

ENG 3902**American Romance****4 Credits**

Instructor:	Christopher Apap	e-mail:	apap@oakland.edu
Office Hours:	Tuesday & Thursday between 12-1 PM & Wednesday before class by appointment	Office Location:	519 O'Dowd Most appointments will be in my classrooms

We'll have some specific goals and outcomes for the semester:

- knowledge of how literature is an expression of culture
- knowledge of literary form, especially the evolution of the novel in American culture.
- identify major challenges and issues authors raise with regard to issues such as gender, race, and religion.
- effectively communicate in both discussion and written work key analytical, critical, and historical tensions in the works we study.

WHEN a writer calls his work a Romance, it need hardly be observed that he wishes to claim a certain latitude, both as to its fashion and material, which he would not have felt himself entitled to assume had he professed to be writing a Novel.

-Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of Seven Gables*

We will study a series of early American novelists to see how they develop romance as a genre as they also try to articulate what is distinct about American literature. The course will conclude with the study of Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in which he satirizes both romance and the audience's expectations of the genre.

Required Texts:

Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly* 9780140390629
James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans* 9781593081379
Catharine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* 9780140436761
William Gilmore Simms, *The Yemassee* 9781375686167
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* 9780393264890
William Wells Brown, *Clotel, or The President's Daughter* 9780142437728
Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* 9780393966404

Available at the OU Bookstore. Further readings will be made available via Moodle.

Course Requirements:

Participation	30%	300 pts
Material Culture	10%	100 pts
Bibliography	05%	50 pts
Summary	05%	50 pts
Close Reading	05%	50 pts
Short Interpretation	10%	100 pts
Peer Review	05%	50 pts
Revisions	05%	50 pts
Final Paper	25%	250 pts

Grading Scale

Total Points	OU Grade	Equivalent grade
920-1000 =	4.0	A
900-919 =	3.7	A-
880-899=	3.3	B+
820-879=	3.0	B
800-819=	2.7	B-
780-799=	2.3	C+
720-779=	2.0	C
700-719=	1.7	C-
680-699=	1.3	D+
600-689=	1.0	D
599 or lower=	0.0	F

Attendance & Participation

Attendance and participation comprise 30% of your final grade, or 300 points. For this class, the grade will be dependent on frequent attendance and participation in class discussions and in occasional Moodle forums, as well as the completion of occasional in-class writing assignments.

Three absences or more will reduce your participation grade by *at least a full grade*.

I don't make distinctions between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. Every student gets two "freebies," which I strenuously suggest you save for the unavoidable car breakdown, personal illness, or family emergency. After that, your participation grade starts dropping, first by thirty points, then in increments of fifteen per absence. Thus, a student with five absences would lose 45 points from their participation grade (this is really dangerous if you are not participatory in class—an earned C, with 225 points, would drop to 165 points [for you non-math majors, that's an F]).

All assigned readings should be completed before setting foot in the classroom. I expect all students enrolled in the class to read deeply. A surface reading of the texts will, in all likelihood, result in a superficial grade in the course.

Our discussions will almost always include a close reading, sometimes of a passage that has been pre-circulated. Close reading is the act of performing a careful and sustained reading of a brief passage from a literary work. It is, quite simply, the cornerstone of literary analysis. Many of the

specific moments that we will focus on in class will consist of close readings, and your ability perform close readings will be an essential element of your participation.

There will likely be sessions in which your comments and questions dominate the discussion. That is certainly my goal. It is thus imperative that you come to meetings having read and thought ahead toward possible topics of conversation. Flag passages that seem particularly evocative or confusing—even, or perhaps especially, if you're not sure what to say about them.

All reading is mandatory. You must bring your books to class—neglecting to do so may negatively affect your participation grade. If we have Moodle readings, please print them or take out a book from the library. Reading on over the shoulder of a classmate is really problematic—it suggests to me that you have not prepared for the class, and will affect your grade.

I am willing to allow students latitude on their comments in discussion, as long as they adhere to the following guidelines: when possible, you should talk to each other, by name, and not simply to me (or the ceiling, or your books); you should aim always to back up your comments by referring to specific passages in the text; and you should feel free to question or contradict one another or the text or me, as long as you do it respectfully and with some backing other than personal opinion. Do note that while this class does focus on literary interpretation, all interpretations must be backed by evidence from the text. Mere opinion is never sufficient in this class.

Please note—if you merely attend class regularly and say nothing, your participation grade will likely be in the low C range (210-225 points). Only by regularly participating can you earn a participation grade in the B or A range. I will let you know how you are doing with regard to participation after the first exam so that you may make necessary adjustments. Painfully shy students *do* have options to be a part of the conversation: feel free to e-mail me explicit questions the evening before a class session that I can use to jump start dormant discussions. I will say this, however: there are few careers in which the ability to speak to other people, interact, and make an argument or comment on the fly is not a valued skill. I'd prefer that you speak up in class. E-mailing me questions is a substitute for class participation; it is *never* a substitute for attendance. I do expect that cell phones be turned off and put away or, in the case of emergent situations, turned to “vibrate.” **I do not allow computer use in my classroom, including blackberries or telephones with internet capabilities (not even for note-taking).** Students who need special consideration to use computers for note-taking must speak to me, and must also conform to the following requirements:

- 1) sit in the final row of the classroom so that students are not distracted by your computer
- 2) e-mail me the notes from class immediately after class ends (within 10 minutes of the session's conclusion).

I will request that students who do not comport to these requirements refrain from computer use.

Material Culture Assignment:

Archaeologists refer to material culture as the artifacts or other concrete things left behind by specific cultures. In this class, one of the ways we will approach the past is through the material culture of the time. Material culture includes—but is not limited to—clothing, photographs, newspapers, physical books, art, tools, vehicles, and maps. I view the material culture of

eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America as not merely interesting and at times hilarious, but as a valuable tool that helps us understand the material contexts within which authors wrote and readers consumed literature. Our discussions will often refer to specific objects of material culture with which authors expected their readers to be familiar (and, at times, objects with which readers are particularly NOT expected to be familiar). Starting in Week 3, students will give a material culture presentation of approximately 5 minutes in which they choose an item from that week's reading/viewing and discuss how it was used, its history, etc. I will develop a schedule with students to best work with everyone's individual schedule. Students must be able to relate their presentation to a scene in the book or play (For example: "In this scene in *The Scarlet Letter*, the protagonist is given an object called . . ."). Students will also write a brief discussion of their presentation and list their sources. I strongly encourage visual aids, and am always willing to help students decide which objects would make for useful material culture presentations (if you need help, please contact me *at least* two days before the assignment is due). The best presentations both enlarge our understanding of the nineteenth century *and* the cultural objects which we are studying. The written Material Culture assignment should be no more than 250 words, and should be turned in to me when you present. Half of this grade will be based on the appropriateness of the topic and the completeness and relevance of the research; the other half is based on your preparedness and performance for the presentation. This will comprise 10% of your grade, or 100 points.

Bibliography

This semester, we will craft an annotated bibliography for the class. Each student will be responsible for reading one text (generally, an article or chapter of a book not to exceed 40 pages) and write a summary of the argument and, when applicable, its evidence. This requires a summary of 250 to 500 words of a supplemental critical or scholarly text (chosen from a list provided by the instructor—see the handout in class and on Moodle). That written work will be posted on our class blog and will help to develop a critical bibliography for the use of the entire class. **Students will have the chance to revise and correct their blog entries after it is graded, for a grade improvement of up to five points.** This assignment will be rolling, with different texts due during specific sections of the course as specified in the text list. This assignment will be worth 50 points, and will be graded as check-plus (50 points), check (44 points), and check minus (38 points). The baseline grade is determined on the merits of your work, the clarity of your written expression, the completeness of your summary, and the degree to which you address issues we have developed in the course. Students will also be encouraged to read and use the bibliography: the proposal for the final paper will require that you list at least two articles that you believe might be of interest to you—and these may come from the bibliography we develop.

Writing Assignments

Over the course of the semester, we will have three brief writing assignments which are designed to help you develop specific skills that you will need as a writer and critical thinker in order to best complete the final paper in the class.

The first assignment is a summary of between 300 and 500 words of *Edgar Huntly*. This assignment is designed to help you to effectively summarize issues of plot, character, and themes and address the major issues of the narrative. This assignment will be worth 50 points, and will

be graded as check-plus (50 points), check (44 points), or check minus (38 points). The baseline grade is determined on the merits of your work, the clarity of your written expression, and the completeness of your summary—as well as your ability to write within the confines of the 300 word minimum and the 500-word limit.

The second assignment will be a close analytical reading (for a set of instructions on close reading, see Moodle) of a pre-circulated passage from Sedgwick's *Hope Leslie*. This should ideally be between 400 and 700 words. This assignment will be worth 50 points, and will be graded as check-plus (50 points), check (44 points), or check minus (38 points). The baseline grade is determined on the merits of your work, the clarity of your written expression, and the completeness of your analysis.

The third assignment will be a 3-page interpretation in which you will use a scholar's argument in order to frame your own analysis of the Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. Students will choose one of three pre-circulated scholarly works with which to engage. This assignment is worth 100 points. This assignment will be given a standard grade based on the merits of your argument, the clarity of your written expression, and the relevance and application of evidence.

Further explanations of the assignments will become available on Moodle starting in the second week of classes. Please see the class schedule and in the syllabus for due dates and Moodle for more detailed instructions.

I do expect your work to be polished and to be proofread. I will not specifically dock points for spelling and typographical errors, poor punctuation, and grammatical problems (like commas splices, fragment sentences, run-ons, or subject/verb agreement). Do be aware that frequent or especially egregious grammatical errors can also obscure your ideas and expression and make it difficult to understand your writing, which can also affect my understanding of your ideas. In my experience, papers with more than five errors of this type do not end up in the A/check-plus range. There are a set of common errors that students make as they begin academic writing, usually having to do with the quotation of text and the placement of punctuation; I will circulate a handout before the first writing assignment is due as a guide and reminder for all students. I prefer that all writing assignments be turned in *in class*. For those students who have to miss a class for illness or other emergencies, I will set up Moodle to accept assignments. In addition, I urge students to upload assignments to Moodle as a backup. **I will not accept late assignments for this class.**

Final Paper

There will be one 6-8 page paper due at the end of the semester. The final paper will enable you to develop your own ideas about what we have read and may comprise an extension of one or more assignments that you have completed over the course of the term; thus, you might build on your own thinking, and use my comments on the early graded work to improve your writing and arguments about literature. I welcome students to come and discuss drafts in my office hours. During one of the class forums, you will present your ideas for a final paper in a 200 word proposal, including the titles of two articles from the class bibliography that you expect to be relevant to your work. You will also be expected to comment on each other's proposals and give constructive feedback.

We will spend significant time in the final two weeks of the course presenting our ideas to one another and engaging in peer review. Your performance on the peer review, in which you will present a draft of your writing to classmates, and give your classmates feedback on their writing, comprises 5% of your grade, or 50 points; your own revisions, as a response to the peer reviews, and revisions of your draft for the final paper, will account for another 50 points.

The first draft of the Final Paper is due for peer review *in class* on November 29. If you are late with your draft for peer review or with your comments on your classmates' work, you will lose at least a full grade on each portion of the assignment. Final Drafts will be due in my office or via Moodle on Thursday, December 13 at 3:00 PM. The paper is worth 250 points, or 25% of the total grade (before revisions).

Extra Credit

Over the course of the semester, you will be given opportunities to earn extra credit for this class. Extra credit in my class is designed to allow you to practice skills that are important in the class, and which I feel will help you prepare for the exams or otherwise augment your learning experience. However, these are not free points. Extra credit is always assessed by me in the following way: a check-plus earns full offered credit; a check earns half offered credit; a check-minus earns one point; a zero earns no credit. The idea here is that students must do quality work in order to earn any credit at all, and going through the motions will often result in an outcome that does not boost your grade much, or at all. Doing the assignments in a slap-dash manner will not be rewarding intellectually—and will not be rewarded with very many points. If you feel that your best-effort work is being given check-minus grades, come see me; it may merely mean that you have misunderstood the assignment or my expectations for it.

Please note: **when you agree to turn in extra credit, my policy regarding plagiarism and intellectual honesty will be in effect**; using info from other sources without credit or cutting and pasting from other websites, if verified, will result in what might reasonably be described as an administrative smackdown: an F in the class, and academic probation at best. It's not worth it.

All extra credit annotations will have strictly enforced due dates; I will not accept them later than their due date.

Additional Items

Moodle Use

This course has an extensive website that I will use to post assignments, and make assigned and supplemental readings available. You may sign in to Moodle by directing your Firefox web browser to moodle.oakland.edu and then click on the link to our course.

In order to properly use Moodle, it is suggested you use Mozilla Firefox. You may download a free version of the browser at www.firefox.com. *In my experience, students who use a different*

browser (especially internet explorer) have a ton of trouble and cannot properly view the course website, thereby missing out on valuable communications, assignments, and class notes. It is your responsibility to upload assignments on time.

Communication

The best way to reach me is via e-mail. Please allow me 48 hours to respond to your questions.

If you have questions about assignments, you must ask them at least forty-eight hours before that assignment is due. I want to have time to actually think about my response and give you time to think about what I write and incorporate it into your work. Please try not to respond to group e-mails, since the OU e-mail system groups replies in specific ways that may result in my missing an e-mail.

I absolutely love it when students attend my office hours. In fact, I love it so much that I'm going to offer ten points of extra credit to anyone who stops by my office hours or makes an appointment to chat about *anything* before the midterm exam. *Please* contact me to sign up for a slot so that we can be guaranteed to have time to chat. Feel free to pop in when you'd like, too, but realize that I may have other students who have reserved time. If you cannot attend office hours at the posted times, please contact me; I'm generally willing to arrange to meet at other mutually convenient times.

Do note that because of the large number of students I work with each semester, I am unable to review drafts of assignments via e-mail. If you wish to discuss the extra credit assignments, or would like feedback, please make an appointment to speak with me.

Dropping/Adding

Beginning the first day of classes through the end of Late Registration, the signature of the faculty member is required to add all classes. The assignment of these students will be made in accordance with class enrollment capacities agreed upon by the department chair and the Registrar. If students drop classes through the end of the "no grade" drop period, their names will no longer appear on the class list. For students who drop classes after the "no grade" period until the last day of official withdrawal, a grade of "W" is assigned. The last day to add or drop classes at 100% tuition refund for full semester classes for the Fall 2018 semester is September 18, 2018. No adds after that day will be processed. Please refer to the OU website at http://www.oakland.edu/important_dates for other important dates this semester.

Students with Disabilities

Students who may require special considerations should make an appointment with campus Disability Support Services. Students should also bring their needs to my attention as soon as possible.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Federal law, Title IX, and Oakland University policy prohibits discrimination, harassment, and violence based on sex and gender (including sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic/dating violence, stalking, sexual exploitation and retaliation). If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, and you are not ready or sure if you should report the behavior, you can confidentially receive appropriate advice and support at Graham Health Center, East Wing, 408 Meadow Brook Road, reachable at 248-370-3465. Counselors conducting therapy cannot contact authorities without student permission or the belief that there is an imminent threat of harm to self or others. If you are ready to officially report this behavior, you may report violations non-confidentially with the Dean of Students Office at 248-370-3350, or with the OU Police Department at 248-370-3331. Any other form of reporting—including in-class admissions, a report to an instructor during office hours or via e-mail, or even within student writing assignments—is non-confidential. I will seek to keep any information you share with me private to the greatest extent possible, but as a faculty member I have mandatory reporting responsibilities to share information regarding sexual misconduct and crimes I learn about to help make our campus a safer place for all.

Plagiarism & Intellectual Honesty

I have a zero tolerance policy toward plagiarism—documented plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the course and will forever ruin my good impression of you. If you are caught engaging in academic misconduct you will also deal with the dean as specified in the code of conduct. Even the appearance of such misconduct will be reported to the dean to examine—so be careful. Please see the academic misconduct policy as specified in the course catalog. (for a decent definition of plagiarism and examples of proper citation, see [<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>]). **When in doubt, please feel free to run anything questionable by me. I'd rather take a minute to educate students than hours filling out paperwork for disciplinary action.**

The policy on intellectual honesty is in place for **exams, papers, annotations** and **all extra credit** assignments.

Reading Schedule

Thursday	September 6	Introduction Richard Chase, <i>The American Novel and Its Tradition</i> (1962), Chapter 1 [MOODLE] Nina Baym, <i>From Novels, Readers, and Reviewers</i> (1984), Chapter 11 [MOODLE] John McWilliams, "The Rationale for 'The American Romance,'" <i>boundary 2</i> 17:1 (1990), pp.71-82 [MOODLE] Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> "To The Public" and Chapter 1 (through page 12)
Tuesday	September 11	NO CLASS
Thursday	September 13	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> Chapter 1-10 (through page 103)
Tuesday	September 18	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> Chapter 11-20 (through page 203)
Thursday	September 20	Charles Brockden Brown, <i>Edgar Huntly</i> , complete Summary Due
Tuesday	September 25	NO CLASS
Thursday	September 27	James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> Chapters 1-12 (1-123)
Tuesday	October 2	NO CLASS
Thursday	October 4	James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> Chapters 13-23 (124-251)
Tuesday	October 9	James Fenimore Cooper, <i>The Last of the Mohicans</i> Complete (252-364)
Thursday	October 11	Catharine Maria Sedgwick, <i>Hope Leslie</i> Part I, Chapters 1-8 (1-122)
Tuesday	October 16	Catharine Maria Sedgwick, <i>Hope Leslie</i> Part I Chapters 9- Part II Chapter 5 (123-246) Analysis Due
Thursday	October 18	Catharine Maria Sedgwick, <i>Hope Leslie</i> Part II Chapter 6-end (247-371)

Tuesday	October 23	William Gilmore Simms, <i>The Yemassee</i> Chapters 1-16 (1-136)
Thursday	October 25	William Gilmore Simms, <i>The Yemassee</i> Chapter 17-34 (137-282)
Tuesday	October 30	William Gilmore Simms, <i>The Yemassee</i> , complete (283-441)
Thursday	November 1	Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> , “The Custom House” (1-33)
Tuesday	November 6	Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> Chapter 1-12 (34-98)
Thursday	November 8	Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> Chapter 13-end (99-155) Interpretive Paper Due
Tuesday	November 13	William Wells Brown, <i>Clotel, or The President’s Daughter</i> “Narrative of the Life . . .” (1-40)
Thursday	November 15	William Wells Brown, <i>Clotel, or The President’s Daughter</i> Chapters 1-18 (41-138)
Tuesday	November 20	William Wells Brown, <i>Clotel, or The President’s Daughter</i> Complete, including Appendixes A-C (139-148)
Thursday	November 22	NO CLASS
Tuesday	November 27	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> Chapters 1-18 (1-142)
Thursday	November 29	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> Chapters 19-31 (143-227) Rough Draft Due
Tuesday	December 4	Mark Twain, <i>The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i> Complete (228-296)
Thursday	December 6	Peer Reviews; Evaluations
Thursday	December 13	Final Paper due @ 3 PM