ENGL 330: American Romanticism
Tu/Th 2-3:15 | Sturges 114
Spring 2006

Professor Alice Rutkowski
Office: 230 Welles
Office Hours: Tu/Th 11:15-2 and by appointment
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   (site has links to: syllabus, course reserves, bulletin board, class contact information, copies
   of all assignments and the course email list-serv)

Course Description
In the years before the Civil War, writings in the United States captured both the vital spirit of the
young republic and its already troubling contradictions. Students in this course will read a number
of works written during this dynamic and restless period, both from “classic” authors such as
Hawthorne and Thoreau as well as more “popular” writers such as Harriet Beecher Stowe. We'll
also look closely at the historical and cultural contexts for these works especially as it relates to
popular culture and reform movements.

Course objectives
Students will gain a thorough knowledge of American literature from the first half of the nineteenth
century and be able to place works in a historical, biographical and cultural context. In addition,
they will learn how to read and use literary criticism in the interpretation of literary works, develop
original theses and construct critical arguments.

Required texts:
All texts are available at the campus bookstore, Sundance. If at all possible, please buy the edition
indicated, to make finding page numbers easier for us all; for the starred (*) item, you must buy the
edition indicated because they contain extra material not found elsewhere.

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Dover)
Emerson, Ralph Waldo. Self-Reliance and Other Essays (Dover)
Fuller, Margaret. Summer on the Lakes (U Illinois)
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. House of the Seven Gables (Dover)
Poe, Edgar Allan. The Raven and Other Favorite Poems (Dover)
Poe. Tales of Terror and Detection (Dover)
Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom’s Cabin (Penguin)
*Thoreau, Henry David. Walden and Civil Disobedience (Houghton Mifflin)
Whitman, Walt. Leaves of Grass, 1855 ed. (Penguin)
Plus, Electronic Reserve readings (ERes): class password is “romance”

Recommended Texts:
A good essay-writing handbook, such as The Bedford Handbook for Writers (Diana Hacker,
Bedford) or the MLA Handbook for Writers (Joseph Gibaldi, MLA)
**Evaluation**

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<tr>
<td>annotated bibliography</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-12 page critical essay</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>final exam</td>
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<td>participation</td>
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<td>bulletin board posts</td>
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<td>short written responses</td>
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Final grades in my courses are not meant to come as a surprise and the calculations I use to arrive at them should not be mysterious. If, at any point during the semester, you would like to know what grade you have earned up to that point in the course, let me know. The procedure for inquiring about your current overall grade is as follows: 1) let me know you’d like to know your current grade (by email, in person, etc.) and then 2) schedule an office appointment with me. This will give me time to calculate your grade and then together we can discuss your performance in class.

**Reading Assignments:** Reading assignments must be completed by the date they appear on the syllabus. Often the reading assignments are somewhat complicated – that is to say, there are several readings from several different places, so pay close attention to the syllabus. Students are expected to bring the assigned text(s) to class; when the reading is from ERes, students must print a hard copy and bring it to class.

**Writing Assignments:** see course schedule for due dates

Annotated bibliography and longer essay: A bibliography/paper proposal will precede the paper and is designed to ensure every student’s paper addresses and interesting and arguable question. The proposal will count towards 5% of the final grade. Students who fail to complete the proposal will not be allowed to write the paper. The final version of the paper will be worth 25% of the final grade.

**Format:** Papers should reflect attention to the conventions of standard English, including appropriate documentation (MLA).

**Due dates:** papers are due *in class* on the day listed on the syllabus. Email attachments are unacceptable. Under extraordinary circumstances, extensions may be granted, provided you speak with me *in advance*. Late paper policy is as follows: penalties begin to accrue at 5 PM on the day the paper is due; up to one day (24 hours) late, penalty is 1/3 letter grade (e.g. A becomes an A-); up to two days late, 2/3; three days, 1 full grade; four days, 1 1/3; five days, 1 2/3; six days, 2 full grades; seven days, 2 2/3; more than seven days late, not accepted for credit without excuse certified by the Dean of Students’ office (this includes Counseling center). Weekends count in calculating lateness – if you need to hand in a paper late, either have a secretary in Welles 226 initial, on the paper, the date/time it was finally handed in or send a duplicate copy to me by email (hard copy still should be handed in to Welles 226 box) to get credit for the time you turned it in. Documenting the time a paper was handed in is YOUR responsibility; given a lack of documentation, the penalty will be calculated based on when I receive the paper.

**E-Bulletin Board Posts**

Ten times over the course of the semester students will post a short but pithy question/interpretation to the course electronic bulletin board. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own posts (although there are functions on the site to help you with this). At the end of the semester, students
will turn in a portfolio of their best posts and this will count for 20% of the final grade. See assignment for more details on the logistics of this assignment.

**Grading:** To receive an “A” on a paper or exam, you must do excellent work in all these areas: original thinking, organization, clear analysis, use of sufficient and specific evidence, and consistent and correct grammar and mechanics. I consider a grade of “B” a very good grade for work that is shy of excellent. Students who earn C’s and D’s fall short in these areas. In particular, they often fail to have a thesis, i.e. an arguable point, and they fill their essays with summary rather than analysis. Visit the Writing Center on the second floor of Welles for help in any of these areas.

**Participation:** Participation in class discussion is critical to the success of the course, and therefore will figure into the final grade. I will keep track of both the quantity and the quality of each student’s contributions; this factor can raise--or lower--the final grade significantly. For more details on the expectations and standards for participation, please see the attached sheet.

**Policies**

**Academic Honesty:** It is expected that the work you submit belongs to you and you alone. Any act of plagiarism or cheating will result in a failing grade on the assignment and the notification of the Dean of Students. Plagiarism includes using anyone else’s ideas or words without giving him or her credit, whether the author is a fellow student, a published author, or a web page on the Internet. It doesn’t matter how much you change the words if you are basically paraphrasing someone else’s ideas. If you want to engage with or acknowledge someone else’s ideas, include a clear and thorough citation. If you have any questions about plagiarism, feel free to speak to me.

**Accommodations:** SUNY-Geneseo will make reasonable accommodations for persons of documented physical, emotional or learning disabilities. Students should notify the Director of the Office of Disability Services (Tabitha Buggie-Hunt, 105D Erwin, tbuggieh@geneseo.edu) and their faculty of any needed accommodations as early as possible in the semester. Information on services and campus polices can be found at: http://www.geneseo.edu/~doc/otherareas/disability.shtml

**Required Work:** To pass this course, students must attempt both stages of the paper and the final. Incompletes will be granted ONLY if the following three conditions are met: documented extenuating circumstances (e.g. severe illness or family crisis); a specific request from the student; AND a plan of action to make up the missing work, including due dates.

**Course Calendar**

Tu Jan 17: Introduction to the course
Th Jan 19: the American Renaissance and other models; Jane Tompkins, “Masterpiece Theater;” Reynolds, introduction to *Beneath the American Renaissance*. summary/response paper due on Tompkins
Tu Jan 31: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Nature* (ERes)
Th Feb 2: Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” “The Over-Soul” (19-38, 51-64) and “The Poet” (65-82)
Tu Feb 7: Margaret Fuller, *Summer on the Lakes*. Smith’s intro (vii-xxii) and Ch 1-4 (1-67)
Th Feb 9: Fuller, Ch 5-6 (68-144)
Tu Feb 14: Fuller, Ch 7 (145-156) and “American Literature” (ERes)
Th Feb 16: Henry David Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” (15-36), Emerson, “Man the Reformer” (in Thoreau, 314-328)
Th Feb 23: Thoreau, finish *Walden*, Ch 12-concl (181-264) and excerpts from *Thoreau: Man of Concord* (ERes – pp 4-5 and 154-157)
Tu Feb 28: Louisa May Alcott, “Transcendental Wild Oats” (in Thoreau, 360-373) and Harding, “Five Ways of Looking at Thoreau’s *Walden*” (ERes) and summary/response paper due on Harding
Th Mar 2: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (whole text including preface and letter)
Tu Mar 7: Douglass, cont’d. Fuller review (ERes) and Jenny Franchot, “The Punishment of Esther” (ERes) and summary/response paper due on Franchot
Th Mar 9: Longfellow, “A Psalm of Life,” “The Village Blacksmith,” and “The Rainy Day” (ERes) and Whitman’s intro to *Leaves of Grass* (5-24) and look at engraving of Whitman (p.1)
Tu Mar 14: Spring Break
Th Mar 16: Spring Break
Th Mar 23: Whitman cont’d
Tu Apr 4: Stowe cont’d, ch 22 – 32 (378-499); annotated biblio due
Th Apr 6: Stowe cont’d, ch 33 – end (500-629)
Tu Apr 11: excerpts from *The Key to Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (ERes)
Th Apr 13: Douglass, “The Heroic Slave” (ERes)
Tu Apr 18: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables*, author’s preface – ch 7 (ix – 78)
Th Apr 20: Hawthorne cont’d, ch 8 – ch 13 (79-166)
Tu Apr 25: Hawthorne cont’d, ch 14 – end (167-224)
Th Apr 27: last day; final paper due

**FINAL EXAM IS THURSDAY, MAY 4, 12-3 PM**