

## **ENG 535: Seminar in American Studies I**

Fall 2018

ECTS Credits: 7.5

Tue-Fri, 12:00-13:30, Room XΩΔ 01 102

Dr. Antonis Balasopoulos

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### **Subjectivity and Subjection: (Un)Freedom and the Making of American Culture 1776-1861**

#### **Course Syllabus**

##### **I. Course Description and Objectives**

For long, American literary history has been shaped by an emphasis on the newness, uniqueness and autonomy of American cultural experience. It was in this context that American literature was understood as both the product and the means of a pursuit of multiple kinds of metaphorical "emancipation": from prior literary models, influences and conventions, from the historical constraints of the past, from the religious oppression and social inequity plaguing the "Old World." More recently, writers and critics have attempted to interrogate these premises on a variety of levels. For one, they have reminded us that for all its emphasis on the spirit of a democratic ethos, traditional literary history has tended to downplay the haunting presence of social groups that have remained excluded from the emancipatory promise of universal human and political rights. In this respect, the historical experience and literary representation of black slavery, Native American dispossession and female disenfranchisement have become central means of understanding the implications and limits of the conventional tendency to found "freedom" upon the premises of individualistic autonomy and self-sufficiency.

The aim of this course is to build upon such recent critical insights in order to explore late 18th and 19th century writing as the expression of complex, interrelated and uneven relations among individual and collective subjects. In the process of examining literary and cultural texts, we will be asking a series of questions; what varieties of *unfreedom* does the broader literary legacy of these two centuries render visible? Are freedom and unfreedom strictly antithetical terms, or are they in some ways complementary and interdependent? Is individualism an adequate synonym for human emancipation? Do freedom and unfreedom have a universal and generalizable meaning, irrespectively of the racial, gender or class positions of different subjects? Is every call against unfreedom an expression of a compatible system of political values? Are literary representations of freedom and unfreedom always compatible with "objective" historical circumstances? And, last but not least, what is the place of writing, literacy and literature within the context of a pursuit of emancipation? Under this set of questions, the course aims to bring into dialogue and contestation a series of voices that have all-too-often been treated as separate, and to argue for a model of American literary history beyond both monolithic homogeneity and irredeemable fragmentation.

##### **II. Course Grading and Evaluation**

1) One (1) 8-10 page final term research paper (2,000-2,500 words). In this paper, you must attempt a comparative study of two of the literary or non-fictional texts addressed during the course. The essay must retain a tight focus and examine a concrete and well-defined issue (stylistic, thematic, structural, historical or theoretical) from a comparative perspective. Specific

guidelines and proposals on possible issues to consider will be provided, but you may wish to suggest your own topic to me (at least two weeks in advance). Use of critical research is required; you should be using at least **two** critical sources. This paper will be due at the end of the course, in lieu of a final examination. It will count towards **50 %** of the final course grade.

2) One (1) four-page essay (1,000 words). For this assignment, you must respond to one out of a series of questions on the texts studied in approximately the first half of the course. The essay is a take-home assignment, must be typed, and will count towards **30%** of your final grade. This assignment is in lieu of a mid-term exam and will be handed out approximately at the middle of the semester. You will have ten days to write and hand in the assignment.

3) One (1) 20-minute oral group presentation (presentation group size to be determined upon registration). The range of topics for the presentations is open: you may choose to discuss a specific theme/problem, a dense and provocative passage, a seemingly minor but critically rewarding scene or character, or an interpretive debate regarding the text which has attracted your interest. You must prepare a handout of the main issues you will cover and distribute it in class before the presentation. You are welcome to discuss your presentation plans with me ahead of time. The presentation option will count towards **20%** of your final grade.

### **III. Class policies**

Class attendance is required according to university policy. Please be punctual. If you miss more than a certain number of sessions, you may be advised to withdraw or be told to expect a failing grade in the course. All work for the course must be handed in within the deadlines provided. Please bear in mind that systematic failure to keep up with the reading load will impair your overall performance and jeopardize your course grade.

### **IV .Required Texts**

\* Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*. Penguin. ISBN: 9780140390629. Price at bookdepository: 13.82 euro

\* Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*. Modern Library. ISBN: 9780375760341. Price at bookdepository: 14.40 euro

\* Readings in Course Packet.

\* Purchasing the books (in the editions specified) is **your own responsibility**; no order has been placed in any bookstore. My personal recommendation is obtaining them at bookdepository.com, as they charge no delivery fee, but you may obtain them wherever you wish. Course packets are available at Unique Copy Center, 127 Larnacos Ave., Phone#: 22462932, email: [savvia@mmprintings.com.cy](mailto:savvia@mmprintings.com.cy). Please obtain your copy right away!

### **V. Books Ordered on Short-term Loan**

B a e p l e r , P a u l e d . W h i t e S l a v e s ,  
B l a c k M a s t e r s : A n A n t h o l o g y o f  
A m e r i c a n B a r b a r y C a p t i v i t y  
N a r r a t i v e s . U n i v e r s i t y o f  
C h i c a g o P r e s s , 1 9 9 9 . HT1345.W47 1999.

Davidson, Cathy. *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America*. Oxford University Press, 1994. ISBN: 0195056531

Davis, Brion David. *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution 1770-1823*. Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN: 0195126718

Downes, Paul. *Democracy, Revolution and Monarchism in Early American Literature*. Cambridge UP, 2002. PS193.D69 2002

- Ellison, Julie K. *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion*. U of Chicago P, 1999. PR448.E46E45 1999
- Eppler, Karen Sanchez. *Touching Liberty: Abolition, Feminism and the Politics of the Body*. U of California P, 1993. PS217.S55S26 1993
- Fliegelman, Jay. *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language and the Culture of Performance*. Stanford UP, 1993. E332.2.F55 1993
- Gould, Philip. *Covenant and Republic: Historical Romance and the Politics of Puritanism*. Cambridge UP, 1997. PS374.H5G68 1996
- Kerber, Linda K. *Women of the Republic: Intellect and Ideology in Revolutionary America*. U of North Carolina P, 1997. HQ1418.K47
- . *No Constitutional Right to be Ladies: Women and the Obligations of Citizenship*. Hill & Wang, 1999. HQ1236.5.U6K47 1998
- Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Reddiker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Verso, 2002. ISBN: 1859844200
- Nash, Gary B. *Race and Revolution*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1990. E446.N37 1990
- Samuels, Shirley (ed.) *Romances of the Republic*. Oxford UP, 1996. PS374.H5S26 1996
- Spengemann, William. *A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature*. Yale UP, 1994. PS185.S67 1994
- Sterne, Julia. *The Plight of Feeling: Sympathy and Dissent in the Early American Novel*. U of Chicago P, 1997. PS375.S74 1997
- Wald, Priscilla. *Constituting Americans: Cultural Anxiety and Narrative Form*. Duke University Press, 1995. ISBN: 0822315475. E169.1.W25 1995

## **VI. Further Sources for Research**

- B a e p l e r , P a u l e d . W h i t e S l a v e s ,  
 B l a c k M a s t e r s : A n A n t h o l o g y o f  
 A m e r i c a n B a r b a r y C a p t i v i t y  
 N a r r a t i v e s . U n i v e r s i t y o f  
 C h i c a g o P r e s s , 1 9 9 9 . I S B N :  
 0 2 2 6 0 3 4 0 4 6
- Barnes, Elizabeth. *States of Sympathy: Seduction and Democracy in the American Novel*. Cambridge UP, 1998. PS374.S97B37 1997
- Blackburn, Robin. *The Overthrow of Colonial Slavery 1776-1848*. Verso, 1988. HT1050.B54 1988
- Caretta, Vincent and Philip Gould. *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*. U of Kentucky P, 2001. PR9341.G46 2001
- Castronovo, Russ. *Necro Citizenship: Death, Eroticism and the Public Sphere in the Nineteenth-Century United States*. Duke UP, 2001. HQ1073.5.U6C37 2001
- Cugoano, Quobna. *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*. Penguin, 1999. HT871.C8 1999
- Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*. Penguin, 2003. HT869.E6A3 2003
- Ellison, Julie K. *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion*. U of Chicago P, 1999. PR448.E46E45 1999
- Fogel, Robert William. *The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*. Norton, 1989. E441.F63 1994
- Gates, Henry Louis and Gates, William Andrews (ed). *Pioneers of the Black Atlantic: Five Slave Narratives 1772-1815*. Civitas Books, 1998. ISBN: 1887178988
- Giles, Paul. *Transatlantic Insurrections: British Culture and the Formation of American Literature, 1730-1860*. U of Pennsylvania P, 2001. PS159.G8G5 2001
- . *Virtual Americas: Transnational Fictions and the Transatlantic Imaginary*. Duke UP, 2002. PS159.G8G53 2002

- Gilroy, Paul. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Verso, 1993. ISBN: 0860916758
- Goddu, Teresa A. *Gothic America: Narrative, History and Nation*. Columbia University Press, 1997. ISBN: 0231108176
- Gustafson, Thomas. *Representative Words: Politics, Literature and the American Language, 1776-1865*. Cambridge UP, 1992. PS217.P64G8 1992
- Jefferson, Thomas. *Writings*. Library of America, 1984.
- Kitson, Peter et al., ed. *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*. Pickering and Chatto, 1999. 8 volumes. E446.S617 1999.
- Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Reddiker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Verso, 2002. ISBN: 1859844200
- Martin, Robert, Eric Savoy (ed). *American Gothic: New Interventions in a National Narrative*. University of Iowa Press, 1998. ISBN: 0877456224
- Paine, Thomas. *Collected Writings*. Library of America, 1995.
- Patterson, Orlando. *Slavery and Social Death*. Harvard University Press, 1990. ISBN: 067481083X
- Samuels, Shirley (ed.) *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in 19th Century America*. Oxford UP, 1993. ISBN: 0195063546
- Sancho, Ignatius. *Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African*. Penguin, 1998. ISBN: 0140436375
- Smith, John David, ed. *The "Benefits" of Slavery*. Garland, 1993. E449.B4197 1993
- Snader, Joe. *Caught Between Worlds: British Captivity Narratives in Fact and Fiction*. U of Kentucky P, 2000. ISBN: 0813121647
- U of Kentucky P, 2000. ISBN: 0813121647
- Thomas, Helen. *Romanticism and Slave Narratives: Transatlantic Testimonies*. Cambridge UP, 2000. PR448.S55T48 2000.
- Thornton, John. *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. Cambridge UP, 1998. DT31.T516 1998
- Williams, Eric. *Capitalism and Slavery*. U of North Carolina P 1994. HC254.5.W5 1994

## **VII. Online Resources**

The library offers online access to several of the top academic journals in the field of American literature and culture, including: *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, *American Literature*, *Comparative American Studies*, *Journal of African-American Studies*, and *Journal of American Studies*.

Searchable online collections of early American literature and culture, including important primary texts and archival material are to be found in the Library of Congress Digital Collections:

<<http://www.loc.gov/library/libarch-digital.html>>

Cornell University's "Making of America":

<<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/moa>>

and the Early Americas Digital archive:

<<http://www.mith2.umd.edu/eada/>>

## **VIII. Course Structure and Detailed Class Reading Schedule**

### **Unit I. Debating (Un)Freedom in Revolutionary America**

Tuesday, September 4

Introduction and Course Logistics

Friday, September 7

James Madison, From *The Federalist*, No.10 *Heath Anthology* 1013-1018 (Course Packet )

Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, From “What is an American?” *Heath Anthology* 895-899 (Course Packet).

Tuesday, September 11

Crèvecoeur, From “What is an American?”

Priscilla Wald, “Terms of Assimilation” *Cultures of United States Imperialism* 59-84 (Course Packet)

Friday, September 14

Thomas Jefferson, From *Notes on the State of Virginia* *Heath Anthology* 970-971 (Course Packet).

Prince Hall, “To the Honorable Council and House of Representatives” *Heath Anthology* 686-687 (Course Packet).

Tuesday September 18

Eric Foner, “To Call it Freedom” *The Story of American Freedom* 29-45 (Course Packet).

Gary Nash, “The Revolutionary Generation Embraces Abolitionism” *Race and Revolution* 3-24 (Course Packet).

David Cooper, “A Serious Address to the Rulers of America” *Race and Revolution* 117-130 (Course Packet).

Friday, September 21

Susan Buck-Morss, “Hegel and Haiti” 821-836 (Course Packet).

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* 3-17, 44-54 (Course Packet).

Tuesday, September 25

Linda K. Kerber, “Introduction” *Women of the Republic* (Course Packet).

Linda K. Kerber, “No Political Relation to the State” *No Constitutional Right to Be Ladies* 8-33 (Course Packet).

Friday, September 28

Cathy Davidson, “Privileging the *Feme Covert*” *Revolution and the Word* 110-125.

Linda K. Kerber, “The Anti-Republican Implications of Coverture” *Women of the Republic* (Course Packet).

Tuesday, October 2

Thomas Paine “An Occasional Letter on the Female Sex” 937-939 (*Heath Anthology*).

Judith Murray “On the Equality of the Sexes” 1032-1039 (*Heath Anthology*).

Friday, October 5

Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, “A Motley Crew in the American Revolution.” *The Many-Headed Hydra*, 211-247 (course packet).

“The Declaration of Independence” *Heath Anthology* 960-964 (Course Packet).

No Class-Absence at Conference

Class will be remade, preferably on Wednesday, September 19

Tuesday, October 9

“The Declaration of Independence” continued

Paul Downes, “The Spell of Democracy” 7-30. *Democracy, Revolution and Monarchism in Early American Literature* (Course Packet).

Robert A. Ferguson, "We Hold these Truths" 1-28 *Reconstructing American Literary History* (Course Packet).

## **Unit II. Gothic Elaborations: The Dream-Life of the Republic**

Friday, October 12

Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*.

Leslie Fiedler, From *Love and Death in the American Novel* 139-148 (Course Packet).

Tuesday, October 16

Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*.

Jane Tompkins, From "What Happens in *Wieland*" *Sensational Designs* 44-58 (Course Packet).

Friday, October 19

Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*.

Cathy Davidson, "Early American Gothic" *Revolution and the Word* 236-253 (Course Packet).

Tuesday, October 23

Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly*.

Jay Fliegelman "The Debt of Nature Reconsidered", *Prodigals and Pilgrims* 93-122 (Course Packet).

Friday, October 26

Washington Irving, "Rip van Winkle" *Heath Anthology* 1248-1260 (Course Packet).

Paul Downes "Irving and the Gender of Democracy" *Democracy, Revolution and Monarchism in Early American Literature* 144-164 (Course Packet).

Tuesday, October 30

Irving, "Rip van Winkle" continued

Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (Course Packet).

Jay Fliegelman, "Filial Freedom and American Protestantism" *Prodigals and Pilgrims* 174-191 (Course Packet).

### **Mid-term assignment topics handed out**

Friday, November 2

Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" continued

Jay Fliegelman, "Filial Freedom and American Protestantism" *Prodigals and Pilgrims* 174-191 (Course Packet).

No class-Absence at Conference

Class will be remade

## **Unit III. "Ourselves as Others, Others as Ourselves": Captivity and/as National Identity**

Tuesday, November 6

Paul Baepler, "Introduction", *White Slaves, African Masters* 24-44 (Course Packet).

Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*

No class-Absence at Conference

Class will be remade

Friday, November 9

Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*.

Julie Ellison, "Walkers, Stalkers, Captives", *Cato's Tears and the Making of Anglo-American Emotion* 148-170 (Course packet).

**Mid-term assignment due**

Tuesday, November 13

Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*.

Malini Johar Schueller "Algerian Slavery and the Liberty Vision", *U.S. Orientalisms* 45-58 (Course Packet).

Friday, November 16

Royall Tyler, *The Algerine Captive*

Tuesday, November 20

Friday, November 23

There is a chance this class will be missed due to participation in hiring committee. Students will be duly informed and the class will be remade if missed.

Tuesday, November 27

Friday, November 30

***Final paper due according to university exam schedule.***