

**ENGL 1313:  
The Beginnings of American Literature  
REVISED**

**Fall 2023  
MWF 12:30-1:20  
DH 308**

**Dr. Claudia Stokes (she/her)  
DH 328, 999-7833  
cstokes@trinity.edu**

Office Hours:  
Tuesdays 2-3 and Thursdays 10-12  
and by appointment

*We acknowledge this place known as San Antonio as the traditional homeland of many Native American peoples who were called Coahuiltecan by the Spanish. 200 tribes/bands/clans were documented in historical records and include the Payaya, Auteca Paguame, Jarame, Pompopa, and Borrado, as well as other aboriginal peoples such as the Esto'k Gna who continue to carry their traditional lifeways.*

### **Course Description**

This course examines some of the major concerns and interests of American literature from the colonial era through the nineteenth century. We will study the numerous aesthetic movements that informed literature in this period, such as the Puritan plain style, American Romanticism, and literary realism. We will also learn about the various literary genres and forms that became popular amid these aesthetic movements, among them the sermon, the autobiography, the essay, and the novel. The class will also cover such influential movements as transcendentalism, sentimentalism, and naturalism.

### **Course Requirements**

Students are required to do all assigned readings and come to class prepared. This class includes several long works, so take advantage of light weeks by reading ahead. Course requirements include regular reading quizzes, two essays, a midterm, and a final exam. All essays are due by midnight on the day assigned and must be uploaded as Word docs to the class site on Canvas. If you are struggling to complete classwork, please contact Dr. Stokes as soon as you are able. Please contact Dr. Stokes if you feel you must submit work late. Students who bring their laptops to class are not permitted to read unrelated materials, to check their email, etc. All cell phones should be put away during class. Texting and emailing during class are not permitted.

Students are expected to attend all classes. Students may miss three classes without penalty; students who miss five or more classes may fail the course. Students with COVID or other health conditions may request to Zoom into class; please email Dr. Stokes to request permission. Excused absences include religious observances, travel required for classes or teams, and major medical or life events. If you are struggling to attend class because of personal or mental health reasons, please contact me as soon as you are able.

Exams will be made available on Canvas for students to complete on their own. Students will be held to the highest standards of the Honor Code and may not consult any sources—such as notes, texts, web searches—during the exam period. At the completion of the exam period, students must upload the exam to Canvas. Students registered with SAS may receive additional time and any necessary accommodations.

### **Honor Code**

All work must be the student's own; use of ChatGBT and other forms of artificial intelligence are strictly forbidden and will be treated as a violation of the university's honor code. Students are required to pledge all written work that is submitted for a grade: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work" and their signature. The pledge may

be abbreviated “pledged” with a signature.

Any violations of the university’s academic integrity policy and the Honor Code will be reported to the Academic Honor Council, which will investigate, adjudicate, and assign a punishment within certain guidelines if a violation has been verified.

### **Accommodation**

Students who have registered with the Student Accessibility Services may take exams in the SAS with additional time as well as any other necessary accommodations. Students are expected to contact SAS to schedule those exams and may do so by calling 210-999-8528 or emailing [sas@trinity.edu](mailto:sas@trinity.edu). Students who are ill or otherwise unable may request to Zoom into class without penalty. Students will be referred to using their preferred names and personal pronouns. Please contact Dr. Stokes directly if you wish to discuss further.

### **Title IX/Sexual Misconduct**

All faculty are required to report to the Title IX Coordinator any instances of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, non-consensual sexual intercourse, non-consensual sexual contact, sexual exploitation, intimate partner violence, stalking, and related retaliation. Faculty and staff reports do not initiate the complaint process, but if you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment, please share this information directly with the Title IX Coordinator or one of the individuals who has been designated as a confidential resource on campus.

### **Trigger warnings**

A few course readings contain violence, sexual assault, and racist language. The syllabus clearly identifies the texts that include such content, and students are advised to exercise caution as needed.

### **Curricular Requirements**

This course satisfies both the Understanding Literature and the Arts requirement of the Common Curriculum. It also satisfies both the Understanding Diversity and Historical Perspectives Capacities of the Pathways Curriculum. Upon successful completion of an Understanding Diversity (UD) course, students will have demonstrated the ability to:

- identify and articulate the diverse human experiences, identities, or cultures in the United States.
- analyze how social or cultural systems adapt to changing historical circumstances.
- analyze differences in power and privilege among groups and how these differences may lead to the domination, exploitation, or exclusion of some groups by others. gather and evaluate information from scholarly sources concerning diversity.

Upon successful completion of a Historical Perspectives course, students will have the demonstrated ability to

- analyze major historical events, contexts or processes.
- use these events, contexts and processes to better understand the unique character of cultures, institutions or ideas.

### **Grades**

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Reading quizzes	10%
First essay	20%
Second essay	25%
Midterm	20%
Final exam	25%

### **Evaluation Criteria**

Exams will be evaluated for their accuracy, relevance, and thoroughness. Essays will be evaluated on the following qualities: accuracy; methodical argumentation; textual evidence; organization; mechanical and grammatical regularity; and interpretive analysis.

Grades are assigned according to the following standard:

100	A+	99-94	A	93-90	A-
89-88	B+	87-84	B	83-80	B-
79-78	C+	77-74	C	73-70	C-
69-65	D	<64	F		

### Course Books

- *Broadview Anthology of American Literature*

- Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage* (Broadview)

Students may purchase alternate editions, use library copies, or read digital editions. Additional readings are available on the class Canvas site. Students are expected to bring all assigned readings to class, whether in print or digital format.

#### Week 1

8/21	Introduction
8/23	"New England" from <i>Heath Anthology</i> (Canvas)
8/25	John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity" (UD)

#### Week 2

8/28	Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," continued
8/30	Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "The Author to Her Book," "Here Follows Some Verses upon the Burning of Our House"
9/1	Mary Rowlandson, "From a True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson" (UD)
	Trigger <u>warning</u> : this text contains scenes of violence and racist language

#### Week 3

9/4	<b>Class cancelled in observance of Labor Day</b>
9/6	Rowlandson, "From a True History," continued
9/8	Phillis Wheatley Peters, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To S.M., A Young African Painter, on Seeing His Works," "To His Excellency, George Washington" (UD)

#### Week 4

9/11-13	Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence"
9/15	Benjamin Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> (Part I) (UD)

#### Week 5

9/18-22	Franklin, <i>Autobiography</i> (Part II)
9/22	<b>First essay due at noon</b>

#### Week 6

9/25	<b>Class cancelled in observance of Yom Kippur</b>
9/27	Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle"
9/29	"Rip Van Winkle" (continued), Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" (Canvas)

#### Week 6

10/2	Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar" and "Divinity School Address"
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10/4-6 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

Week 7

10/9 Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*  
 10/11 Edgar Allan Poe, "Annabel Lee," "The Raven"  
 10/13 **Fall break—no class**

Week 8

10/16 **Midterm Exam (Canvas)**  
 10/18 Lydia Sigourney, "Death of an Infant," "Indian Names," "Slavery" (UD)  
 10/20 Frances Harper, "The Slave Mother," "Bible Defense of Slavery," "The Fugitive's Wife" (UD)

Week 9

10/23-27 Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (1881 edition) (UD)  
 10/27 Humanities Day

Week 10

10/30-11/3 Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (UD)  
Trigger warning: this text contains scenes of violence and racist language

Week 11

11/6 Louisa May Alcott, "Psyche's Art" (Canvas)  
 11/8 Emily Dickinson, "Faith is a Fine invention," "There's a certain Slant of light," "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," "A Clock stopped—," "Publication-- is the Auction," "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun," "Tell all the Truth"  
 11/10 William Dean Howells, "Editha" (Canvas)

Week 12

11/13 Mark Twain, "Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog," "The Old Ram" (Canvas)  
 11/15 Sui Sin Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" (Canvas)  
 11/17 Catch-up day  
**Second essay due by noon**

Week 13

11/20-24 **No classes in observance of Thanksgiving**

Week 14

11/27-12/1 Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*  
 Trigger warning: this text contains scenes of violence

Week 15

12/4 Review and course evaluation

**THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE HELD ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14 FROM 12:00-3:00pm.** The exam will be made available on Canvas, and students will have precisely three hours to complete the exam on their own. Students registered with SAS may receive additional time. Students will be held to the highest standards of the Honor Code and may not consult any sources—such as notes, texts, web searches—during the exam period. At the completion of the exam period, students must upload the exam to Canvas.