COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course surveys American literature from its origins in the travel accounts of European explorers, during their exploration and settlement of the Americas, to the significant changes in modes of literary and cultural representation prompted by the American Civil War. We cover an extraordinarily wide range of material, so reading selections tend to be long and we tend to move at a rapid pace. The purpose of reading excerpts from longer selections and of taking a faster pace is to allow us to cover as many different authors as possible in order to give you the most comprehensive view of the history of American literature. Out of this view, you should develop a sense of the importance of the various contexts (social, cultural, history of ideas, literary movements and periods, etc.) out of which early American literature is produced. More importantly, the chronological approach to the course material should foster in you a desire to reflect on the connection between our lives now and the themes, dilemmas, and ways of living presented in the literary texts. The most important learning objective in this course is for you to develop critical skills by which to closely read and interpret shorter passages from literary selections that you are able to put into dialogue with a larger historical and cultural context of literary production.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

• **Weekly online postings**: due by midnight on the Sunday night before we cover the material. There are eleven possible postings. You need only do ten.

• **3 short paper assignments**. You will be required to work closely with textual quotations in order to support an interpretation/argument about the literature. Details to follow.

• **2 non-comprehensive exams** consisting of passage identification and short answers to questions regarding analysis of key passages from our readings and class discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Online Postings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1(^{st}) Paper</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2(^{nd}) Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3(^{rd}) Paper</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final</td>
<td>20%</td>
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You are responsible for figuring out your own grade during the semester using the above percentages. Please do not ask me to calculate your grade during the semester! You can do it as accurately as I can with the above percentages. However, if you wish to have a general
conversation with me about how you are doing in the class, I am always open to such a discussion.

GRADING

Things that will negatively affect your grade:

- incomplete assignments
- late assignments
- poorly realized assignments
- disrespectful attitude
- not participating in class discussions
- excessive absences
- coming late to class
- leaving class early
- disrupting class in any other way
- being unprepared for class
- plagiarism (any suspicion of plagiarism will be turned over to Student Judicial Affairs and could result in your failure of the course and/or expulsion from the university)

GRADING SCALE:

A: Work of this quality is superior and represents an achievement normally attained by only a small amount of students.

B: “B” level work is better than adequate and shows strong competence in the subject matter/skill.

C: “C” quality work shows adequate or satisfactory mastery of the subject/skill.

D: “D” level work barely meets the minimum requirements for the course or assignment.

F: Failing grades are reserved for work that falls below the minimum requirements for the course.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND PARTICIPATION

There are no excused absences. I will call roll at the beginning of each class. I expect you to raise your hand, look at me, and say “here” or “present.” It is your responsibility to make sure that I have marked you on the attendance roll. If you come to class late (which you should not make a habit of), you need to see me after class has ended to be sure that I have marked you present (but late). Coming to class late four times equals a full absence. If you miss more than 2 week’s worth of class, you cannot receive a passing
grade (this has to do with the way that credit hours are calculated based on the amount of face-to-face time we have each semester).

**LATE WORK**

You should turn your work in on time. Late assignments will be appropriately downgraded. I do not give make-up exams. I do not accept assignments once a week has passed after the due date.

Postings should be made by Sunday at midnight. If your posting is made after that, I may give it partial credit if it is exceptionally brilliant, but I make no guarantees. You can respond politely to classmates’ posts anytime you wish.

**NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY**

According to the University Catalog, California State University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, color, or national origin. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at CSU Chico, you must register with Disability Support Services V/TTY: 898-5959.

**Tentative Schedule**

Week 1 (1/28-2/1)
Columbus pp.120-131
Cabeza de Vaca pp.141-152

Week 2 (2/4-2/8)
*Smith pp.264-269
Wingfield pp.248-255
Bradford pp.326-346

Week 3 (2/11-2/15)
Mayflower Compact 1620: [http://www.ushistory.org/documents/mayflower.htm](http://www.ushistory.org/documents/mayflower.htm)
Hutchinson (SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKLET) pp. 38-48
Online activities only February 13th and 15th – read Introduction to Theme: Spirituality, Church, and State in Colonial America (SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKLET) pp. 1-8

Week 4 (2/18-2/22)
**2/22 PAPER 1 DUE**
Bradstreet pp.396-7, 409-10
*Rowlandson pp.440-468

Week 5 (2/25-2/29)
Mather (SUPPLEMENTAL BOOKLET) pp. 69-76
*Franklin pp. 808-813, 828-860, pp.860-890

Week 6 (3/3-3/7)
Paine pp. 965-970
Adams pp. 979-983
Jefferson pp. 1057-61

Week 7 (3/10-3/14)
Articles of Confederation 1777: http://www.ushistory.org/documents/confederation.htm
Constitution 1788: http://www.ushistory.org/documents/constitution.htm
Bill of Rights: http://www.ushistory.org/documents/amendments.htm

Lincoln pp. 2078-2080

3/12 and 3/14: Midterm

No Classes March 17-21, Spring Break

Week 9 (3/24-3/28)
*Equiano pp.1154-1185
*Douglass pp.1882-1914, pp. 1914-1945

Week 10 (3/31-4/4) No Class March 31, Ce/sar Cha/vez Day
*Emerson pp. 1582-1608, pp. 1621-1637

Week 11 (3/7-3/11)
*Thoreau pp.1753-1786
*Irving pp. 2153-2164, pp. 2165-2184

Week 12 (4/14-4/18)
*Hawthorne pp. 2267-2275, pp. 2287-2306, pp.2258-2266

Week 13 (4/21-4/25)
4/25 PAPER 2 DUE
*Poe pp. 2462-2471, pp. 2539-2541

Week 14 (4/28-5/2)
Cooper pp. 2187-2206
Melville pp. 2625-2650

Week 15 (5/5-5/9)
Stanton pp. 2113-2115
Truth pp. 2094-2096
Whitman pp. 2937-2982

Week 16 (5/12-5/16)
5/16 PAPER 3 DUE
*Dickinson pp. 3046-3076 [“There’s a certain Slant”; “I felt a Funeral”; “I heard a Fly buzz”; “After Great Pain”; “Tell all the Truth”]
Final Exam:
If your class meets 9-9:50, your final exam is Monday, 5/19 from 10-11:50 a.m.
If your class meets 1-1:50, your final exam is Wednesday, 5/21 from 2-3:50 p.m.

* = Discussion question due before class