

el Aviv University
Department of English and American Studies

Print Fiction in America

BA elective 0626.2272

Tues 12-2

Webb 102

Maya Merlob

mayamerlob@hotmail.com

Reception hours: by appointment

2017 Semester b

Grades

20%- Attendance and participation.

40%- 3 responses.

40%- Final paper.

Responses

Choose 3 of the 4 dates marked ***** and submit a 1-2 page paper specifying your **interpretation** of **one** of the texts or of a section in the text. A response is a short essay, which discusses a certain aspect of a text in a very narrow form albeit in a highly clear manner. Responses are to be submitted **before** we discuss the text in class so as to encourage original thinking about it.

Late 18th- and early 19th-century America is known as the "Era of Paper, and the Age of Print." With the possibility of publication made cheaper and more accessible, early America is experiencing a gush of literary productivity, a surge of textual production, which shapes, and ultimately constructs, an American book industry. Focusing on what can be called print fiction, a metafictional writing that treats the various facets of this newly-born industry, this course will explore the advent of print and its impact on literary style, the rise of newspaper literature, as well as the consequent shift in the figuration of the Author and the commercial figures surrounding him- editors, publishers, booksellers, and literary critics. Looking into the aspects of the publication of texts, we will also address the emerging tradition which puts emphasis on the material conditions of writing and views the book as no more than a physical object, a product made for mass consumption.

General Requirements

All students enrolled in this class must be familiar with the works and topics discussed in the preliminary survey of American literature. Hence, they must all have successfully completed the "Introduction to American Literature" course.

Materials

All the materials for this course are available online (Moodle). Students are required to access the materials for each class. If a student is unfamiliar with the electronic system, it is his/her responsibility to approach the lecturer or other reliable source for technical assistance.

Requirements

1. Attendance and Participation: All students must attend and take an active role in class. It is absolutely imperative to come to class prepared with the texts assigned for each class. Students are required to read the texts beforehand. The students' preparation as well as their ability to engage in a discussion about the texts will account for 20% of the final grade.

2. Responses: Throughout the semester students are required to submit short written responses on the texts due the day of submission. Four dates are possible for submission, out of which the students will choose 3. For those interested in improving their grade, an optional fourth submission is possible for the fourth date, with the highest three marks to be taken into consideration. All responses should be 1-2 pages long and should be written in a clear and concise manner, allowing space for students to express their opinion and original thinking. The three responses account for 40% of the final grade.

3. Final Paper: A final paper will be assigned towards the end of the semester and is due July 24 1 pm. The final paper is to be 4-5 pages long and will require students to engage in a literary interpretation based on the topics and themes discussed throughout the semester.

4. Plagiarism: There is no need to consult secondary sources. If a student chooses to, s/he may cite the source appropriately. Failing to give proper credit to a source used is considered plagiarism and will be dealt according to the departmental instructions. Plagiarism is a serious offense which this course, as well as the entire Department, will not tolerate.

1. **14.3 Introduction**

2. **21.3 The Self-Made Man in Print**: Susan Ridley Sedgwick "The Boy and the Book."

The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin (excerpts).

3. **28.3 The Persistence of the Romantic Genius**: Charles Brockden Brown "The

Scribbler," "The Man at Home," "The Rhapsodist." Nathaniel Hawthorne "The

Custom House." Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar."

4. **4.4 The New American Language and Style**: On Business Writing (excerpts).

Alexis de Tocqueville, James Kirke Paulding, Philip Freneau, and John Henry

Warland.

5. **5.4 **** (Wed.- make-up class) The Fallen Author**: Theodore Sedgwick Fay- "The Poor

Author," Anonymous, "Reminiscences of an Unhappy Author."

Passover Break

6. **25.4 The Miseries of the Job**: Washington Irving "Poor Devil Author." "The Miseries

of Authorship.”

May 2- Independence Day

7. **9.5 ****** **Hired Pens:** Edgar Allan Poe “The Literary Life of Thingum Bob,” Anonymous,
“The Incastros.”
8. **16.5 Newspaper Literature: Excerpts**
9. **23.5 ****** **Behind the Scenes of the Industry:** Anonymous, “Confessions of a Country
Editor.” Theodore Sedgwick Fay, “The Little, Hard-Faced Old
Gentleman.”

30.5 Shavuut

6.6- NO CLASS

10. **13.6 The Editorial Function:** Theodore Sedgwick fay, “From the Diary of an Editor.”
11. **20.6****** **Literary Success and Celebrity Culture:** Woman in the Literary Market: Anne Bradstreet. Emily Dickinson. Fanny Fern- *Ruth Hall* (excerpts).
12. **27.6 The Literary Businesswoman:** *Ruth Hall*- Cont. Fanny Fern, “A Practical Bluestocking.”
13. Make-up Class: **Date TBA- Payment, Copyright, Royalties:** *Ruth Hall*- Cont.;
Edgar Allan Poe “Some Secrets of the Magazine Prison
House.” Anon.,
“The Morality of Publishers.” Benjamin Franklin, “Apology
for
Printers.”