

Dr. Roggenkamp

English 527
Antebellum American Literature

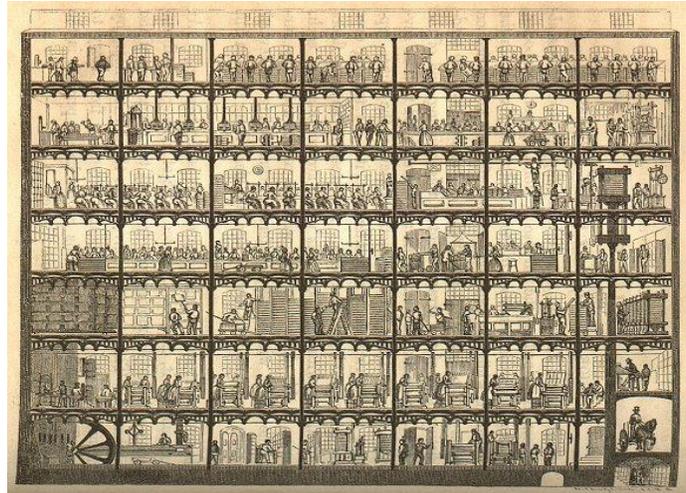
Spring 2015

Office: 315 HL

Hours: WF 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

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Image: Cross section of Harper Brothers publishing firm, from *The Harper Establishment; or, How the Story Books are Made*, by Jacob Abbott (1855)



Course Description

English 527 examines some of the most influential novels, short stories, essays, and poems—as well as key intellectual and artistic movements—of the 1830s and 1850s, the period that scholars once called the “American Renaissance,” but which we now simply refer to as the antebellum era. This encompassed one of the richest phases of literary production in the nation, an era during which some of the most famous names in American narrative arose, including Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, and Harriet Beecher Stowe.

1830-1860 also saw intense changes in American culture, demographics, technologies, economics, social mores, and, not coincidentally, publishing, readership, and authorship. With explosions in population came competing ideas about what America itself meant, and authors and readers alike continually pondered a number of provocative questions. From where, for instance, should America take its cultural identity, and what should constitute worthy reading material for a nation newly aware of its cultural independence from Great Britain? What role should the mass market play in determining what publishers produced and what people read? What is the artist’s role in shaping a rapidly changing society, and should literature address “the real” or “the ideal?” What do those terms mean, anyway?

We will let a similar series of questions guide us through this semester, starting by thinking about the term “American Renaissance.” What do those words signify, and how might they fail to capture a fuller picture of writing in antebellum America? Why were some of the canonized figures of the “American Renaissance,” sometimes disregarded in their own time? We will also turn to some of the popular fiction and “scribbling women” of the “feminine fifties” and, from these authors, some of the most decisive and moving anti-slavery works. Why were these authors and literary forms so popular in their day, and why were they marginalized after that time? How did the tensions between high-brow, male authors (like Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson and, in a more complicated way, Edgar Allan Poe) and middle-brow, female authors (like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Fanny Fern) inform literary production and consumption and shape its subsequent reputation in academia? How do antebellum anxieties about race, class, and gender inform our reading of these works today? Finally, we will end the course by circling back to some of the key works of the “Renaissance” and thinking about what it means—stylistically, aesthetically, and contextually—to write an American epic.

Student Learning Outcomes	<p>For the purpose of measured Student Learning Outcomes Assessment:</p> <p><u>SLO 1</u> Students will demonstrate familiarity with some of the contexts and conventions relevant to antebellum American literature and culture, as measured by an ungraded pretest and post-test.</p> <p><u>SLO 2</u> Students will demonstrate satisfactory completion of a critical review of scholarly literature, as measured by a checklist for this assignment.</p>												
Required Texts	<p>The following works are required for this course. In addition, you will have a few readings to download from eCollege (details provided in syllabus and in class). In general, you may use any edition you like. The ISBNs listed correspond with the editions ordered through the bookstore.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> (ISBN 9780393969665) • Ralph Waldo Emerson, <i>Emerson's Prose and Poetry</i>, ed. Joel Porte (ISBN 9780393967920) • Fanny Fern, <i>Ruth Hall</i> (ISBN 9780140436402) • Margaret Fuller, <i>Woman in the Nineteenth Century</i> (ISBN 9780393971576) • Philip Gura, <i>American Transcendentalism: A History</i> (ISBN 9780809016440) • Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> (ISBN 9780140390445) • Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales</i> (ISBN 9780393935646) • Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (ISBN 9780140437959) • Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i> (ISBN 9780393972832) • Edgar Allan Poe, <i>Selected Writings of Edgar Allan Poe</i>, ed. G. R. Thompson (ISBN 9780393972856) • David Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville</i> (ISBN 9780199782840) • Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom's Cabin</i> (ISBN 9780393933994) • Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass and Other Writings</i> (ISBN 9780140421996) 												
Grading	<p>Your final grade for this course will be weighted as follows:</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr> <td>In-class presentation, handout for article review</td> <td style="text-align: right;">10%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Written review of scholarly article</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paper 1, periodicals research, 5-6 pp.</td> <td style="text-align: right;">30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Paper 2, research paper or bibliographic essay, 15-18 pp.</td> <td style="text-align: right;">35%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Class participation</td> <td style="text-align: right;"><u>15%</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td>TOTAL</td> <td style="text-align: right;">100%</td> </tr> </table> <p>The department of Literature and Languages does not, as a rule, allow an "Incomplete" (X) on the transcript; incompletes are <i>only</i> awarded under extraordinary circumstances, pending Department Head and Dean approval. If personal issues or conflicts arise that lead to your missing a substantial amount of class, you will need to consider withdrawing from the class. As a rough guideline for what A-F grades mean, A is awarded for truly outstanding work, B denotes work significantly above the level necessary to meet basic requirements, C is for work that meets basic requirements in every way, D indicates work that meets only some of the requirements yet is still deserving of minimal credit, and F results if work is not completed or if it fails to meet the requirements of the assignment and/or course. I will provide detailed information about paper evaluation at the time of those assignments.</p>	In-class presentation, handout for article review	10%	Written review of scholarly article	15%	Paper 1, periodicals research, 5-6 pp.	30%	Paper 2, research paper or bibliographic essay, 15-18 pp.	35%	Class participation	<u>15%</u>	TOTAL	100%
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TOTAL	100%												

Scholarly Article Review	<p>Each student will read and analyze a full-length (e.g. about 20-25 pages) scholarly article on one text during the semester. I will supply the articles in eCollege. When it is your turn, you will do three things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class, you will “present” your article (about 10-15 minutes) by summarizing the article’s thesis, main points, supporting arguments, etc. • Provide your classmates (and me) with a 2 page handout with the essential points from your in-class presentation • Write a 5-6 page (double-spaced) analysis of the article, which you will turn in to me. In essence, this paper will explain the article’s argument, main points, and structure. Then you will weigh in how successful the author was in making his/her argument. Do you find it convincing? Why or why not? What are the article’s strengths and weaknesses?
Writing Assignments	<p>In addition to the critical article review discussed above, you will have two additional papers. The first is a review of primary source material from digitized antebellum newspapers and/or magazines; instructions for this paper are printed at the end of this syllabus. The second writing assignment is a longer paper, for which you will have the option either of writing a bibliographic essay about a narrow area of scholarly research, or of researching and writing your own scholarly essay. I will provide further information on these other papers later.</p>
Late Assignments	<p>I grant extensions on papers and assignments only under the most exceptional of circumstances. I will only accept late papers if you make explicit prior arrangements with me and provide documented proof of your inability to complete the paper on time due to extenuating circumstances (dire illness, death in the immediate family, etc.).</p>
Attendance	<p>Your attendance in class is crucial, and you cannot expect to do well if you do not attend each meeting (and get here on time). According to the TAMU-Commerce student handbook, “students are expected to be present for all class meetings of any course for which they are enrolled.” I will keep attendance, and you can expect your grade to suffer for absences (more than three, for any reason). Students will be permitted to make up work for excused absences, which include, for instance, participation in a required or authorized university activity, a verified severe illness, or a death in the immediate family.</p>
Graduate Degree Program	<p>Please be sure to send an email to or make an appointment with your graduate director regarding your degree program to ensure that you are on the right track. It is especially important to remember the 12-hour rule: students will lose anything over 12 hours if they have not been fully admitted into a degree program or if they change their program.</p>
Communication and Technology Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If I need to contact class members directly, I will use your university email account, so please check regularly. • I supplement my courses with select features of eCollege, the Learning Management System used by TAMU-Commerce. You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course page. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Tech Services at 902-468-6000, or helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. To complete this course successfully, you will need a computer with internet access (high speed recommended, not dial up) and a word processor equipped with Microsoft Word. Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are

	<p>using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of a browser like Internet Explorer or Google Chrome. Your course will also work with Macintosh OS x along with a recent version of Safari 2.0 or better. Along with Explorer, Chrome, and Safari, eCollege also supports the Firefox browser (3.0) on both Windows and Mac operating systems. You will primarily use eCollege to obtain handouts, to submit papers, and to view the course grade book.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TAMU-Commerce provides students with technical support in the use of eCollege. Technology problems are not an excuse for a late assignment—make sure you submit your work in time to allow for any problems accessing the Dropbox. You may reach the help desk by the following means, 24 hours a day, seven days a week: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone 866-656-5511 to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representatives • Email helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with an eCollege Technical Support Representative • Click the “Help” button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege (e.g. how to submit something to the Dropbox, how to check the grade book, etc)
<p>Additional Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Department of Literature and Languages and Texas A&M University-Commerce do not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty. Instructors uphold and support the highest academic standards, and students are expected to do likewise. Penalties for students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty include failure of the assignment and/or course, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. Refer to the <u>Texas A&M University-Commerce Code of Student Conduct 5.b[1,2,3]</u> for details. Examples of plagiarism include but are not restricted to: turning in an essay written entirely by someone else; copying any portion of someone else’s words and presenting those words as your own (e.g. without quotation or citation); copying paragraphs, sentences, or parts of sentences from another source; using the same ideas that you have found in another writer’s essay and presenting those ideas as your own; using someone else’s basic sentences but changing just a few words (again, without quotation or citation). • The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Office of Student Resources and Services, Gee Library, Room 132, (903) 886-5150, (903) 886-5835, StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu. • All students enrolled at the University must follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. Higher education provides the opportunity to explore difficult and controversial material in a safe, supportive, non-destructive locale. Additionally, I enforce standards of inclusiveness in my classes and will not tolerate discrimination and disrespect in regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, or sexual orientation. • You are responsible for reading and understanding all the items included on this syllabus and on additional materials you receive from me over the course of the term.

English 527: Schedule of Assignments and Readings Some slight adjustments may occur during the course of the semester.	
Jan 19 (Week 1)	No class, but in preparation for first meeting next week, please print out the items I will send in an email to the class (and listed here), and bring those items to class on January 26 th . I would like you to READ the Teichgraeber article before class, but you don't need to read "Diary of an Apprentice Cabinetmaker" prior to class (just bring your copy). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article by Richard F. Teichgraeber, "A Vast Cultural Bazaar": The Antebellum Literary Marketplace" (from <i>Sublime Thoughts/Penny Wisdom: Situating Emerson and Thoreau in the American Market</i>, Johns Hopkins UP, 1995) (located in eCollege DocSharing under file "Cultural Bazaar.pdf") • Please also read the items listed under Jan 26 before we meet on Jan 26 • It would, doubtless, also behoove you to start reading ahead, given that the reading load for this class is, as you will doubtless discover, sometimes rather heavy! 😊
Jan 26 (Week 2)	Introductions, syllabus, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • David Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 3-24 • Philip Gura, <i>American Transcendentalism</i>, preface and introduction
Feb 2 (Week 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Edgar Allan Poe works (pages refer to Norton edition): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, this selection from the Norton edition provides some context: "Transcendentalism and Alternative Romanticism" (pp. 717-720) • "The Fall of the House of Usher" (pp. 199-216) • "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" (pp. 240-266) • "The Tell-Tale Heart" (pp. 317-321) • "The Black Cat" (pp. 348-355) • "The Cask of Amontillado" (pp. 415-421) • "The Masque of the Red Death" (pp. 299-304) • "The Bells" (pp. 65-68) • "The Raven" (pp. 57-61) • "The Philosophy of Composition" (pp. 675-684) • Reviews of Nathaniel Hawthorne, <i>Twice-Told Tales</i> (pp. 643-644 and 645-650) • "Popular Fiction: <i>Blackwood's</i> and the Sensation Tale" (pp. 754-766) • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 169-248
Feb 9 (Week 4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ralph Waldo Emerson works (pages refer to Norton edition): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Each and All" (pp. 432-433) • <i>Nature</i> (pp. 27-55) • "An Address Delivered before the Senior Class in Divinity College" (aka "The Divinity School Address") (pp. 69-81) • "The American Scholar" (pp. 56-69) • Margaret Fuller, <i>Woman in the Nineteenth Century</i> • Gura, <i>American Transcendentalism</i>, Chapter 1, pp. 21-25, 42-45; Chapter 3, pp. 69-71, 90-97; Chapter 4, pp. 98-116
Feb 16 (Week 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Henry David Thoreau, <i>Walden</i> • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 92-103 and 500-506
Feb 23 (Week 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fanny Fern, <i>Ruth Hall</i> • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 402-411

March 2 (Week 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nathaniel Hawthorne stories (pages refer to Norton edition): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “My Kinsman, Major Molineux” (pp. 3-17) • “Young Goodman Brown” (pp. 65-75) • “Wakefield” (pp. 75-82) • “The May-pole of Merry Mount” (pp. 88-97) • “The Minister’s Black Veil” (pp. 97-107) • “The Birthmark” (pp. 118-131) • “Rappaccini’s Daughter” (pp. 188-209) • From <i>The American Notebooks</i> (pp. 309-321) • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 113-134 and 249-258
March 9 (Week 8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass</i> <p>Periodicals paper due before 11:50 p.m. on Friday, March 13. Submit your paper into the eCollege Week 8 dropbox. I will not accept late papers.</p>
SPRING BREAK	
March 23 (Week 9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harriet Beecher Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i>, volume 1 • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 73-79 and 337-346
March 30 (Week 10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stowe, <i>Uncle Tom’s Cabin</i>, volume 2
April 6 (Week 11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>
April 13 (Week 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herman Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i>, “Etymology”-Chapter 54 • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 27-30
April 20 (Week 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Melville, <i>Moby Dick</i>, Chapters 55-end • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 135-159
April 27 (Week 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walt Whitman poems (page numbers refer to Norton edition): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opening poem from 1855 edition of <i>Leaves of Grass</i> (“Song of Myself”) (pp. 662-710) • <i>Drum-Taps</i> (pp. 234-273) • Reynolds, <i>Beneath the American Renaissance</i>, pp. 103-112 and 309-333
May 4 (Week 15)	Work week; no class
FINAL PAPERS DUE in eCOLLEGE, WEEK 15 DROPBOX BY 11:59 p.m. TUESDAY, MAY 12	

Periodicals Paper (due Week 8)

This is a short paper, 5-6 pages in length, and it is not going to require secondary source research of any sort. Rather, I want you to dig into some primary sources in the form of antebellum periodicals. (You'll be looking for things published between 1820 and 1860.)

Gee Library has an amazing database named the American Periodicals Series, a fully-searchable collection of (select) magazines and papers published between British colonization of North America and the end of the nineteenth century. You can find additional periodicals At this website, http://www.periodicalresearch.org/?page_id=26, you will find links to various periodicals that have been partly or fully digitized and are available on the web (not all of them are from the antebellum period, of course, and some of them are also indexed in the American Periodicals Series database). What I would like you to do is to complete a project using this primary source material, choosing one of two approaches:

Approach 1: Using either American Periodicals Series or one of the periodicals you find through the above link, choose an antebellum periodical that looks interesting to you and start reading. You don't, obviously, need to read every single word of every single article or item in the periodical, but just poke around in it. Read what interests you, take note of other things, think about audience, think about style, think about content, etc.

Approach 2: Using choose a narrow search term about a topic that interests you, search out articles, stories, poems, etc. that deal with that subject. And then read. Take note of how authors deal with the topic, the sorts of ideas they express, how they express those ideas, and the kinds of publications in which that topic occurs.

And then you're going to write about what you've found. Tell me about what you have learned about your chosen topic, based on your reading of it in digital form. Summarize what you find. What do the articles and/or the periodical itself "look like" in all senses of the word? What can you tell about it? What seems interesting to you, especially in the context of what we have been studying this semester? You can almost think of this as a sort of "book report" kind of paper, only about periodicals.