you should let me know, preferably in advance. If you find it unavoidable to miss class, be aware of the following guidelines: 1) Four (4) absences are allowed during the semester. Every absence thereafter will result in a 3 point grade reduction of your final grade in the course, regardless of the nature of the absence. If you suspect that outside responsibilities might cause you to miss more than four classes, then you should consider taking the course at another time. I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences, so you should use your allotted absences wisely. Unplanned or unexpected occurrences are likely to occur, so be prepared to use absences for these events only; 2) Tardies will be counted as part of the attendance requirements. Two late arrivals will equal one absence. Class roll will be taken at the beginning of every class. If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to let me know immediately after class or you will be counted absent. It is your responsibility to keep up with your absences and tardies. Reasons related to outside employment or work in other classes are not legitimate excuses for leaving class early or arriving late; 3) Sleeping at any time during the class period will be counted as an absence; 4) Disruptive behavior at any time during the class period will be counted as an absence; 5) Excessive absences beyond the four allowed or habitual tardiness without legitimate reasons that you communicate to me, may result in automatically failing this course.

Homework Assignments: You will complete short, informal writing and presentation assignments throughout the semester to facilitate our discussions in class and to help you prepare for the critical essays and examinations. These will be announced in advance in class and posted on CourseDen. Your grade on these assignments will be factored into the final average of your quiz grade (see below). Homework assignments that are turned in late will receive a grade reduction.

Quizzes (20%): A reading quiz will be given at the very start of class on most days. It will cover the reading assignment(s) listed on the syllabus for that day. The questions will be objective and will assess basic reading comprehension. Quizzes typically include short questions that focus on the following: titles of works and approximate dates; identification of characters and settings; and identification of significant events and main ideas. Homework assignments (see section above) will be included in the quiz grade average. NOTE: I will drop your lowest quiz grade before calculating your final quiz average. Students who arrive late to class or who miss class will not be able to make up quizzes. I do not give make-up quizzes under any circumstances.

Midterm (15%) and Final Exam (15%): The midterm and final examinations will be based on reading assignments, course lectures/discussions, and other materials presented in class and on CourseDen. For each examination, students will be expected to know the major historical events, literary terms and concepts, authors, literary works (including specific passages), and the critical/theoretical interpretations of those works presented in this course. Consequently, students should be familiar with each reading assignment and should take careful notes during class. Both examinations will include an objective component (definitions and short answer questions) and an interpretive component (identification/analysis of specific passages covered in class). The final exam will include a cumulative written component. The date for each examination is listed on the course syllabus and cannot be scheduled at an alternate time unless you have a serious medical emergency or another legitimate reason for doing so, subject to my approval. In the event that such circumstances arise, you must let me know *in advance* to schedule an alternate time to take the examination. Otherwise, late exams will be marked down one letter grade for each day they are taken late. I will post a study guide on CourseDen prior to each exam.

Analytical Essay (20%): You will write one analytical essay (5 typewritten pages minimum). The essay will focus on a thesis-based analysis of a literary work assigned in this course. Guidelines for the essay will be posted on CourseDen. All formal writing assignments in this course must be typed. Essays will be assessed on the basis of an argumentative thesis, organizational structure, interpretive content, use of supporting evidence from the literary work, standard grammar, MLA paper format, and writing style as outlined in the grading rubric.

Research Essay (25%): The research essay (8 typewritten pages) will represent the culmination of your study in this course. Your essay should analyze a primary literary text/s and show evidence of utilizing one of the critical methods or theoretical approaches presented in the seminar. Your essay can focus on any aspect of early American literary studies that interests you, pending approval of your research prospectus. You can analyze works not covered in this course, as long as they are linked in some specific way to works and topics covered in this course. This includes contemporary works, both written and visual (movies or television). I encourage you to use your research and writing to focus on works that may be more central to your own emerging professional areas of interest. Your research essay cannot focus on the same work you analyze in your first critical essay or works that you have written about in other classes. The research essay is due on the date listed in the syllabus. A prospectus (5%) due in advance of the research essay (see syllabus for date) is required as part of this process. You will have an opportunity to share your prospectus with other participants in this class.

Writing Format and MLA Documentation Style: All written assignments that you submit for a grade should follow Modern Language Association (MLA) format. They should be typed and use Times New Roman typeface and 12 point font. Guidelines for all major writing, grammar, and MLA format requirements can be found on CourseDen. I will use these guidelines when I assess your written work. I encourage you to be thoroughly familiar with them.

Late Assignment Policy: I realize that extenuating circumstances sometimes occur; therefore, you are allowed to turn in either the analytical essay or the research essay one class period late without penalty, if you make arrangements with me to do so in advance. You must email me prior to class on the day the assignment is due to make your request. This policy applies **ONLY** to the essays, not to the midterm and final exams. Other written work (especially if it is due as part of a homework assignment), should be completed on time since it is usually related to specific topics or works we are covering in class. Assignments that are turned in late will be subject to the following grade reductions:

Submitted late (after the deadline) on due date: 1/3 of letter grade deduction or 3 points.

Submitted one day (24 hours) after due date: 2/3 of letter grade deduction or 6 points.

Submitted by the next class period: 1 letter grade deduction or 10 points.

Submitted more than one week after due date: 2 letter two grade deduction or 20 points.

Submitted more than two weeks after due date: F (50 point deduction).

Not turned in at all: Zero

Please note that if you miss in-class assignments or presentations that are part of a specific class meeting, additional deductions may to the list above may apply.

Revision Policy: I will be available to meet with you prior to the essay deadlines to discuss paper topics, possible ideas for a thesis, and other questions you may have about the writing process. While I will not proof-read drafts of your

essays, I will answer specific questions that you might have about drafts of any of your essays, *if* you arrange to meet with me in advance. Please note that I probably will not be able to offer any substantial assistance if you wait until the last minute to write your draft/essay or request to meet with me the day the essay is due. Advance planning on your part is essential. Students who make a grade of D or lower on the first critical essay may choose to revise the essay for a higher grade, *if* the essay has been turned in on time. The maximum a grade can be increased through revisions is one letter grade (for example, a grade of D can be revised to a C if all the revision criteria are met). Revisions for a higher grade are only allowed on the first essay.

Extra Credit: I do not give extra credit for additional work beyond the assignments listed here. Please focus on completing the above assignments successfully.

Electronic Devices: Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before entering class. No text messaging or phone calls are permitted during class. Use of them will result from your dismissal from class. Laptops can be used for class-related work only. Use for other purposes will result in your dismissal from class.

CourseDen (D2L) & Technology: This is a technology-supplemented course; therefore, you need to be familiar with CourseDen (<http://westga.view.usg.edu>) and have basic technology skills to participate in this course. Reading and homework assignments, lecture notes, and other supplemental information related to this course will be posted on CourseDen. General information about CourseDen is available online including student tutorials. Let me know if you need assistance with using the UWG online platform.

UWG Email: The official email communication method for all UWG classes is through campus email (MyUWG). All UWG students are provided a MyUWG email account. The purpose of the student email account is to provide an effective means of communicating important university related information to UWG students in a timely manner. It is the your responsibility to check your MyUWG email regularly. Please use your UWG email when communicating with me about this course. Do not use outside email accounts. You can also communicate with me directly through CourseDen, although I only see those emails when I am logged on to CourseDen.

Remind: In addition to UWG email, I use Remind (<https://www.remind.com/>) to communicate with participants in this course. Announcements may include such things as reminders about upcoming assignments, changes in the schedule, or—in rare instances—class cancellations. Information about Remind and how to use it can be found on CourseDen. You can receive announcements directly via text message or you can download the Remind app. Using Remind means you do not have to be signed on to CourseDen to see new course announcements or updates and your phone number remains private. To sign up for Remind, text [@engl4125wg](https://www.remind.com/) to this number: 81010. Once the course has ended, you will be removed from the notification system. Signing up is completely optional, but you will be responsible for any information or announcements you miss.

Americans with Disabilities Act: Students with documented disabilities may work with UWG Accessibility Services to receive essential accommodations specific to their disabilities. All entitlements to accommodations are based on documentation and USG Board of Regents standards. If a student needs course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability or chronic illness, or if he/she needs to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, the student should notify his/her instructor in writing and provide a copy of his/her Student Accommodations Report (SAR), which is available only from Accessibility Services. *Faculty cannot offer accommodations without timely receipt of the SAR; further, no retroactive accommodations will be given.* If you have a registered disability through UWG, see me at the beginning of the semester so that I can work with you to determine what accommodations might be warranted. For more information, contact Accessibility Services in 123 Row Hall by calling 678-839-6428 or email counseling@westga.edu. You can also find information on their website: http://www.westga.edu/studentDev/index_8884.php.

Credit Hour Policy: The University of West Georgia grants one semester hour of credit for work equivalent to a minimum of one hour (50 minutes) of in-class or other direct faculty instruction AND two hours of student work outside of class per week for approximately fifteen weeks. For each course, the course syllabus will document the amount of in-class (or other direct faculty instruction) and out-of-class work required to earn the credit hour(s) assigned to the course. Out-of-class work will include all forms of credit-bearing activity, including but not limited to assignments, readings, observations, and musical practice. Where available, the university grants

academic credit for students who verify via competency-based testing, that they have accomplished the learning outcomes associated with a course that would normally meet the requirements outlined above (e.g. AP credit, CLEP, and departmental exams).

University of West Georgia Honor Code: At the University of West Georgia, we believe that academic and personal integrity are based upon honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students at West Georgia assume responsibility for upholding the honor code. West Georgia students pledge to refrain from engaging in acts that do not maintain academic and personal integrity. These include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, aid of academic dishonesty, lying, bribery or threats, and stealing. Academic dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this class, including essays, quizzes, and materials submitted for a grade. The University of West Georgia maintains and monitors a confidential Academic Dishonesty Tracking System. This database collects and reports patterns of repeated student violations across all the Colleges, the Ingram Library, and the School of Nursing. Each incidence of academic dishonesty is subject to review and consideration by the instructor, and is subject to a range of academic penalties including, but not limited to, failing the assignment and/or failing the course. Student conduct sanctions range from verbal warning to suspension or expulsion depending on the magnitude of the offense and/or number of offenses. The incident becomes part of the student's conduct record at UWG. Additionally, the student is responsible for safeguarding his/her computer account. The student's account and network connection are for his/her individual use. A computer account is to be used only by the person to whom it has been issued. The student is responsible for all actions originating through his/her account or network connection. Students must not impersonate others or misrepresent or conceal their identities in electronic messages and actions. It is your responsibility to report instances of academic dishonesty if you see them occur. UWG Honor Code: <http://www.westga.edu/handbook/59.php>

Plagiarism and Excessive Collaboration Policies: UWG defines plagiarism as taking personal credit without correct and documented attribution for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. UWG expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. Plagiarism also includes taking someone else's writing and submitting it as your own. Even if you alter the wording completely or in part, taking ideas without documented attribution is considered plagiarism. Fabricating sources also constitutes plagiarism. Excessive collaboration occurs when someone else (a fellow student, a family member, or someone you hire) excessively writes or edits your writing to a degree that your independent abilities to produce college-level writing are not evident. Excessive collaboration is a form of academic dishonesty and will be treated the same as a plagiarism under the UWG Honor Code.

If a student violates the UWG Honor Code policy, the student may receive an F for the assignment or an F for the course at the instructor's discretion, depending on the circumstances and severity of the violation. For more information about plagiarism, visit http://www.westga.edu/writing/1326_1649.php

Department Policy on Disruptive Behavior: Students may be dismissed from any class meeting during which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, checking email or texting, and using personal electronic devices. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the course attendance policy. Repeated disruptive behavior that interferes with teaching or affects the learning of others in the class may result in failing this course. If you have concerns about disruptive behavior or would like to talk about the classroom environment or your participation in the class, please set up a time to meet with me. UWG Policy: http://www.westga.edu/vpsa/index_4615.php

Conferences and Outside Assistance: I am always available to meet with you outside of class to discuss your progress in this class, upcoming and graded writing assignments, research topics, or reading assignments we are currently studying. If you are having trouble with the material in this course or have questions and/or concerns you would like to discuss, please set up a time to meet with me. My office hours are listed above, but I will be glad to meet with you at other times, if we arrange a mutually convenient time in advance. I am usually here throughout the week and can arrange to meet at days and times outside of my scheduled office hours.

NOTE: Please make a paper and/or electronic copy of all written work you turn in to me, in case it is misplaced or lost. I will not give you credit for work you claim to turn in that I do not have in my possession.