

**EN 203 Major Writers, American:
Real and Imagined Americas
Cole / Fall 2004**

Instructor: Jean Lee Cole (HU 230, x5440; jcole1@loyola.edu)

Office hours: MW 3-4 pm, Th 12:30-1:30, and by appointment

Class time/location:

203.02 MWF 1-1:50 pm, MH 243

203.04 MWF 2-2:50 pm, MH 243

Required texts: (books are listed in the order they are assigned)

Butler, *Kindred* (Bluestreak/Beacon ISBN 0807083690)

Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Signet ISBN 0451526732)

Melville, *Benito Cereno*, in *Billy Budd, Sailor and Other Stories* (Penguin ISBN 014039057)

Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Penguin 0140390464)

Millhauser, *Martin Dressler* (Vintage ISBN 0679781277)

Bellamy, *Looking Backward* (Penguin ISBN 0140390189)

Wharton, *The House of Mirth* (Signet ISBN 0451527569)

Condé, *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* (Ballantine ISBN 0345484202)

Miller, *The Crucible* (Dramatists' Play Service ISBN 0822202557)

Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Signet ISBN 0451526082)

Other readings in handouts and/or on reserve

Description of course and course objectives:

What's the "story" in "history"? How do historical events inspire works of imaginative literature? Where is the line between the real and the imagined? (Or is history, to an extent, *all* a product of our imagination?)

This course will examine some of the ways in which American history intersects with American literature. We will read a variety of fictional works set in one or more of the following historical periods: Puritan New England in the 1600s, the mid-19th century before the Civil War, the 1890s, and the mid-to-late 20th century. We will examine how historical events are described when they are happening—that is, *before* they become "history"—and how the passage of time colors and changes those depictions to serve contemporary ends. To supplement the literary readings, students will also engage in research on both assigned topics and a topic of their choosing, calling on the knowledge and expertise of scholars in the field to supplement their own analysis and conclusions.

By the end of the semester, students should have gained 1) a deeper understanding of the historical periods on which the course is focused, 2) a sense of how American literature and language has changed over time, 3) a better understanding of how history and literature are both intertwined and distinct from one another, and 4) a basic understanding of research techniques and the use of primary and secondary sources.

Course requirements:

Over the course of the semester you will read all assignments carefully, actively participate in class discussion, and give two in-class presentations. You will write three short (2-3 page) and one longer (7-10 page) papers and will take midterm and final exams. You will also attend a required workshop at the library in research techniques and complete an assignment based on that workshop.

More on the research requirement:

Literary research is an essential component of all English 200-level courses. In order to become familiar with the resources necessary to do research, all students taking these courses are required to:

1. Attend one "Shortcuts to Literary Research" session at the Loyola/Notre Dame Library. These sessions will be held from September 19 through October 3rd. The sessions will last 75 minutes and are held outside of class time.
Sign up online at <http://www.loyola.edu/library/ref/eng200.htm>, selecting 3 possible class times. **Sign-up will close on Tuesday September 14th.** Students then will be notified of their assigned class date by Friday, September 17th. Students who fail to sign up or miss their scheduled class may not be able to make up the session.
2. Complete an assignment that will be distributed at the close of the session. **All assignments must be turned in to the Reference Dept. at the library before Friday October 8th.** Students who need help with the assignment or who have questions can come to the library, call the Reference Desk at 410-617-6802 or email the Reference Dept. at askemail@loyola.edu.

Academic integrity:

The English department regards plagiarism and other forms of cheating as the antithesis of scholarship, learning, collegiality, and responsible citizenship. The department defines plagiarism as any unacknowledged use of another's words or ideas. This definition applies to non-print media, including the Internet, as well as to books, magazines, journals, newspapers, or other print media. To monitor the use of non-print media, the department subscribes to an electronic retrieval and detection service.

It is the student's responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it in all assignments. Students should familiarize themselves with the statement on "Intellectual Honesty" in the Loyola Undergraduate Catalogue, as well as with section R5, "Citing Sources; Avoiding Plagiarism," in Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference*, the English-department handbook. Anyone having questions or uncertainties about plagiarism should consult with the instructor before submitting any assignment. Neither ignorance of the definition of plagiarism nor the lack of the intention to deceive constitutes an acceptable defense in matters of scholarly dishonesty.

This course is covered by the Loyola College Honor Code. Any students guilty of plagiarizing or cheating on any assignment will fail the course regardless of their grades on other assignments or activities, and may be subject to further sanctions as stipulated in the Loyola College Honor Code. For more information on the Code, see the statement in the "Community Standards Handbook."

Grading:

Final grades will be determined according to the following formula:

- 15% Time Capsule assignments
- 15% Class Leader assignment
- 25% Research paper (includes library assignment)
- 15% Midterm
- 15% Final
- 15% Course involvement/quizzes

Grades will be determined using the following point values:

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|----|-----|----|-------------------------|
| A | 95% | C | 75% |
| A- | 92% | C- | 72% |
| B+ | 88% | D+ | 68% |
| B | 85% | D | 65% |
| B- | 82% | D- | 62% |
| C+ | 78% | F | 0-59% (values may vary) |

Attendance and late policy:

You may miss class twice without penalty. More absences, as well as tardies, will have an adverse effect on your course involvement grade. Pop quizzes (if they are deemed necessary) will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up without a documented excuse.

Papers and other written assignments will be considered late 5 minutes after class begins on the day it is due. Late papers will be graded down 1/3 of a letter grade (e.g., from a B to a B-) for each day they are late, **including weekends**. If you need to be granted an extension on an essay, please see me in advance; I will not grant extensions on the day that a paper is due.

Important: Technological excuses (e.g., “my disk got corrupted,” “the printer wasn’t working”) will not, as a rule, be accepted. **Back up all of your work!**

Paper formats:

Hard copies of papers should be typed, double-spaced, using a 12-point, readable typeface (please—no “special” fonts). Give your paper a meaningful title and be sure that your name appears on the first page. Please staple papers once in the top left corner; do not use folders, plastic binders, or report covers.

In addition to submitting hard copies of papers, you will also submit electronic copies by e-mailing them to me at jcole1@loyola.edu. These electronic copies are due at the same time as the hard copies—that is, within five minutes of the start of the class period on the day the paper is due.

Grade complaints:

I will make every attempt to provide clear expectations for each assignment and to grade papers and exams promptly and fairly. If, however, you believe you have received an inappropriate grade, make an appointment with me to discuss the matter. **NOTE: I will not discuss a grade on the day that I return a paper or exam.** Complaints we cannot resolve in conference will be referred to the chair of the English Department.

More on the assignments

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Time Capsule: Time capsules—collections of materials from a particular point in history—reveal, in often surprising and unexpected ways, the thought patterns, preoccupations, literary tastes, and societal values of the period from which they originate. For both major units, you will be examining a “time capsule” of materials dating from the period, choosing one or more artifacts to analyze, and then discussing how your artifact(s) shed light on (or contradict what is portrayed in) the literary readings in an essay of 3-4 pages in length. The time capsules will include things like letters, court documents, maps, popular books and magazines, sheet music, and advertisements; some of the materials will be viewable online outside of class, while others, due to their fragility, will be viewed in class on days designated on the syllabus.

When choosing your artifact(s), you might focus on an item that particularly interested you, or one that you found unexpectedly revealing. Or you could discuss a group of things with respect to a specific idea, issue, or event.

Due dates are noted on the syllabus. Each time capsule report is worth 10% of the course grade. It should follow this format:

- **At the top:** your name and a complete bibliographical citation of the artifact (in MLA format if possible).
- **Description of source:** This description should describe in a concise paragraph (no more than 100 words) the form and content of your chosen artifact. What is it? Who, would you say, would have read/bought/used it? What are its notable features (e.g., how big is it? what does it look like? what condition is it in? if it is a book or pamphlet, does it contain illustrations and/or advertisements? etc.)? What can you say about the producer/author(s) (try Googling it/them, or looking it/them up in a historical or literary database)?
- **Analysis:** Discuss how the artifact reflects on the fiction we have been reading for class. Is its depiction of a historical event, a region, the social/cultural climate (choose one) consistent with how it has been depicted in the reading? If not, what might be the reason? What do differences in how historical periods, events, or people are depicted show about how perceptions have changed over time? In your analysis, you should focus on specific details in both the artifact and in the literary text(s) you discuss. When referring to written texts, **please** use parenthetical page citations, following MLA format. This will mean taking careful notes as you go along.

Your report will be graded on the accuracy and comprehensiveness of your citation/description and the quality, depth, and originality of the analysis. As with the report/response, you will turn in a paper copy to me in class and an electronic copy via e-mail.

The Class Leader Assignment: With a partner, you will be responsible for leading discussion for part or all of one class period during the course of the semester. The in-class presentation will be accompanied by a short essay focusing on some aspect of the reading assignment due for that day.

Your presentation will consist of the following:

- **a brief overview** (no more than 5 minutes) of the writer’s biography and important socio-historical contexts for the literary work being discussed.
- **up to 5 questions** to ask the class, for which you have prepared possible answers. These questions should not be factually oriented (e.g., “Why does Hamlet kill Polonius?”) but rather should be geared toward generating debate and discussion (“What does Hamlet’s murder of Polonius show about his character at this point in the play?”). A majority of the questions should be geared toward literary analysis rather than simply eliciting discussion of ideas raised in the text (e.g., “what metaphors used in *Taming of the Shrew* could be considered sexist?” as opposed to simply, “Is the *Taming of the Shrew* sexist?”). Questions about general ideas raised are fine—they just shouldn’t make up the majority of questions you ask the class.
- **a handout** given to the rest of the class (30 students total, plus a copy for me) that outlines the overview information (if such information is presented) and lists the discussion questions. Leave room following each question for notes!

Your presentation should last at least twenty minutes, and for no more than forty. It will be graded on:

- the clarity and relevance of overview/contextual information
- the quality of questions asked (do they cover the entire reading assignment? Do they follow a more-or-less logical sequence? Are they challenging enough to generate interesting discussion? Are they clear? Are an appropriate number of questions—enough but not too many—asked?)
- the quantity and quality of commentary your presentation generates.

Note: Although longer presentations will not necessarily receive higher grades, presentations falling near the minimum time of twenty minutes will be unlikely to generate sufficient discussion. Consider 20 minutes to be a *minimum* (i.e., passing) requirement.

In addition to a copy of your handout, you will also write and turn in a **2- to 3-page mini-essay** analyzing some aspect of the reading for the day (possibly, an answer to one of the discussion questions on the handout). This essay should establish an argumentative take on the text, and be supported with analysis of direct quotations. **Note: although you will be presenting in pairs, each student should turn in his or her own mini-essay, and should address a different aspect of the text from his/her partner.**

I recommend that you meet with me to discuss your presentation at least two class periods before you are scheduled to give it. If you can have the reading done in advance, our conference will be of most use to you. The day of your presentation, **at least an hour in advance**, you may bring your handout to the English Department and ask Mrs. Rafferty, our department secretary, to make copies for you. Keep in mind that the copier can be very busy and that your copies will take last priority, so leave plenty of time to get your copies made if you choose to have them done at the English Dept. **To save trees, please make double-sided copies.**

To help you organize your presentation and handout, I will provide a sample handout for our first book, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. We will also work on generating quality discussion questions during the first few weeks of class.

The Research Paper: In this 6-8 page paper, you will present a focused argument concerning one or more of the literary texts assigned in the course, and will support that

argument with *both* 1) independent literary analysis and 2) ideas and interpretations written by literary critics and scholars and historians.

To prepare for writing this paper, you are required to attend the library for a session in research techniques and to complete an assignment based on that session. You will also be turning in a paper proposal and preliminary bibliography.

Your final paper will be accompanied by an annotated bibliography that includes at least 5 relevant sources (you do not need to cite all five within the body of your paper). The paper will be graded on the coherence and originality of the argument, the quality of independent analysis, the handling of outside sources, the completeness and accuracy of the annotated bibliography, and the timely completion of the preliminary assignments. **Note:** I will not grade the research paper until I receive notification that you have attended the research workshop at the library and completed the assignment. Papers written by students who do not attend the workshop or complete the assignment *will receive a zero* (0).