I. COURSE DESCRIPTION
English 317, American Literature is a one-semester course for which the student receives three credits. The course is a survey of the works of early American writers from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. In this course, students are exposed to an interweaving and unfolding of disparate threads and literary voices that will give them an integrated vision that crosses boundaries of ethnic, gender, or regional perspectives.

II. COURSE RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVE
English 317 helps students develop an understanding of and appreciation for the literary and cultural context of male and female writers from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, the historical and intellectual currents that influenced them, and the literary genres they employed. In this course students will be able to demonstrate in their writing and speaking an understanding of literature through interpretation, analysis, synthesis, and presentation.

Many of the students who take E317 will become English educators; such students must learn to use speaking and observing as major forms of inquiry and reflection. Therefore, students will be responsible not only for learning the course material, but for being able to present it (see “special course requirements,” below). Whether or not an individual is in fact an education major, it is true that when a student takes responsibility for presenting material, she learns it in a more dynamic way, as do her classmates. In this way, the successful student of E317 is expected to become an ambassador for the arts and humanities, and for benefits of critical thinking and judgment as lifelong habits (*ref. NCATE matrix 2.4, 2.7, esp. 3.2*).

III. COURSE OVERVIEW:
English 317, American literature I, is a one-semester, three-credit course that surveys the works of early American writing from the beginnings to the flowering of 19th century Romanticism. Besides acquainting students with a body of remarkable literature that has recently been reshaped to include far more disparate voices than were once excluded, the course will seek to both question and develop narratives that link literary texts to one another through relations of affinity, influence, interconnection, and culture. This course is dedicated to finding cultural links and crossings, and is particularly interested in those moments in American texts in which writers move across boundaries of social class, gender, race, and culture in the widest sense. In teaching and learning about United States authors, it is particularly useful to find connections and contrasts between Nathaniel Hawthorne and Frederick Douglass, or Ann Bradstreet and Phillis Wheatley, or Samson Occom and Chief Joseph, at least in how their writings differingly "read" and reinterpreted the North American world whose stage they shared.
IV. COURSE COMPETENCIES

1. Institutional Outcomes

E317 American Literature I is well aligned with the University’s goal of developing students and teaching candidates who are effective performers, reflective decision-makers, and humanistic practitioners.

- The humanities content of E317, and the student’s responsibility for demonstrating a keen appreciation of it is designed towards developing **effective performers**. Students engage the literature and culture of early America wide variety of ethnic and cultural perspectives, including the voices of women, Native-American, African-Americans, and European-Americans.

- **Reflective decision making** is developed through consideration of the ethical, moral, and spiritual issues surrounding the literature of a people who claimed divine providence as their guide, but countenanced atrocities (slavery, Amerindian genocide) repugnant to the modern mind. Students relate their own backgrounds to the backgrounds of the writers, to examine the ideas and cultural settings that have informed contemporary cultures and the culture of times past.

- **Humanistic practice** is engendered when the students demonstrate cross-cultural understanding and appreciation of others’ beliefs, values, and cultural constructions, as well as their own.

This course offers the students an understanding of how American Literature began in the 1600s as an obscure offshoot of the English Renaissance and how it grew gradually out of its provincial status and underwent its own Renaissance in the nineteenth century.

2. Specific Learning Objectives:

The course is designed to equip students to acquire the following competencies:

A. To introduce students to pre-national literature in America and to acquaint them with writers whose works reflect the Puritan sense of history, self and style;

B. To acquaint students with the emergent national literature of the Enlightenment era as reflected in writing that was often political in content, satiric in tone, and didactic in purpose;

C. To aid students in understanding the national literature and Romantic individualism of nineteenth-century America and the reason for calling this period an American Renaissance;

D. To introduce students to the major genres of each literary period as these genres reflect the thinking in various periods;

E. To understand the thematic or ideological content of certain genres in American literature;

F. To understand what makes some genres more “American” than others;

G. and to acquaint students with themes that are characteristic of, though not necessarily exclusive to the American experience, and that includes the following:
the problem of American identity;
the individual and the community;
the problem/expression of literary authority;
the American Dream;
the immigrant experience, family relationships and attitudes toward children;
race, segregation, and slavery;
gender issues of women’s lives, works, vision, politics, and war.

IV. EXPECTED MEASURABLE OUTCOMES

Through
• typed papers,
• in-class essays and exams,
• formal class presentations,
• typed papers, and
• formal and informal class discussion, *(ref. NCATE matrix 3.2.2, 3.2.3, 3.2.4)*

Students will at the end of English 317 be able

A. to discuss a group of writers who neither had the intention of creating a native literature, nor regarded themselves as professional authors;

B. to explain why early explorers, settlers, and colonials took up the pen for utilitarian purposes;

C. to discuss the intellectual currents of the colonies (Puritanism, Anglicanism, Separatism, Catholicism and Quakerism);

D. to analyze the various genres which comprised the best writing of the era: history, diaries and poetry;

E. to understand how the writers of the Enlightenment era became more and more American as the century progressed, until the Revolutionary War ended their Colonial status;

F. to discuss the social setting for philosophical, political, and occasional writing;

G. to discuss the various genres: satire, short moralistic tales, and (toward the end of the period) novels and plays;

H. to show the importance of Deism, Rationalism, and Revivalism on authors of the Revolutionary period;

I. to discuss the writer of the Romantic Period as a professional author, though many writers still regarded literature as an avocation;

J. to analyze the intellectual currents of the Romantic period: nationalism, romanticism and transcendentalism;
K. to understand why the so-called American Renaissance produced classic examples of fiction and poetry;

L. to discuss the basis for understanding the political writing of the period;

M. to understand the significance of travel literature;

N. and to discuss the relationship that existed between formal and informal literature and realize that the same fulfilled both.

COURSE CONTENT

1. The Literature of Colonial America
   · Christopher Columbus (1451)
   · Captain John Smith (1580-1631)
   · William Bradford (1590-1657)
   · Thomas Morton
   · John Winthrop (1588-1649)
   · Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672)
   · Michael Wigglesworth “Day of Doom”
   · Edward Taylor (1642-1729)
   · Cotton Mather (1663-1730)
   · Mary Rowlandson
   · John Woolman
   · Jonathan Edwards

2. The Literature of Reason and Revolution
   · Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790)
   · Olaudah Equiano (1745-1797)
   · Thomas Paine (1737-1809)
   · Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826)
   · Phillis Wheatley (1754-1784)
   · Philip Freneau (1752-1832)

3. The Age of Romanticism I
   · David Walker
   · Washington Irving (1783-1859)
   · James Fenimore Cooper
   · Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849)
   · Nathaniel Hawthorne
   (there will be an exam after The Scarlet Letter)

4. The Romantics, continued
   · Margaret Fuller
   · Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
   · Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862)
   · Herman Melville (1819-1891)
· Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896)
· Frederick Douglass (1817-1895)
· Harriet Ann Jacobs (1813-1897)
· Walt Whitman (1819-1892)
· Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

IV. SPECIAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Each student is required to make an oral presentation, that will also serve as a basis for a critical review.

1. Who were the Puritans, and what did they believe?
   Name: Due Date

2. Who were the Quakers, and what did they believe?
   (And why did the Puritans hate them so?)
   Name: Due Date:

3. Mary Rowlandson, her captivity narrative, and King Phillip’s War
   Name: Due Date:

4. Benjamin Franklin: The Man and his writing:
   Name: Due Date

5. Thomas Jefferson: Backgrounds of the man and of his “Declaration”
   Name: Due Date:

   Notes on the State Virginia (and the issue of race)
   Name: Due Date:

6. David Walker From: The Appeal
   Name: Due Date:

   Name: Due Date:

   “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”
   Name: Due Date:

8. James Fenimore Cooper: “The Deerslayer”
   Name: Due Date:

   Name: Due Date:
“The Fall of the House of Usher”
Name: Due Date:

“The Masque of the Red Death”
Name: Due Date:

Name: Due Date:

“Rappaccini’s Daughter”
Name: Due Date:

“The Scarlet Letter: Getting to know Hester and Pearl”
Name: Due Date:

“Dimmesdale and Chillingsworth”
Name: Due Date:

“The resolution: Who is saved, who is not?”
Name: Due Date:

11. Ralph Waldo Emerson: “Nature”
Name: Due Date:

“Self Reliance”
Name: Due Date:

“The American Scholar”
Name: Due Date:

12. “What you need to know about Margaret Fuller (But Never knew to ask)”
Name: Due Date:

Name: Due Date:

“Civil Disobedience”
Name: Due Date:

13. Herman Melville: “Bartleby the Scrivener”
Name: Due Date:

(The death of Uncle Tom from Uncle Tom’s Cabin)
Name: Due Date:
15 Frederick Douglass: “Narrative of the Life” (How he learned to read and write, and the famous root episode)
   Name: Due Date:

16 Walt Whitman; “Song of Myself”
   Name: Due Date:

“When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”
   Name: Due Date:

The following critical readings are in the library

Ray B. Browne and Martin Light, Critical Approaches to American Literature, Volume I

Lawrence Buell, Literary Transcendentalism

H. S. Commager, The American Mind

Everett Emerson, ed. Major Writers of Early American Literature 1764-1789: The Revolutionary Years Everett Emerson, ed.

Puritanism in America, 1620-1750, Perry Miller, The Puritans: A Sourcebook of Their Writings, Volume I

Charles Shapiro, ed. Twelve Original Essays on Great American Novels

The Gale Literature Criticism Series will be of help to you. Look for books in the LC (Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800), NCLC (Nineteenth Century Literature Criticism), and DLB (Dictionary of Literary Biography). The following volumes of the DLB should be particularly helpful:

Dictionary of Literary Biography - The American Renaissance in New England. Volume 1

Dictionary of Literary Biography - Antebellum Writers in New York & the South. Volume 3

Dictionary of Literary Biography - American Colonial Writers, 1606-1734. Volume 24

Dictionary of Literary Biography - Afro-American Writers Before the Harlem Renaissance. Volume 50

Dictionary of Literary Biography - American Short Story Writers Before 1880. Volume 74

IF YOU CAN’T FIND WHAT YOU’RE LOOKING FOR, ASK A LIBRARIAN FOR HELP!!

Of course, there are many, many internet sources that are of help. For my list of recommended internet sources, see the list of selected internet links at the end of this document.
Guidelines for class presentations:
- Plan your presentations
- Speak TO the class; don’t read something downloaded from the web!!
- Make eye-contact.
- Reading some of the text can be interesting, but you have to MAKE IT interesting! For instance, use inflections in your voice, and call on another member of the class to help.
- Relate your material to other course material and to anything else that will help the students.
- Ask for questions.
- Ask questions. Leave the audience something to consider.
- When possible, give the class something to look at or listen to. Pictures of Columbus, the Puritans, slaves, and the founding often reveal much about changing cultural attitudes. Examples can be found at http://www.learner.org/amerpass/. This doesn’t have to be elaborate; 10 copies of two pictures can do much to illustrate a point.

(ref NCATE matrix 3.2.1-3.2.5; 4.7; 3.6.2)

Grading criteria for class presentations:
Summary of the material (present the main points in a way that is easily understandable) 38%
Relationship to the course material in general (other authors, issues, and periods) 20%
Showmanship (presentation, audio/visual, eye-contact, posture, dress) 23%
Clarity and pronunciation of speech 10%
Questions and Answers 10%
Top Possible score: 101% (!!)

Not only will the instructor evaluate the student; students will be required, at the end of each class, to evaluate the student presentations of that class (yikes!). (ref. NCATE matrix 4.6, 4.7, 4.8).

Writings

The following formal papers are required:

1. At the midterm, each student will submit a comparison paper on two of the works the class has studied (this will NOT be on the same topic as the class presentation);

2. Each student will be responsible for a paper on The Scarlet Letter

3. Each student will write a paper, due at the end of the semester, which relates the topic of his or her paper to one or two other major works we study in the course of the semester.

VI. METHOD OF EVALUATION

Students must complete four unit examinations in addition to the mid-term and final examinations. Quizzes will be given throughout the semester. All unit examinations will be announced. Quizzes will not always be announced.

Quizzes .............................................................. 13%
Unit Tests .......................................................... 15%
List of suggested internet links:

The following websites are listed roughly in order of usefulness, in the instructor’s opinion. (Some of the best sites are not the most useful, because they demand a high speed, multi-media connection).

**Anthology of American Literature** by George McMichael companion website.
http://cwx.prenhall.com/bookbind/pubbooks/mcmichael/
Like most textbooks today, yours supports a companion website. Features of this site include an interactive timeline, dynamic web links which are a valuable source of supplemental information, author profiles, essay questions, bulletin board discussion areas. It’s pretty good.

**Companion Website to Norton Anthology of American Literature**
http://www.wwnorton.com/naal/
An older website than the prenhall American Lit. website, this one has recently been extensively refreshed. Very good.

**C-Span American Writers**
http://www.americanwriters.org/index_short_list.asp
I love this site!! It is a true multi-media site. Filled with information and material, and very lively. You need a highspeed network connection to appreciate it.

**American Passages: A literary survey**
http://www.learner.org/amerpass/
Want to put together your own slide show on American Lit? This is the place to go! A co-production of WWNorton and PBS, this is an interactive, multi-media site designed to support a college level American Literature course. Excellent!

**Early American Literature 1600 - 1900, Resources**
http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/amlitfirst.htm
A link to links. So far, it has always been kept up to date.

**PAL Perspectives in American Literature: A Research and Reference Guide**
http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/table.html

**The Seventeenth Century: Echoes of the Renaissance and Reformation**
http://lonestar.texas.net/~mseifert/amlit1.html
Lecture notes from Michael S. Seiferth

**Resources for American Literature**
http://www.cwrl.utexas.edu/~daniel/amlit/amlit.html
Analysis and criticism of works by Lorraine Hansberry, Frank Norris,

Voice of the Shuttle: English Literature
http://vos.ucsb.edu/
English & American literature. Literary criticism. This site keeps growing! Must visit

Outline of American Literature
http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/oal/amlitweb.htm
From USIA. Literary movements; time periods. Excellent site, From U.S. Information Agency

American Literary Movements
http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/litfram.html
Defines literary terms, timeline, biography and links for authors.

The American Renaissance and Transcendentalism
http://www.pbs.org/wnet/ihas/icon/transcend.html
From PBS. I Hear America Singing

Electronic Archives for Teaching the American Literatures
http://www.georgetown.edu/tamlit/tamlit-home.html
Essays, syllabi, bibliographies

Romancing the Indian
http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/HNS/Indians/main.html
Comparison of the sentimentalizing and demonizing representations of American Indians in the works of James Fenimore Cooper, Mark Twain and other nineteenth-century American authors.

Who Was Benjamin Banneker?
http://www.progress.org/banneker/bb.html
Biography from Banneker Center for Economic Justice

The World of Benjamin Franklin
http://sln.fl.edu/franklin/rotten.html
Biography; Franklin as a scientist, inventor, statesman, printer, philosopher, musician and economist;

American Transcendentalism Web
http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/
Begun in Spring 1999 by Virginia Commonwealth University graduate students studying in Professor Ann Woodlief's class in Studies in American Transcendentalism. This is a major resource for students of American Literature.
The Cambridge History of English and American Literature

An Early American Almanac History; facsimile of first almanac published in 1725

Fire and Ice; Puritan and Reformed Writings
http://www.puritansermons.com/

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Richardson, Robert D. *Emerson: The Mind on Fire*  

Richardson, Robert D. *Henry Thoreau: A Life of the Mind*  

Reynolds, David S. *Walt Whitman's America: A Cultural Biography*  
NY: Knopf Publishing Group, 1996.


Stone, Albert C. “Identify and Art in Frederick Douglass’ Narrative.”  

Sundquist, Eric J. “Slavery, Revolution and the American Renaissance.”  