



**Call & Response of
American Literature
Colonial to the Present
Dr. Kim Wells**



\$100 REWARD
WILL be given for the apprehension and delivery of my Servant Girl HARRIET. She is a light mulatto, 21 years of age, about 5 feet 4 inches high, of a thick and corpulent habit, having on her head a thick covering of black hair that curls naturally, but which can be easily combed straight. She speaks easily and fluently, and has an agreeable carriage and address. Being a good seamstress, she has been accustomed to dress well, has a variety of very fine clothes, made in the prevailing fashion, and will probably appear, if abroad, tricked out in gay and fashionable finery. As this girl absconded from the plantation of my son without any known cause or provocation, it is probable she designs to transport herself to the North.
The above reward, with all reasonable charges, will be given for apprehending her, or securing her in any prison or jail within the U. States.
All persons are hereby forewarned against harboring or entertaining her, or being in any way instrumental in her escape, under the most rigorous penalties of the law.
JAMES NORCOM
Edenton, N. C. June 30 1852



**ENG 210 Ref# 9245: Call & Response of American Literature
Syllabus– Fall 2008**

Instructor: Dr. Kim Wells
Office: Bronson Hall 241

Class Meets
Tuesday & Thursday
@ 11:00-12:15

Class Meets in: BH 223

Office Hours
MWF 11:00-12:50
TR 10-11
and by appointment

Contact Info
Home Phone: 318-918-0437 (Seriously. USE **ONLY** in emergency.)
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REQUIREMENTS

1. Baym, Nina, Ed. *The Norton Anthology of American Literature*, Shorter Seventh Edition. New York: Norton, 2008. (bring it to class *every day!*)
2. One additional novel, which you will choose from a list to read. More details will follow.
3. Your syllabus (bring it to class *every day!*)
4. Any collegiate dictionary.
5. Access to a computer. All assignments **MUST** be typed.

In addition to these requirements of this class, all students at LSUS are required to purchase the following handbook: Jewell, Thomas. *Understanding Plagiarism*. New York: Prentice Hall, 2004. You are expected, according to the LSUS student handbook, to use it throughout your academic career. Prerequisite for this class: ENG 105 & 115 (or their equivalent).

Briefly:

The course catalog describes this class as: “The study of major American authors from the colonial through the modern periods. This sounds pretty simple. But who are “major” American authors, and who gets to decide that? How does a survey course that covers such a long time period handle the huge amount of writing and authors and genres and texts that are American? And, by the way, what is American? What is “Literature?” Are these term flexible? Why have readers, from the Colonial period to the present, found the texts we will read in this course compelling? **How does literature of the past, present, and future “call” and “respond” to each other?** Have the texts we call American Literature changed over time? What has American Literature, (or generally literature) come to mean? Why might a young nation (America) yearn for a list of “classics,” define some writers as “major”? What are the values by which some literary books are valorized and some are not? *Let’s work to see what we think.*

This course will require of **you**:

- sharpness and sensitivity in the art of reading
- practice in the arts of adult-level writing and conversation
- a heightened sense of what comes after what, and possibly because of what, in the onward flow or tumult of cultural history
- lots of reading
- (did I say lots of reading?)

Grade Breakdown:

- Daily reading journal portfolio: worth 20% final grade. Due: Thursday December 4
- One out of formal class essay: worth 20% final grade
- 2 in-class 100 question exams: worth 30% final grade
- Final exam, 200 questions, short answer & multiple choice, worth 20% final grade
- Attendance/participation: 10%

Content/Reading Journals:

Every single day of class you are responsible for writing a 1-2 page reader response journal to the reading assignment we have that night. You will turn in all of your reading journals for a grade at the end of the semester in your portfolio. However, I will have two “checkup days” where you bring it to class so I can see it’s being done as we go, and not put off ‘til the last day of class. See calendar for dates due. You will get a list of response journals on which to model your work.

Essay

You will read one complete novel or poetry collection on your own, which you will be required to purchase or borrow or check out of a library. You will do a 5-8 page (typed, double-spaced, MLA format) critical research-based analysis of that novel. You will choose from a list of approved texts. These will be due throughout the semester. More details will follow in class.

Exams

Two 100 question, fact-based multiple choice + short essay exams will be given in this course. The first on Thursday October 2 will cover texts up ‘til Walt Whitman. The second, on Tuesday November 18 will cover texts ‘til Maxine Hong Kingston.

The Final Exam will be 200 questions, and will cover all texts *from the entire semester*, including the five authors who will not have been covered on E1&E2.

All three exams will consist of short answer essays and multiple choice questions.

Unless otherwise noted, always read the “introductory biography material” for each author we cover, as well as any individual literary works listed below.

Date	Reading Assignment
Tuesday September 2	Hurricane Day! Gustav, Go Away!
Thursday September 4	Syllabus; intro to Dr. Wells. American Literature on Youtube, poem by Robert Hayden, "American Journal (handout)."
Tuesday September 9 Puritans	Anne Bradstreet pp 97-117; Cotton Mather pp.143-149; Jonathan Edwards, from “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” 194-205.
Thursday September 11 Early African-American	Oludah Equiano, pp. 355-388; Phillis Wheatley p. 419 and the poem “On Being Brought From Africa to America” on page 420.
Tuesday September 16 American Gothic	Nathaniel Hawthorne, “Young Goodman Brown” pp. 605-614.
Thursday September 18 Poe & Melville	Poe, “The Raven.” p. 675. Melville pp. 1089-1092 “Bartleby the Scrivener” 1093-1118.
Tuesday September 23 Slavery	Sojourner Truth pp. 761-762; Harriet Jacobs, from “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” pp. 804-825.
Thursday September 25 Slavery	Harriet Beecher Stowe, all readings from “Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” Supplemental handouts on Miguel Covarrubias.

Tuesday September 30 New England's "American" Lit	Thoreau. "Resistance to Civil Government." pp. 829-end.
Thursday October 2	Whitman, pp. 991-995, "Song of Myself" pp. 1010-1057.
Tuesday October 7	Exam 1– entire class. Will cover up to Whitman. Reading portfolio checkup. Bring your portfolio to class so I can see that you're writing it. Daily grade points.
Thursday October 9 Dickinson	Dickinson, poems " "There's a Certain Slant of Light"; #479 "Because I could not stop for death"; #591 "I heard a fly buzz"; #1096 "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass." pp 1197-1200.
Tuesday October 14 Domestic Goddess	Sarah Orne Jewett "The White Heron" pp. 1590-1598.
Thursday October 16	Fall Break, no classes.
Tuesday October 21 African American Poets: This is the REMix	Langston Hughes pp. 2263-2270 and handout poem "Revival" and Gil Scott Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised" (handout) & Sarah Jones "Revolution" (Youtube clip, in class).
Thursday October 23 Re-Reading The Poet Laureate	Robert Frost. Poems: "Mending Wall" p. 1953, "The Road Not Taken" p. 1960, "Fire and Ice" p. 1963, "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" p. 1963.
Tuesday October 28 Modernism & Imagism	Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird, p. 1990.
Thursday November 30 Evolution of the American Gothic	In-class, watching movie. TBA. Write a "reading journal" review of the movie for your portfolio. <i>Come to class in costume to class & receive 1 free day "forgiveness" of reading journal .</i>
Tuesday November 4	Zora Neale Hurston "How it Feels to be Colored Me" pp. 2158-2161.
Thursday November 6 Harlem Renaissance	Ralph Ellison, excerpt from "Invisible Man" pp. 2429-2440.
Tuesday November 11 Southern Literature	Flannery O'Connor "Good Country People." pp. 2568-2583.
Thursday November 13	Maxine Hong Kingston "No Name Woman" pp. 2744-2753.

Tuesday November 18	Exam 2– entire class. Will cover up to Kingston. Reading portfolio checkup. Bring portfolio to class so I can see you’re writing in it.
Thursday November 20	Anne Sexton & Adrienne Rich. All poems, pp. 1138-1455.
Tuesday November 25 Contemporary Voices	Sandra Cisneros “Woman Hollering Creek” pp. 2820-2828.
Thursday November 27	No Class: Thanksgiving Break.
Tuesday December 2	Jhumpa Lahiri “Sexy” pp. 1681-end.
Thursday December 4	James Tiptree, Jr. “The Women Men Don’t See”. Available online at: http://www.scifi.com/scifiction/classics/classics_archive/tiptree2/tiptree21.html If the html doesn’t work for you, see me in my office to make a photocopy. Reading Journal Portfolio Due.
Final Exam: Tuesday December 9 at 10:30 AM. Note: Final will cover entire semester , including those we did not cover in previous exams (Sexton, Rich, Cisneros, Lahiri, Tiptree)!	