Survey of American Literature I

Early American literature reflects the unique concerns and values of the founders of the nation. Often, it focuses upon the uniqueness of America—its status as a political and social experiment in freedom, democracy, and equality. This idea of America's uniqueness is called "exceptionalism," a term referring to a belief that the US does not conform to the normal rules of other countries. We will explore the ways the early Americans saw themselves as exceptional and will ask whether we are in fact exceptional, and if so, in what ways. Do the actual experiences of people living in this time period suggest the truth of American exceptionalism, or not? To what extent is the American ideal affected by race, gender, and religion? To what extent is our literature affected by its having been written by Americans living in the US?

Reading. All assignments are from the Heath Anthology of American Literature, Volumes A and B, Fifth edition. Students should read all introductory material for each author studied. This course is primarily designed for students to read and discuss an extensive amount of literature. It is above all a reading course.

Papers. There are two papers assigned for this course. They should be 4-5 pages in length, typed, double-spaced with conventional fonts and margins. Late papers will be lowered one notch per day they are late. Papers will not be accepted a week after the due date. The first paper may be re-written within a week of the date it is returned; the final grade will be an average of the first and second grades. The final paper may not be rewritten. Students are strongly encouraged to work with me prior to the due date, and to take advantage of the services of the Writing Center (free one-on-one tutoring). Appointments can be made by calling 885-2991 or stopping by the Center on the 2nd floor of the Battelle Building.

Reading Quizzes. Classes will begin with a reading quiz. These are designed to be easy if you’ve done the reading, and impossible if you haven’t. The five lowest quiz grades will be dropped. (That includes any zeroes for missed classes). To take these quizzes, you must have a personal response pad ("zapper"), and you must bring them to class. These will record the grades immediately onto blackboard. We may also use the zappers for class discussions. If you forget your zapper, do the quiz on a sheet of your own paper and follow up with me to make sure I enter the grade manually. This is your responsibility.

Discussion Questions and Blackboard. Each student will prepare a list of 3-5 discussion questions for a particular class meeting. These will be posted by noon of two days before class. (In other words, by noon on Sunday for a class meeting on Tuesday and by noon on Wednesday for a class meeting on Friday.) Class discussions will be determined by these. In addition, they will serve as the impetuses for blackboard discussions. Please do not write questions that seem like the kind of questions you think you should write. Please write questions you really want to talk about! Be prepared to initiate the discussion of these questions in class. These will be
graded. If the assignment for the day includes more than one work, you do NOT have to cover all of them, though you may. Just write questions you care about. In addition to posting one set of discussion questions, each student should respond to one or more of these questions five times over the course of the semester. Your response should be thoughtful and interesting. It does not have to be terrifically long, but it should be long enough to enable you to express a complex idea.

**Participation.** Don’t mistake my critical engagement with your contributions for a belief that I don’t respect your ideas. I challenge your ideas out of respect, not out of disrespect. I have been told that sometimes my tone seems harsh, but this is an unfortunate side-effect of my passion for truth and ideas. You are encouraged to call me out in class any time!

**Attendance.** If you miss more than three classes, your grade may be lowered. If you miss more than five, it will be lowered. If you miss more than seven, you will fail. The only excuses are medical emergency or religious holiday. Please avoid being late at all cost; lateness really irritates me. However, if you are in fact late, don’t lurk at the door or not come to class; just come on in as unobtrusively as possible.

**Grades.** Final grades will be calculated according to the following percentages:
- Paper 1: 20%
- Quizzes: 15%
- Blackboard: 5%
- Debate: 5%
- Final Examination: 20%
- Discussion Questions: 5%
- Class Participation (includes lateness, absences, preparedness): 10%

**Academic Dishonesty:** I take plagiarism and academic dishonesty very seriously, and I am required to report cases to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, whose policy is to fail students for the course. Please read the university's Academic Integrity Code closely, and be sure to ask me if you have any questions. The code is available online at http://www.american.edu/academics/integrity/index.htm.

In writing papers, you must properly cite all sources (1) directly quoted, (2) paraphrased, or (3) consulted in any fashion. Sources include all printed material as well as the Internet. Proper citation means using a standard citation format: MLA, APA, or Chicago.

It is also considered plagiarism if you merely rework source material, placing an author's thoughts in other words without contributing your own ideas. For that reason, you must include some kind of source note whenever drawing on someone else's interpretation. A source note can be a sentence or more in your paper, or it can be a footnote. A source note should clarify the extent to which your interpretation is indebted to your source, explaining both (1) what you use and (2) where you depart or differ from the source.

It is also considered plagiarism to submit drafts, response papers, and other informal assignments without properly citing sources and acknowledging intellectual debts. Failure for the course is the typical sanction in such cases.
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1. Tuesday August 26: Introduction.

ENCOUNTERS

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: ENLIGHTENMENT
6. Friday September 12: "Voices of Revolution and Nationalism": 800-802; Handsome Lake "How America was Discovered (802-804); Benjamin Franklin: All of the short pieces pp. 804-828.

LIBERTY
7. Tuesday September 16: Cluster: "On the Discourse of Liberty" (1049-1065), and "Patriot Songs and Loyalist Songs" (1067-1086)

REFLECTIONS ON THE REVOLUTION
10. Friday September 26: "The Contrast" continued.

TRANSITIONS
13. Tuesday October 7: Genteel and Un-Genteel. Lydia Sigourney, "The Suttee," "Death of an Infant," "Indian Names," "To a Shred of Linen"; also, the Cluster on the Humor of the Old Southwest (2120-2142)
14. Friday October 10: Ralph Waldo Emerson: Nature: Introduction, chapter 1, Chapter 3, the first 2 pages of Chapter 6 (i.e. "Idealism" pp. 1597-1598)

TRANSCENDENTALISM
15. Tuesday October 14: Ralph Waldo Emerson: "Self-Reliance"
   Friday October 17: Fall Break. Go outdoors! (Remember that revisions of paper #1 are due within a week after they are returned to you.)

AMERICA'S BARD
16. Tuesday October 21: Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (first 6 sections)
17. Friday October 24: Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (7-15; 19-33; 44, 48-52)

AMERICAN GHOST STORIES

GOOD KINDS OF PEOPLE AND BAD KINDS OF PEOPLE
21. Friday November 7: Pro-Slavery Writers. George Fitzhugh Southern Thought and Caroline Lee Hentz The Planter's Northern Bride

SPEAKING OUT FOR SLAVES
22. Tuesday November 11: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of an American Slave
23. Friday November 14: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin, Thomas Wentworth Higginson's Nat Turner's Insurrection

DEBATING THE ETHICS OF SLAVERY
24. Tuesday November 18: Prepare for The Debate. Paper #2 due
25. Friday November 21: The Debate. Class will last an extra hour.


AMERICA'S GREATEST POET
27. Tuesday, December 2: Dickinson. Poems TBA.
28. Friday, December 5: More Dickinson, summing it all up.

Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

1 In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, 2the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. 3Then God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

6 And God said, "Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. 8God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

9 And God said, "Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. 12The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. 13And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, 15and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. 17God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, 18to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky." 21So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. 22God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. 25God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

27 So God created humankind in his image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.
28God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29God said, "See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have
them for food. 30And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Chapter 2
Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. 2And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. 3So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

4 These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created.

Another Account of the Creation
In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up--for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground; 6but a stream would rise from the earth, and water the whole face of the ground-- 7then the LORD God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being. 8And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east; and there he put the man whom he had formed. 9Out of the ground the LORD God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river flows out of Eden to water the garden, and from there it divides and becomes four branches. 11The name of the first is Pishon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; 12and the gold of that land is good; bdellium and onyx stone are there. 13The name of the second river is Gihon; it is the one that flows around the whole land of Cush. 14The name of the third river is Tigris, which flows east of Assyria. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it. 16And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; 17but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner." 19So out of the ground the LORD God formed every animal of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field; but for the man there was not found a helper as his partner. 21So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23Then the man said,

"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."
Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

The First Sin and Its Punishment
Chapter 3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God say, 'You shall not eat from any tree in the garden'?

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; 3 but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the garden, nor shall you touch it, or you shall die.' " 4 But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die; 5 for God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

8 They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden at the time of the evening breeze, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" 10 He said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself." 11 He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" 12 The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, and I ate." 13 Then the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate." 14 The LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you have done this,
cursed are you among all animals
and among all wild creatures;
upon your belly you shall go,
and dust you shall eat
all the days of your life.
15 I will put enmity between you and the woman,
and between your offspring and hers;
he will strike your head,
and you will strike his heel."

16 To the woman he said,
"I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing;
in pain you shall bring forth children,
yet your desire shall be for your husband,
and he shall rule over you."

17 And to the man he said,
"Because you have listened to the voice of your wife,
and have eaten of the tree
about which I commanded you,
'You shall not eat of it,'
cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life;
18 thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field.
19 By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread until you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; you are dust, and to dust you shall return."
20 The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all living. 21And the LORD God made garments of skins for the man and for his wife, and clothed them.
22 Then the LORD God said, "See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever"—therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from which he was taken. 24He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain Murders Abel
Chapter 4 Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have produced a man with the help of the LORD." 2Next she bore his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper of sheep, and Cain a tiller of the ground. 3In the course of time Cain brought to the LORD an offering of the fruit of the ground, 4and Abel for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions. And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6The LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? 7If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it."
8 Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let us go out to the field." And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel, and killed him. 9Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" He said, "I do not know; am I my brother's keeper?" 10And the LORD said, "What have you done? Listen; your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground! 11And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12When you till the ground, it will no longer yield to you its strength; you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth." 13Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear! 14Today you have driven me away from the soil, and I shall be hidden from your face; I shall be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth, and anyone who meets me may kill me." 15Then the LORD said to him, "Not so! Whoever kills Cain will suffer a sevenfold vengeance." And the LORD put a mark on Cain, so that no one who came upon him would kill him. 16Then Cain went away from the presence of the LORD, and settled in the land of Nod, east of Eden.