

**American Studies, 050:227**  
**19th Century American Literature and Culture**

**Tuesdays, 1-4PM**  
**Ruth Adams Building, Room 207**

**Professor Andy Urban**  
**American Studies & History**  
[aturban@rutgers.edu](mailto:aturban@rutgers.edu)  
**Office Hours by Appointment, Online**  
**he/him pronouns**



*Fanny Palmer, "Across the Continent," 1868*

## Overview

This course introduces students to American literature and culture from the long-nineteenth century (1783 to 1918). Topics that this course will explore include: the origins of American nationalism in the aftermath of the Revolution, and the struggle for cultural authority; the emergence of middle-class domesticity, the market economy, and the mass mobilization of wage labor; the search for a distinct and “authentic” American literature; evangelical Protestantism and anti-Catholic nativism; race and the problem of slavery; westward expansion, overseas imperialism, and the displacement and removal of indigenous peoples; the rise of industrial capitalism; the construction of gendered roles and spheres; and, the rise of mass entertainment and popular culture.

We will focus on literary sources such as novels, poetry, autobiographical writings, and journalism, as well as cultural texts such as songs, paintings, sculpture, theater, and vaudeville. To contextualize these sources, we will read scholarly sources that interpret the social and political meanings that informed nineteenth-century cultural production and how works of culture were received and consumed by the public. Finally, we will also explore how writers and filmmakers from the present and recent past have sought to recreate the nineteenth century in period pieces and works of historical fiction.

## Required Readings

The required book for this course, Tiya Miles’s *All That She Carried*, is available for purchase through the bookstore or through numerous online vendors, or it can be acquired through the Rutgers’ libraries system using EZBorrow/Interlibrary Loan. You are required to by a hard copy version of this book, to bring with you to class meetings. Citations to digital versions of this text will not be accepted in course assignments.

The remaining course readings will be available either as pdfs in the “Files” section of our Canvas site, in the folder labeled “Readings,” or linked to in the syllabus. You are not required to print out pdf readings although you may find it useful to do so.

## COVID Protocols and Regulations

For the fall 2021 semester, Rutgers is requiring masks in all classrooms and other meeting spaces, regardless of the vaccination status of the students and instructors involved. The Delta variant surge makes it highly unlikely this policy will change any time soon.

In keeping with Rutgers University policy, you will be required to wear a nose-and-mouth covering at all times. While I do not anticipate that this will be an issue, please

note that students who fail or refuse to wear a mask will be asked to leave the classroom immediately – with no exceptions. Masks are not required outdoors and based on what we decide as a class, we might hold – weather permitting – a couple of our class meetings, or portions of our class, outside. In the classroom, we will try to maintain social distance as much as possible.

Presently, Rutgers is instructing faculty to hold all non-instructional meetings online, unless a face-to-face meeting is somehow essential. Accordingly, my office hours will take place on Zoom. To set up a meeting time, please just email me with your availability and we can schedule something.

If you are feeling ill or sick, please do not attend class in person. I can work with you to catch up via Zoom. (I'll preach for a second and note that even before Covid, it was not a great idea to attend class while sick. Practice self-care!) I am also aware that you may need to assist a friend, family member, or loved one who becomes ill or is facing other difficulties due to the pandemic. Throughout these challenging times, I have tried to be understanding and accommodating, and I will continue to do so. I just ask that you communicate with me so that we can come up with appropriate contingency plans.

If Covid causes multiple students to have to miss in-person teaching, we will discuss whether it makes sense to move – temporarily – to online instruction.

For the latest information and updates on Rutgers' various policies and regulations concerning Covid-19, please consult: <https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/>.

### **Assignment and Grading Summary:**

*Additional assignment details and instructions will be provided in separate documents.*

Midterm Exam – 25% (take-home, to be completed the week of October 18)

Final Exam – 30% (take-home, due by Friday, December 17)

Three Response Papers – 30% (10% each)

- Class will be divided into two groups, A & B. The class schedule at the end of the syllabus indicates which group is to turn in a response paper for class.

Participation and engagement – 15%

### **Grading Scale:**

92-100=**A**; 87-91=**B+**; 81-86=**B**; 77-80=**C+**; 70-76=**C**; 60-69=**D**; 0-59=**F**

**Note:** there are no minus grades at Rutgers.

## School of Arts and Science Degree Requirements Met by this Course:

Students will learn to:

- Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies. [AHp]



## American Studies Department Learning Goals Met by this Course:

Students will learn to:

- Critically analyze interdisciplinary primary and secondary sources relating to the nineteenth century United States.
- Interpret primary and secondary sources in their broader social, economic, and political contexts.
- Gain insights into how nineteenth-century American cultural forms departed from earlier periods and anticipated subsequent eras.
- Write well; speak articulately; and think critically, analytically, and creatively.

## Class Policies:

### Class Announcements:

Please make sure that you are receiving and checking Canvas announcements. All important information related to class will be sent out through Canvas. You are responsible for knowing the information and instructions posted to Canvas.

### Special Accommodation Requests:

All special accommodation requests should be brought to my attention during the first two weeks of class. Full policies and procedures are available for review at:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu>.

### Academic Integrity Policy:

<https://nbprovost.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-students>

The principles of academic integrity require that a student:

- properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others.
- properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work.
- make sure that all work submitted as their own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
- obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with their interpretation or conclusions.
- treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress.
- uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which they are preparing.

Any violation of academic integrity is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate sanction or penalty. If you are unsure about whether something might violate Rutgers' academic integrity policy - please ask me for clarification!

### **Honor Pledge:**

I pledge on my honor that I will adhere to all aspects of the Rutgers Academic Integrity Policy and to Rutgers policies concerning bullying, intimidation, and harassment (<https://policies.rutgers.edu/10211-currentpdf>).

By accepting this syllabus and enrolling in this course, you assume responsibility for knowing the above policies and the possible penalties - including suspension and expulsion - should you violate them.

## Class Schedule and Readings

### September 7 – Introductions

- Benjamin Franklin, “The Origin of Tobacco, from a Curious Account Given by Dr. Franklin of the Hospitality of Those We Call the Savage Indians,” *The Essex Journal and the Massachusetts and New-Hampshire General Advertiser* 25: 2 (1784).

### September 14 – Literature and Culture in the American Revolution

- Markus Rediker and Peter Linebaugh, “A Motley Crew in the American Revolution,” in *Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (New York: Beacon Press, 2000), 211-247.
- Thomas Jefferson, “Declaration of Independence,” from *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson* (1821)

Selections from [\*The American Yawp Reader\*](#):

- Thomas Paine Calls for American independence, 1776
- Boston King recalls fighting for the British and securing his freedom, 1798
- Abigail and John Adams Converse on Women’s Rights, 1776

### September 21 – The Literature and Culture of the Market Revolution – Group A

- William Cronon, “To Be the Central City,” in *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (W.M. Norton, 1991).
- Naomi Reed, “The Specter of Wall Street: ‘Bartleby, the Scrivener’ and the Language of Commodities,” *American Literature* 76, no. 2 (2004): 247-273.
- Herman Melville, “Bartleby, The Scrivener: A Story Of Wall-street,” *The Piazza Tales* (1856)

### September 28 – The Literature and Culture of the Enslaved, part 1

- Miles, *All That She Carried*, prologue – chapter 2

### October 5 – The Literature and Culture of the Enslaved, part 2

- Miles, *All That She Carried*, chapters 3 - 5
- Excerpts from Solomon Northrup, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853)
- Andy Urban, “Art as an Ally to Public History: 12 Years a Slave and Django Unchained,” *The Public Historian* 36, no. 1 (February 2014): 81-86.

### October 12 – The Literature and Culture of the Enslaved, part 3 - Group B

- Miles, *All That She Carried*, chapters 6, 7, Conclusion, and “An Essay on Process”
- Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Wife of His Youth” (1898)

### NO CLASS ON OCTOBER 19 – TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM THIS WEEK

### October 26 – The Literature and Culture of War – Group A

- Drew Gilpin Faust, “‘The Dread Void of Uncertainty’: Naming the Dead in the American Civil War,” *Southern Cultures* 11, no. 2 (2005): 7-32.
- Dominic Tierney, “‘The Battle Hymn of the Republic’: America’s Song of Itself,” *The Atlantic*, November 4, 2010, <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2010/11/the-battle-hymn-of-the-republic-americas-song-of-itself/66070/> - please read online and review the embedded media
- Ambrose Bierce, “An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” (1890)

### November 2 – The Literature and Culture of Nativism – Group B

- Erika Lee, “‘Americans Must Rule America,’ in *America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States* (Basic Books, 2019), 39-74.
- Anna Yeziarska, “The Lost ‘Beautifulness,’” in *Hungry Hearts* (1922)
- Selection of Immigration Cartoons (see pdf)

### November 9 – The Literature and Culture of Imperialism – Group A

- Amy Kaplan, “Conquest and Liberation: Mark Twain and Imperialism,” in *What Democracy Looks Like: A New Critical Realism for a Post-Seattle World* (Rutgers University Press, 2006), 68-76.
- Jana Lipman, “5 things to know about Guantanamo Bay on its 115th birthday,” *The Conversation*, December 10, 2018, <https://theconversation.com/5-things-to-know-about-guantanamo-bay-on-its-115th-birthday-108301> (read online)
- Victor Gillam, “The White Man’s Burden,” *Judge*, 1899

### Selections from *The American Yawp Reader*:

- William McKinley on American Expansionism (1903)
- Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1899)
- William James on “The Philippine Question” (1903)
- African Americans Debate Enlistment (1898)

## **November 16 – The Literature and Culture of Capitalism and Labor – Group B**

- Alan Trachtenberg, “Capital and Labor,” in *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (1983)
- Rebecca Harding Davis, “Life in the Iron Mills” (1861)

## **NO CLASS THANKSGIVING WEEK**

## **November 30 – Adapting the Literature and Culture of 19th Century**

- Judy Simons, “The Afterlives of Louisa May Alcott: Greta Gerwig’s Little Women,” *Adaptation* 13, no. 2 (2020): 279–281.

In-class film screening: Greta Gerwig, director, *Little Women* (2019)

## **December 7 – The Literature and Culture of the Masses**

- Nan Enstad, “Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in ed. Stanley Aronowitz and Michael Roberts, *Class: The Anthology* (2018).
- Edith Wharton, “The Other Two” (1904)