**Professor: Lauren Klein (lauren.klein@lmc.gatech.edu)**

Office Hours: M/W 1:00-2:00pm, Skiles 359 (and by appointment)

# Course Website: http://lkleincourses.lcc.gatech.edu/formac12/

**LMC 3508 BC: Formations of American Culture**

**M/W/F 12:05-12:55pm, Skiles 354**

# Course Prerequisites

ENGL 1102

**Core Area**

Humanities

# Course Description

In this class we will explore the origins and expressions of American culture from the time of “first contact” to the Civil War. By sampling letters, personal narratives, poetry, essays, short stories, and novels, among other cultural forms, we will question what constitutes American cultural—and national—identity, and how literary works, in particular, contribute to the formation, preservation, and promulgation of a national sense of self. In the process, we will also discover how many of today’s most potent social and political issues, such as the role of government, class stratification, racial division, gender roles, moral and religious values, and scientific and technological change, can in fact be traced to America’s earliest cultural records.

**Learning Outcomes**

* Students will read a range of writings (and other cultural texts) from the time of first contact to the Civil War.
* Students will discover how early American issues relate to the present day.
* Students will become aware of the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, and they will be able to analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts.
* Read, analyze, and interpret not only cultural projects such as film, literature, art and new media, but also scientific and technical documents.
* Recognize a variety of social, political, and philosophical theories and apply those theories to creative and scientific texts, as well as to their own cultural observations.
* Recognize the traditions and conventions of literature, film, and other forms of narrative art, and analyze those traditions and conventions in specific cultural contexts.

# Required Texts

Available at Engineer’s Bookstore and online:

Nina Baym et al, eds. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature, Package 1*

(Volumes A&B), 8th ed. (Norton, 2012, ISBN-13: 978-0393913095)

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, ed. Cathy Davidson (Oxford UP, 1987,

ISBN-13: 978-0195042382)

Nathanial Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, ed. Robert Levine (Norton,

2006, ISBN-13: 978-0393924763)

Additional readings to be posted on course website.

# List of Graded Assignments

Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows:

* Participation and quizzes: 20%
* Discussion assignment: 5%
* Blog posts: 25%
* Portfolio I: 10%
* Portfolio II: 15%
* Final portfolio: 25%

All assignments will be graded on an A-F scale.

When calculating final grades, I convert letter grades to a simplified 4.0 scale:

A = 4 B = 3 C = 2 D = 1 F = 0

If you are curious about the criteria I employ when grading blog posts, please refer to this chart developed by Professor Mark Sample of George Mason University:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **GRADE** | **CHARACTERISTICS** |
| **A** | **Exceptional**. The blog entry is focused and coherently integrates examples with explanations or analysis. The entry demonstrates awareness of its own limitations or implications, and it considers multiple perspectives when appropriate. The entry reflects in-depth engagement with the topic. |
| **B** | **Satisfactory.** The blog entry is reasonably focused, and explanations or analysis are mostly based on examples or other evidence. Fewer connections are made between ideas, and though new insights are offered, they are not fully developed. The entry reflects moderate engagement with the topic. |
| **C** | **Underdeveloped.** The blog entry is mostly description or summary, without consideration of alternative perspectives, and few connections are made between ideas. The entry reflects passing engagement with the topic. |
| **D** | **Limited.** The blog entry is unfocused, or simply rehashes previous comments, and displays no evidence of student engagement with the topic. |
| **F** | **No Credit.** The blog entry is missing or consists of one or two disconnected sentence. |

**Attendance Policy**

You are allowed three excused absences. Beginning with the fourth absence, your overall course grade will be lowered by a full letter grade (e.g. A to B) for each unexcused absence. This means that if you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course.

Please be respectful to your fellow students and arrive on time. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late, you will be considered absent for that class. If you absolutely must miss a class meeting, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance in order to make alternate arrangements.

**ADAPTS Contact Information**

Students with disabilities should self-report to the Access Disabled Assistance Program for Tech Students (ADAPTS) at:

Smithgall Student Services Building, Suite 220

Phone: (404) 894-2564

TTD: (404) 894-1664

Email: [adaptsinfo@gatech.edu](mailto:adaptsinfo@gatech.edu)

<http://adapts.gatech.edu/>

# Honor Code Statement

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in an F on the assignment and possibly in the course, as well as potential disciplinary action. For more information, please refer to the definition of “academic misconduct” included in the Georgia Tech honor code, available online at:

<http://www.honor.gatech.edu/>

If you are unsure as to what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me before submitting your assignment.

**Week by Week Schedule**

**Unit 1: Origins, Contact, and Conflict**

* **Monday, August 20th**

Course Overview

* **Wednesday, August 22nd**

Christopher Columbus, letters from the first and fourth voyages (*NAA* 34-6)

In class: [John White/Theodor De Bry engravings](http://www.virtualjamestown.org/images/white_debry_html/introduction.html)

* **Friday, August 24th**

“The Iroquois Creation Story” and “The Navajo Creation Story (*NAA* 21-34)

In class: from Terrence Mallick, *A New World*

Due

Blog I: Intro

* **Monday, August 26th**

William Bradford, “Of Plymouth Plantation,” from Book 1 (*NAA* 121-138)

* **Wednesday, August 28th**

William Bradford, “Of Plymouth Plantation, from Book 2, “Dealings with the

Natives” (*NAA* 140-143)

Jill Lepore, “Beware of Any Linguist,” from *The Name of War* (PDF)

* **Friday, August 30th**

Mary Rowlandson, “A Narrative of the Captivity…” (*NAA* 256-288)

* **Monday, September 3rd** –NO CLASS, Labor Day
* **Wednesday, September 5th**

Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue" (*NAA* 208), "The Author to Her Book" (*NA*

225), "Here Follows Some Verses…" (*NAA* 232)

John Winthrop, “A Model of Christian Charity” (*NAA* 165-177)

Due

Blog II: On Contact

* **Friday, September 7th**

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter,* through Chapter 5 (*NA****B*** 450-499)

* **Monday, September 10th** – NO CLASS, Professor out of town

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter,* Chapters 6-15 (*NA****B***499-550)

* **Wednesday, September 12th**

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter,* Chapters 16 to end (*NA****B*** 550-594)

* **Friday, September 14th**

In class screening: Will Gluck, *Easy A*

Due

Blog III: On Conflict

**Unit 2: Awakenings, Enlightenments, and Revolutions**

* **Monday, September 17th**

In class: Discussion of *Easy A*

* **Wednesday, September 19th:**

Jonathan Edwards, "Personal Narrative" (*NAA* 396-406),

Samson Occom, from "A Short Narrative of my Life" (*NAA* 446-8)

* **Friday, September 21st**

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography,* Part I (*NAA* 480-526)

Due

Blog IV: On Awakenings

* **Monday, September 24th**

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography*,Parts II and III (*NAA* 526-571)

* **Wednesday, September 26th**

Olaudah Equiano, from "The Interesting Narrative…" (*NAA* 687-721)

* **Friday, September 28th**

Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought…" (*NAA* 764), “To the Right Honorable

William…” (*NAA* 765), “Letter to Samson Occom” (*NAA* 763)

Due IN CLASS:

First midterm portfolio

* **Monday, October 1st**

Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (*NAA* 668-677)

* **Wednesday, October 3rd**

J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, from *Letters from an American Farmer* (*NAA*

604-625)

* **Friday, October 5th**

John Adams and Abigail Adams, selected letters (*NAA* 625-639)

* **Monday, October 8th**

Anonymous, *Amelia: Or, the Faithless Briton* (PDF)

Due

Blog V: On Revolutions

**Unit 3: Agency and Identities**

* **Wednesday, October 10th**

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, Volume I (1-64)

* **Friday, October 12th**

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple*, Volume II (65-120)

* **Monday, October 15th** – NO CLASS, Fall Break
* **Wednesday, October 17th**

In class screening: *Breaking Dawn, Part I*

* **Friday, October 19th**

In class: Discussion of *Breaking Dawn*

Due

Blog VI: On Agency

* **Monday, October 22nd**

Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle" (*NAB* 25-41)

* **Wednesday, October 24th**

James Fenimore Cooper, from *The Pioneers* (*NAB* 62-79)

* **Friday, October 26th**

Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie, from* Volume I (*NAB* 86-101)

William Apess, “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man” (*NAB* 154-159)

Due

Blog VII: On Identities

* **Monday, October 29th**

Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Nature” (*NAB* 211-243)

* **Wednesday, October 31st**

Ralph WaldoEmerson, “The American Scholar” (*NAB* 243-265) and “Self

Reliance” (NAB 269-286)

* **Friday, November 2nd**

Henry David Thoreau, from *Walden*, Chapters I, II, IX, and XVI (*NAB* 981-

1033; 1071-1085; 1127-1136)

**Unit 4: Resistance and Renaissances**

* **Monday, November 5th**

Henry David Thoreau, "Resistance to Civil Government" (*NAB* 961-979)

Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (*NAB* 2140-3)

* **Wednesday, November 7th** – NO CLASS, Professor out of town

Due VIA EMAIL:

Second midterm portfolio

* **Friday, November 9th**

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative* (*NAB* 1170-1239)

* **Monday, November 12th**

Herman Melville, “Benito Cereno” (*NAB* 1526-1582)

* **Wednesday, November 14th**

Edgar Allan Poe, “The Purloined Letter” (*NAB* 701-713), The Fall of the House

of Usher" (*NA*B654-666), “The Man Who Was Used Up” (PDF)

* **Friday, November 16th** – NO CLASS, Professor out of town

NathanielHawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables,* Chapters I-VI (3-71)

* **Monday, November 19th**

In class screening: Quentin Tarantino, *Django Unchained*

* **Wednesday, November 21st**– NO CLASS, Professor out of town

Due

Blog VIII: On Resistance

* **Friday, November 23rd** – NO CLASS, Thanksgiving
* **Monday, November 26th**

NathanielHawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables,* Chapters VII to

XIII (71-150)

* **Wednesday, November 28th**

NathanielHawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables,* Chapter XIV to end

(150-225)

* **Friday, November 30th**

Abraham Lincoln, “Address Delivered at the Dedication of the Cemetery at

Gettysburg” (*NAB* 738), Second Inaugural Address” (*NAB* 739)

Walt Whitman, "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" (*NAB* 1387-1392), “When

Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (*NAB* 1402-1409)

Due

Blog IX: On Renaissance

* **Monday, December 3rd**

In class: Whitman discussion, continued.

* **Wednesday, December 5th**

In class: Portfolio workshop

* **Wednesday, December 7th**

In class: Portfolio workshop

**Final portfolio due VIA EMAIL:**

* **Tuesday, December 11th at 11:30am**