



American Progress- John Gast (1872)

**AML 4453 – Reimagining the American Renaissance
(Class #17698), Summer A 2020**

Instructor Name: Srimayee Basu

Course meeting times & locations: MTWRF 2 & Zoom

Office Location and Hours: WR 3/Zoom & Canvas

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: sbasu@ufl.edu

The term “American Renaissance” was first used by scholar F.O. Matthiessen to denote the period between 1830 and 1860, which he terms the “age of Emerson and Whitman.” This period is believed to be one where American Literature came into its own and developed a distinct national character. However, what literary historians have often overlooked is that this period also coincided with the Abolitionist and Suffragist Movements, and the exclusion of the literatures produced by key writers of these movements produces a narrow if not flawed understanding of the period’s zeitgeist. This course will revisit the American Renaissance and attempt to reconstruct it as a vexed, polyphonous literary period. We will both expand our understanding of the American literary canon by reading critically neglected works from the nineteenth century by suffragist, African American, and Native American writers, and reconsider works by canonical writers of this period through contemporary theoretical paradigms. Our

objective will be to think about the relationship between literary and national longing for form and self-determination and the possibility/desirability of retrieving and reclaiming canons from their original contexts.

In the light of the ongoing public health crisis, this course shall be offered entirely through online class sessions. We shall meet for synchronous sessions on Monday and Friday on Zoom during Period 2. The sessions on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday shall be asynchronous, that is, I will post short lecture videos and discussion questions/activities on Canvas which you will view/complete by 11:59 pm of each day.

Required Texts:

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"

Margaret Fuller, *Woman in Nineteenth Century* (excerpts)

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*

Frederick Douglass, *The Heroic Slave*

Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*

Herman Melville, *Benito Cereno*

William Apess, "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man"

Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and M.J. Cage, "The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolution"

Mark Rifkin, *Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance* (excerpts)

Assignments:

Class Participation (100 points): This does not merely encompass perfect attendance but also the quality and frequency of your contributions during our online discussions and your posts on Canvas discussions forums.

Quizzes (200 points): Reading quizzes will be administered through the Canvas course page and will test your familiarity with the text's plot, narrative, and characters, as well as its key themes. These will be announced quizzes and their dates have been mentioned on the weekly schedule.

Short Reflection Papers (500 words; 100 points): For this assignment, you will examine a specific concept, historical event, or cultural phenomenon that we have encountered in a text and reflect on its narrative significance, history, and etymology (if applicable).

Research Prospectus & Annotated Bibliography (500 words; 100 points): In this assignment, you will write a brief proposal for the topic that you wish to work with for your final research paper. Your proposal should include a primary text, a central argument, your proposed methodology and plan of research. Additionally, you will create an annotated list of provisional secondary sources that you propose to use in your research paper.

Research Paper (3000 words; 500 points): In this essay, you will use the skills we have built throughout the course and in our previous essays. Your paper should have a strong, clear, and creative argument about a text of your choosing, and should consult at least 3 scholarly sources. This should not be a regurgitation of the issues, ideas, and themes we have discussed in class, but should instead be a result of your own critical thinking and understanding of the text.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is required and will be taken every day. If you miss more than four (4) classes, you will automatically fail the course. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> (Links to an external site.) Links to an external site. (Links to an external site.)Links to an external site. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed. If you are absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. A note on tardiness: Students who enter class after roll has been taken are late. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.
3. *Paper Format & Submission:* Students will submit their essays through Canvas. Because I use the reviewing feature in Microsoft Word, papers must be saved in a Word-compatible format, generally .doc or .docx, or .rtf. You should save your papers using your last name and the assignment name as the filename. Submit through the assignment tab by attaching the document to the assignment page.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Students should turn in essays on the day they are due—even if they cannot make it to class. Computer or email problems are not valid excuses for late work; save documents frequently and on multiple disks. Late work will not be accepted. Any other work that is not turned in by class time on the due date will not be accepted and will automatically count as a zero. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require documentation.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

9. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.
10. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575 or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>.
11. *Classroom behavior and netiquette*: Common courtesy is mandatory in our virtual classroom. Silence all cell phones, pagers, alarms, and so on when you “enter” the classroom; unexpected noises interrupt everyone’s concentration. *If a student is found text messaging in class, they will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day.* Sleeping, holding private conversations, and reading other material are also inappropriate behaviors during class time.
12. *UF’s policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/> .
13. *Policy on environmental sustainability*. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

Syllabus			
Wk	Day	Reading Material	Due
1	5/11	Introduction and Syllabus Review https://virtualny.ashp.cuny.edu/cholera.html Discussion on keywords: Expansionism, Manifest Destiny, Exceptionalism	
	5/12	Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The American Scholar”	
	5/13	Emerson continued	Quiz 1
	5/14	Margaret Fuller, <i>Woman in Nineteenth Century</i>	

	5/15	Fuller continued Workshop on Reflection Papers	Quiz 2
2	5/18	Edgar Allan Poe, <i>The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym</i>	
	5/19	Poe continued	
	5/20	Poe continued	Quiz 3
	5/21	Toni Morrison, <i>Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination</i> (excerpts)	Reflection Paper 1 due
	5/22	Morrison continued	
3	5/25	Holiday	
	5/26	Frederick Douglass, <i>The Heroic Slave</i>	
	5/27	Douglass continued	
	5/28	Douglass continued	
	5/29	Douglass continued	Quiz 4
4	6/1	Catharine Maria Sedgwick, <i>Hope Leslie</i> Workshop on writing a research prospectus & annotated bibliography	
	6/2	Sedgwick continued	
	6/3	Sedgwick continued	Quiz 5
	6/4	Herman Melville, <i>Benito Cereno</i>	Reflection Paper 2 due
	6/5	Melville continued Workshop on Final Research Paper	Quiz 6
5	6/8	William Apess, "An Indian's Looking-Glass for the White Man"	Research

			Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography due
	6/9	Apress continued	Quiz 7
	6/10	Harriet Wilson, <i>Our Nig</i>	
	6/11	Wilson continued	
	6/12	Wilson continued	Quiz 8
6	6/15	Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and M.J. Cage, “The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolution”	
	6/16	Stanton, Anthony, and Cage continued	Quiz 9
	6/17	Mark Rifkin, <i>Settler Common Sense: Queerness and Everyday Colonialism in the American Renaissance</i> (excerpts)	Research Paper due
	6/18	No Class	
	6/19	Wrap-Up and Course Review	

Grading/Assessment Rubric:

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage (Point %)
A	4.0	93–100
A-	3.67	90–92

B+	3.33	87–89
B	3.0	83–86
B-	2.67	80–82
C+	2.33	77–79
C	2.0	73–76
C-	1.67	70–72
D+	1.33	67–69
D	1.0	63–66
D-	0.67	60–62
E	0.00	0–59

Grade Meanings

A Student did what the assignment asked at a superior level, meeting all the composition objectives required of the assignment. Additionally, his or her work shows originality, creativity, and demonstrates that the student took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.

B Student did what the assignment asked at a quality level, meeting most of the composition objectives required of the assignment. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

C Student did what the assignment asked but overlooked some of the composition objectives. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.

D Student neglected some basic requirements of the assignment and completed it at a poor-quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete, and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.

E An E is usually reserved for students who do not do the work or do not come to class.

However, if a student's work is shoddy, shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, and/or an inability to meet the composition objectives, he or she will receive a failing grade.