**LITT 3621:001  
Early American Literature** (W2)  
TR 8:30-10:20, B-008  
Fall 2010

Dr. Deborah Gussman

Office: F137

Hours: TR 1:15-2:15 and by appointment  
Phone: 609-652-4657  
deborah.gussman@stockton.edu  
<http://wp.stockton.edu/gussman>

**Required Texts**:

Myra Jehlen and Michael Warner, eds. *The English Literatures of America, 1500-1800*. Routledge 1997.  ISBN: 978-0-415-90873-3 (paperback) req.

William Apess. *A Son of the Forest & Other Writings*. U of Massachussetts P 1997. ISBN-10: 1558491074  (paperback) req.

Catharine Maria Sedgwick. *Hope Leslie*. Penguin 1998. ISBN-10: 0140436766 (paperback, req.)

James Fenimore Cooper. *Last of the Mohicans*.  Signet 2005.  ISBN-10: 0451529820  (paperback, req.)

William Hill Brown and Hannah W. Foster. *The Power of Sympathy* and *The Coquette*. Penguin,1996. ISBN-10: 0140434682 (paperback, req.)

**Course Description and Goals**

We will be looking at the development of an American literature from the period of exploration and contact through the 1820’s (though not always in chronological order). We will read a variety of texts including essays, novels, poems, sermons, non-fiction narratives and autobiographies. Through our readings, writing, and discussions, we will explore issues that were significant to writers and readers of the time, and that continue to interest us today such as: What is an American? Who defines when writing becomes literature? Is there an American literature, or many literatures?

We will be approaching this diverse body of writing with attention to historical contexts, literary and intellectual developments, and considerations of race, gender and class. In addition to gaining knowledge of a fascinating body of material that would deeply influence the work of later writers, you will be learning new questions and critical perspectives to bring to your reading and writing, and engaging with current scholarly debates over the changing literary canon. I need to include some secondary readings next time to make that happen!

Prerequisites: LITT 2123, or permission of instructor.

This course meets the Literature Program’s “before 1800 requirement” and is an American literature course.

**Course Requirements**

**Two essays:** 5-6 pages each. We will discuss topics in advance.

**Two exams**: These will include short answer, identification, explication, and essay questions.

**Attendance and participation**: You are expected to attend class regularly having completed the assigned reading and/or writing and to be prepared to discuss the texts and your own work. We will also be using Blackboard for additional discussions, question-posing, problem-solving, and announcements. If you are frequently unprepared, late, or miss more than 4 classes, you will find it difficult to earn a satisfactory final grade. For obvious reasons, please silence cell phones and do not text message, check email, listen to music, or surf the web during class.

**Grading** -- In arriving at final grades, I will follow this breakdown:  
20% –Essay #1  
20% –Essay #2  
25% - First exam  
25% - Second exam  
10%- Class preparation and participation, Blackboard participation

Other grading policies:

* Grades will be lowered by 5 pts. for each day late, unless prior arrangements have been made with me.
* All assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course.
* In accordance with the College’s policy, I do not give incomplete grades unless there are extremely serious circumstances, and then, only by prior arrangement.

**Grading Scale:**

100-93: A 82.9-80: B- 69.9-67: D+

92.9-90: A- 79.9-77: C+ 66.9-63: D

89.9-87: B+ 76.9-73: C 62.9-60: D-

86.9-83: B 72.9-70: C- 59.9 & below: F

**Academic Honesty**: The Literature program expects students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. You should make yourself aware of Richard Stockton College’s Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found in the Student Handbook. You should also make yourself familiar with the penalties for violations of the policy and your rights as a student.

Please be aware that plagiarism (one form of academic dishonesty) includes, but may not be limited to: using all or part of a source, either directly or in paraphrase, either intentionally or unintentionally, whether that source is published, or online, or taken from a fellow or former student, *without properly acknowledging that source.*

If you are found to have represented the work or ideas of others as your own, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

1. If this is the first time the student has been found to have plagiarized, he/she will receive an "F" for that paper or assignment and/or the course.  
2. For second offenses of plagiarism, the student will receive an F for the course.  
3. Whenever possible, a student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, should meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written in order to review and discuss the suspect work.

Additionally, in accordance with Stockton College policy, Literature faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expelled. If you have a question specific to a paper you are working on, please bring it to my attention.

**Class Schedule (subject to revision – check Blackboard regularly)**

**PLEASE BRING YOUR TEXT TO EVERY CLASS (be sure you have the right book!)**

(ELA= The English Literatures of America, H=handout, posted on Blackboard)

**September**

T 9/7 Introductions, syllabus. **Origins and First Encounters**: View *The New World*, Terrence Malick, dir. (2005)

TH 9/9 Finish viewing *The New World* and discuss. Read Native American narratives of origin and encounter: ““Premonitions and Prophecies” from *Native American Testimony*, Peter Nabokov, ed. 1991, pages 3-17 (H); Selections from *Native American Literature*, Lawanna Trout, ed, 1999, 75- 109 (H)

T 9/14 **Age of Discovery**: Ch. 1 Introduction, 3-6; Columbus, 11-17; Vespucci, 17-28; Nahutal accounts, 30-35 (ELA) Add Noah Webster, “The Story of Columbus” 1791, 798-799.

\*\*Deadline to drop a course with a 100% refund

TH 9/16 **English Diaspora (Virginia)**: Ch. 3 Intro, 101-103, Selections 1-4, 104-129 (ELA).

T 9/21 **English Diaspora (New England):** Ch. 3 selections 8-10 and13-15 (ELA)

TH 9/23 **Journals and Diaries**: Ch.5 John Winthrop, from the journal 308-315; Michael Wigglesworth, from the diary 319-321; Anne Bradstreet, “To My Dear Children” 322-325; Samuel Sewall, from the diary, 382-388 (ELA)

T 9/28 **Constructing the “Indian” and the “Puritan”:** Ch. 7 Roger Williams, from a *Key Into the Language of America*, 494-498; Ch. 5 Thomas Shepard, a visit to John Eliot’s Indian Mission, 316-317; John Eliot, Indians and imps, 318; Mary Rowlandson, *The Soveraignty and Goodness of God*, 349-357,362-364,373-382 (ELA)

TH 9/30 **Puritan Poetry**: Ch.8, introduction, Selections 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12

**October**

T 10/5 **Puritan Poetry:** Ch. 8, Selections 11 and 14.

TH 10/7 **FIRST EXAM**

\*\* F 10/8 Deadline to withdraw from a full-term course with a 50% refund

T 10/12 Start reading Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*, 1826 (Ch. 1-10). View film: *Last of the Mohicans*, 1992 (114 minutes)

TH 10/14 Cooper, Ch. 11-20

T 10/19 Cooper, Ch. 21-33

TH 10/21 Begin Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie*, 1827, 3-83

T 10/26 Preceptorial Advising – no classes, but keep reading *Hope Leslie,* 84-177

TH 10/28, Sedgwick, 181-276

**November**

T 11/2 Sedgwick, 277-371

\*\* W 11/3   Preceptorial Advising - no classes until 3:35PM

TH 11/4 Apess, *Eulogy on King Philip*, 1836

**Section III: Eighteenth Century Lives**

T 11/9 John Rogers, Jr. “The Declaration and Confession of Esther Rodgers” 404-407; Sarah Knight, “Journal,” 415-427; Elizabeth Ashbridge, from Some Account of the Fore-Part of the Life, 659-667 (ELA)

TH 11/11 View *A Midwife’s Tale*. **Paper #1 due on Blackboard, Fri. 11/12 by midnight.**

T 11/16 Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, 725-54, 768-770 (ELA)

TH 11/18 Olaudah Equiano, from the *Interesting Narrative*, 792-798; Stephen Burroughs, from *Memoirs of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs* 801-812; John Filson, *The Adventures of Daniel Boon*, 781-791. (ELA)

**Section IV: Towards a National Literature**

T 11/23 **Poetry**: Ch. 14, Selections 10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 27, 30 (ELA)

**Paper #2 due on Blackboard, Wed. 11/24, by midnight.**

TH 11/25 Thanksgiving holiday – no classes

T 11/30 **Fiction**: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*, 1797.

**December**

TH 12/2 Foster, *The Coquette*, cont.

T 12/7 Debate over the national novel: Selections 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 16 from Chapter 13 (ELA)

TH 12/9 **Final examination**

TH 12/ 16     Fall term graduating student grades due in the Office of the Registrar 10AM

12/19     Summer and Fall term commencement ceremony