English 340:  
The American Novel before 1920

Spring 2010 (#34800)  
MW 3:30 – 5:00 pm  
Parlin 206

Professor Coleman Hutchison  
coleman.hutchison@mail.utexas.edu  
Office: Calhoun 207  
Office Phone: 512.471.8372  
Office Hours: W 2:00-3:30 pm; F 3:30-5 pm; and by appointment

Course Description
This survey of the early American novel will emphasize the diversity—and the depravity—of the first one hundred years of novel writing in the United States. We will read both familiar and unfamiliar authors and pay particular attention to issues of popularity and reception. Why did these novels command such a large audience of readers? What social and cultural changes did these novels both respond to and help to produce? Along the way we’ll encounter an array of narrative techniques and great generic diversity. The eclectic reading list promises, among other things, the picaresque, the travel narrative, romance, realism, and sentimentalism; courtroom dramas, forensic evidence, race riots, and adultery; cannibalism, “deviant” sexuality, and America’s first spontaneous combustion.

Course Objectives
The course will: offer a survey of the American novel between the late-eighteenth and early-twentieth centuries; model methods of literary and cultural interpretation; help students to improve their critical thinking, reading, and writing skills.

Course Requirements and Evaluation Method
Participation (25% of final grade)
You are expected to be an active participant in classroom and electronic discussions and in all peer review exercises. Reading quizzes, discussions, and Blackboard (Bb) postings will be used to evaluate preparedness for class. Attendance is mandatory; repeated unexcused absences will affect your grade.

Blackboard postings: First Response
You will post on Blackboard responses to nearly all of the course’s eight novels. These responses should pose a critical question, offer an interpretation of a passage, or suggest connections among texts. Alternatively, you may use your response to reply to another student’s posting. Responses should be, at minimum, several sentences in length and must be posted by noon the first day we are to discuss a given novel (e.g., on 1 February you will post a response to *Wieland*; on 26 April you will post a response to *The Marrow of Tradition*). NB: These are formal writing exercises.
Examinations (50% of final grade)
You will take two examinations during the term. The midterm exam will be a take-home essay and constitute 20% of the final grade. The final exam will be cumulative and include identifications, short answer, and essay questions; the final will constitute 30% of your grade for the course.

Essay (25% of final grade)
You will also produce one 4- to 6-page essay this term. Since this is a course with a Writing Flag, you will be expected to revise said essay at least once. An in-depth essay assignment will follow shortly.

NB: Plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade of the course. Letter grades will be determined on the basis of the following rubric:

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>94-100</td>
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<td>A-</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>B</td>
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Alas, the University does not recognize the grade of A+.

Academic Integrity
Each student is expected to abide by the University Code of Academic Integrity: “The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.” Any work submitted for academic credit must be your own.

Accommodations for students with disabilities
The University of Texas at Austin provides, upon request, appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (471-4641 TTY).

Email Protocol
Email will be used as a primary means of communication in this course. You will be responsible for checking your email regularly. I will, in turn, do my best to respond to emails in a timely fashion. NB: While I am more than happy to answer brief queries over email, Office Hours are the place for substantial discussions about course materials and assignments. Please do come by.

Common courtesy
Please silence your cell phones, refrain from texting, and limit your use of laptop computers during class.
**Course Texts**

Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (1791)  

Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland; or, the Transformation* (1798)  
(Jay Fliegelman, ed.; Penguin: 978-0140390797)

Caroline Kirkland, *New Home, Who'll Follow?* (1839)  
(Sandra A. Zagarell, ed.; Rutgers: 978-0813515427)

Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838)  
(J. Gerald Kennedy, ed.; Oxford: 978-0199540471)

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1852)  
(Leland Person, ed.; Norton: 978-0393979534)

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852)  

William Dean Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885)  
(Kermit Vanderbilt, ed.; Penguin: 978-0140390308)

Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901)  
(Eric J. Sundquist, ed.; Penguin: 978-0140186864)

All texts are available at the Co-Op, 2246 Guadalupe; additional, secondary materials are available via Bb.

**A note on reading for this course**

The nineteenth-century novel is not known for its brevity. As such, this will be a reading-intensive course. You are expected to have read and be able to discuss each day’s reading assignment.
Course Schedule

W 20 January  Introduction: The novel in America

An American Tale

* M 25  Rowson, Charlotte Temple (1-59)
W 27  Charlotte Temple (cont.) (60-132)
* M 1 February  Brown, Wieland (1-88)
W 3  Wieland (cont.) (89-164)
M 8  Wieland (cont.) (165-207)
W 10  Wieland (cont.) (208-278)
Jay Fliegelman, “Introduction” (vii-xlii)

The Outskirts of Civilization

* M 15  Kirkland, New Home, Who’ll Follow? (1-98)
W 17  New Home (cont.) (99-189)
* M 22  Poe, The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket (1-79)
W 24  Pym (cont.) (79-120)
M 1 March  Pym (cont.) (120-178)
Toni Morrison, from Playing in the Dark (Bb)

“Be true! Be true! Be true!”

W 3  Hawthorne, The Scarlet Letter (1-35)
Michel Foucault, “What Is an Author?” (Bb)

S 6  Midterm Exam due by midnight via email

M 8  Scarlet Letter (cont.) (36-97)
W 10  Scarlet Letter (cont.) (97-166)
**Feeling Right**

* M 22  
  * Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (39-140)

W 24  
  * *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.) (141-225)  
  * Stowe, *Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin*, selections (Bb)

M 29  
  * *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.) (226-377)

W 31  
  * *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.) (378-523)

M 5 April  
  * *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.) (524-629)  
  * James Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel" (Bb)

W 7  
  * Writing Workshop

S 10  
  **Essay due by midnight via email**

**The Economy of Pain**

M 12  
  * Howells, *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1-92)

* W 14  
  * *Lapham* (cont.) (93-186)

M 19  
  * *Lapham* (cont.) (187-270)

W 21  
  * *Lapham* (cont.) (271-365)  
  * Paul A. Bové, “Helpless Longing, or the Lesson of *Silas Lapham*” (Bb)

“...but a thin veneer”

* M 26  
  * Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1-92)

W 28  
  * *Marrow* (cont.) (93-165)

Su 2 May  
  **Peer Review deadline**

M 3  
  * *Marrow* (cont.) (166-247)

W 5  
  * *Marrow* (cont.) (248-329)  
  * Conclusion: The novel as America

F 7  
  **Revised Essay due by midnight via email**

F 14  
  **Final Exam (7-10 pm)**

* indicates that a Blackboard post is due by noon