

620:053:02 Survey of American Literature Fall 2006

❧ *Imagining America* ❧

**Instructor:** Dr. Anne Myles

**Time:** TTh 11:00-12:15

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**My home phone:** 833-7094 (OK for weekends or emergency, before 10:30 p.m.;

I'd prefer you to contact me via my office phone or e-mail otherwise)

**Office hours:**

My regular office hours are Wednesdays 4:00 or 4:30-5:00 (start time depends upon whether I have a meeting or not 3:30-4:30) and Thursdays 1:00-3:00. If these times don't fit your schedule, please contact me and we can arrange something else. I am frequently in my office at other times besides scheduled office hours; feel free to knock anytime you see my door cracked open.

Description:

This course will introduce you to major periods and trends in American literature, and give you a taste of the work of some of the major writers of this tradition. It is, of course, impossible to do justice to American literary tradition(s), let alone to individual writers, in a one-semester survey of nearly 500 years. This semester our readings will focus on exploring the dreams, nightmares, encounters, and experiences that have shaped our imagination of that more-than-place called America, from early colonizers to the present moment of a nation deeply divided and entangled in a highly controversial war. We will read some works that express grand and hopeful visions, some that speak with a prophetic voice to the failures to live up to such visions, and some that explore the tangled recesses of the American experience and psyche in complexly crafted literary art. While we'll pay plenty of attention to literary dimensions, an underlying principle of the course is that, contrary to Laura Bush's (political) assertion that American literature is "not political," it has always been a means of debating, challenging, and ultimately helping to create the nation.

Prerequisites:

620:034, Critical Writing About Literature (or the equivalent), is a pre- or co-requisite.

Required Texts:

- Lauter et al, eds. *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Concise Ed.*
- Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*

Required Work (I'll give you more specific guidelines before each assignment):

1. **First Paper.** This will be a fairly short (3-5 pages) analytic paper based on one of the first units we cover in the class. You will discuss in your own words the connections and/or contrasts you see between the any two texts we have read: how do these texts define, challenge, or complicate the idea of the “American dream,” or offer different perspectives on the way(s) in which America has been imagined?
2. **Second Paper.** This will be a somewhat longer paper (at least 5 pp.) involving research. You will focus on one of a choice of texts covered in class, and research several different critical interpretations of it (ideally, different critics’ perspectives on some particular issue within the text). Your paper will discuss the interpretive issue(s) the text raises, explain the arguments of your critical sources, and offer your own response to or evaluation of these issues and arguments.
3. **Third Paper.** This final paper will ask you to think as an editor or teacher. From our readings in the course (adding, if you wish, other selections from the *Heath Anthology* or covered in *Multicultural Literature* if you’ve taken that course) you will select 3-5 texts to be grouped together within a special section in an (imaginary) secondary-school American literature anthology. The section might be organized around the theme of this course, or around any other theme or concept in American literature that you choose. Your paper (4-6 pp.) will be either a proposal to the anthology’s publisher for a unit you think should be included in the anthology, or the introduction to the selections that would appear in the published book, guiding readers into how they should think about the concept of the section and about the particular works you’ve included.
4. **Short written responses.** You will have six 1-2 page written responses due at various points in the semester. These should be typed, but are meant to be relatively informal and journal-like, articulating your response to and/or wonderings about one or more recent readings, either on its/their own or in connection to particular course units or themes. See the page at the end of this syllabus for more information.
5. **Final Exam.** The exam will include A) a short-answer section in which you will be asked to *identify the authors of* and *answer questions on* passages from works covered throughout the syllabus; B) an essay section, most likely asking you to respond to one question (out of several choices) on *Angels in America*. I will give you a handout with more detailed information about the final exam near the end of the semester.

Grading:

Your course grade will be determined by the percentage of points that you earn, minus any subtractions for poor attendance or late work. Especially strong class participation will strengthen your final grade if your grades for written work do not seem to me to fully reflect your overall performance in the course. The total number of points possible for the semester may vary slightly from this estimate.

Short responses, total	60 points (10 each)
First Paper	50 points
Second Paper	100 points
Third Paper	75 points
Final Exam	75 points
Attendance/participation	25 points
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Total	385 points

Your semester grade will be calculated based on the following standard percentage scale out of the total points possible:

A	95%	B-	80%	D+	67%
A-	90%	C+	77%	D	64%
B+	87%	C	74%	D-	60%
B	84%	C-	70%		

If you are unable to complete all the work by finals week and wish to receive a grade of I (Incomplete) you must request this of me specifically before the beginning of finals week. However, I will *not* give Is to people who have vanished for much of the semester and make a sudden late reappearance. According to University policy, the final date you may drop the class and receive a W on your transcript is Friday, October 27.

Deadlines:

Work is due on the date specified. Papers are normally due at the beginning of class, but I will not penalize you so long as they are in by 5 p.m. on that day. (Do not skip class because you're having trouble with your printer, etc.) There will be subtractions from your grade for late work, increasing with the length of time the paper is late. In those cases I will give the paper a "merit grade" which lets you know how I responded to the paper in itself, and the official "recorded grade" which factors in the lateness. I am willing to negotiate extensions requested at least one class in advance, preferably more. E-mail submission is acceptable if you can't make it in to campus. Even if a piece of work is very late, it is always better to turn it in that not; I won't refuse it and will always give you some credit.

Revision Policy:

Yes, you are welcome to revise your first and/or second essay if you are dissatisfied with the grade -- so long as there is time left in the semester to do so. If I give the revision a higher grade, it replaces the old grade. However, I suggest you meet with me first to go over my comments and your revision plans. I expect substantial rethinking/rewriting in a revised paper; except in special, mutually agreed-upon cases, I will return unmarked a revision that contains only mechanical or sentence-level changes. When you submit a revised essay, you must also attach the original copy of the first version along with my comments and grade sheet; I cannot evaluate your changes otherwise. Due dates for revisions are generally negotiable/flexible, but I will not accept revisions after the last week of regular class (i.e., no last-minute revisions of earlier work will be accepted during finals week; I have too much to grade then as it is!). I will not typically accept revisions of short response papers.

In general, if you are unhappy with your marks on written work you have submitted, please consult with me and we'll determine whether, and how, you might improve your score on these or your ultimate grade in the class. Obviously, the earlier in the semester we discuss this, the more opportunity there is for you to make a meaningful difference in your grade.

I am also always willing to look at rough drafts (though I make no promises about drafts shown me less than 48 hours before the paper is due). If time is tight, it generally works best if you can e-mail me your draft as a Word attachment; that way I'll probably get it quickly and I can send it back to you with comments as soon as I've read it.

Format for Submitting Class Work:

All essays must be word-processed/typed in a plain, average-sized font, double-spaced, with approximately 1" margins on all sides, on 8 1/2" x 11" plain paper. I recommend Times Roman 12-pt. font (as in this syllabus) or something similar.

No separate title page is necessary. At the top of the first page of your paper (I don't care which corner[s]), include your name, the name of this course, and the date. Centered beneath that, give your paper a title that gives some idea what it is about -- do not use just the title of the work you are writing about. Double-spacing between the title and the beginning of the text makes it easier to read. Also, please number your pages -- do so by hand if you forget to do it on the computer.

In a separate page at the end of your paper, list all the texts you have used in the paper in correct MLA style. There are guides to MLA style in any writer's handbook and on countless websites. If you have a question, please ask.

All quotations from the text or direct references to passages in the text of the work(s) you are writing about must be followed by page references. I expect prose, poetry, and dialogue to be quoted in the correct form(s).

Proofread your paper carefully (spell-checkers help but won't do the whole job [*see?*]); numerous typos and other errors you could easily have fixed make you look careless or indifferent and will detract from your grade, probably more than one or two honest mistakes in syntax will.

**Also, be sure to save all your work on a disk or a flash drive, both completed papers and important writing in progress. On occasion papers do get misplaced during the grading process – or your computer may crash. Don't let this become a crisis!**

Attendance:

Expected and required. I do take attendance in class, and more than a few absences will cause you to begin losing points from the 25 allotted in the course for attendance and participation. Legitimate reasons for missing class include your own illness; a death or medical emergency in your immediate family; your required attendance at an official University-sponsored event; or dangerous driving conditions. If one of these pertains to you, please notify me by e-mailing me or leaving a message on my office voice-mail, if possible before the class you will miss.

If a situation arises that will cause you to miss a number of classes, notify me as soon as you reasonably can so that we can discuss how we will handle it. If you are going through a personal or family crisis that wreaks havoc with your ability to participate in the class, I strongly urge you to withdraw from it: see the reading and assignment schedule for the last date this semester on which you may withdraw with a "W." Every semester a few students have problems and ask for Incompletes: in my experience few of them ever complete their coursework later. You will spare yourself and me future headaches by not getting yourself into this situation. There is no stigma attached to withdrawing from a course.

Academic Ethics:

All students are expected to abide by the University's official policy on academic ethics. You can review this policy at <http://www.uni.edu/pres/policies/301.html>. If you have any question about what would constitute plagiarism in relation to your use of a particular source, please consult with me or, if I am not available, with another faculty member. Keep a record of the sources you consult while doing research for a piece of writing; you should be able to retrieve all sources consulted if an issue should arise.

**Any work you submit that appears intentionally plagiarized (you attempt to pass off language, ideas, or a complete text from another source as your own, assuming or hoping I won't be able to tell) will be graded F, and you will have to redo the assignment from the beginning on another topic, under close supervision. In addition to the above penalties, I reserve the right to automatically fail any student from the course for wholesale or repeated plagiarism.**

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a disability requiring special accommodation in the classroom or for exams or other assignments, please contact me early in the semester so we can work out the appropriate adjustments. Please bring some kind of official documentation if possible; I should receive this directly from the university, but I may not have it at hand.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

### August

T 22 Introduction

#### **Unit 1: Crossing Oceans, Crossing Cultures**

*The New World was created through experience (both thrilling and deeply traumatic), imagination (often rooted in religious traditions), and cultural encounter (whether sought or unwilling). In this unit we will consider accounts from several traditions, as well as a more modern account of culture-crossing that invites us to look at the accounts of early settlers from a new perspective.*

Th 24 Gaspar Pérez de Villagr , extract from *The History of New Mexico* (68-72); William Bradford, extract from *Of Plymouth Plantation* (164-178); John Winthrop, extract from *A Modell of Christian Charity* (147-57).

T 29 Mary Rowlandson, from *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*, 206-231; *The Jesuit Relations*, 107-116.

Th 31 Rowlandson continued; Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa), from *The School Days of an Indian Girl* (1686-1696). Recommended: get started on Franklin reading (long). **Response 1 due.**

### September

#### **Unit 2: American Dreams and Disillusionments**

*One of the most important and influential books in America, Franklin's Autobiography as a model for the "self-made man" in a rising nation. (It is also, read properly, quite funny.) Cr vecoeur extends the American dream to a nation of immigrants. But for many people, the story of a life involves obstacles Franklin never considered. . . .*

T 5 Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part I (381-424); J. Hector St. John de Cr vecoeur, Letter III, "What is an American?" from *Letters to an American Farmer* (435 & 441-446).

Th 7 Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part II (424-434); Meridel LeSueur, "Women on the Breadlines," (2085-2092); Richard Wright, "The Ethics of Living Jim Crow," (2141-51); Carlos Bulosan, from *America is in the Heart* (2190-95).

#### **Unit 3: "Only that day dawns to which we are awake"**

*These two Transcendentalist visionaries exhorted their contemporaries (and us) to look at the world, and ourselves, with fresh eyes, and in so doing sought to declare America's spiritual independence from Europe and the past.*

T 12 Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Self-Reliance" (689-90, 707-723). **Response 2 due (focus on material from last week)**

Th 14 Henry David Thoreau, chapter from *Walden*, 749-50, 765-775.

**Unit 4: "How a slave was made a man"**

*Douglass's classic narrative tells us from within what it means to be a slave -- and what it means to achieve manhood -- in America. Melville's complex, surprising fiction challenges us to reexamine our assumptions about both slavery and American character.*

T 19 *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave*; read through chap. 10 at least, 855-930 (but finish it for today if you can).

Th 21 Douglass, *Narrative* continued (finish it); for a voice speaking on slavery from a female perspective, please read Frances E.W. Harper, poems 931-936. Begin Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno," 1055-1057, 1084 ff., try read to p. 1104 at least. **Paper 1 due by Friday, 9/22 (in my mailbox or on my office door)**

T 26 Melville, "Benito Cereno," finish.

**Unit 5: Cracked foundations**

*Here are nightmare visions from three very different writers, exposing cracks in the psyche, the nation, and the family order. What themes link these writers? What images and symbols? How can we trace the motifs of private and public disturbance -- the cracked foundations of the American self and state?*

Th 28 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," 953-968.

**October**

T 3 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," 988-989, 1001-1014.  
**Response 3 due.**

Th 5 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper," 1596-1609.

**Unit 6: Poetry for America I: "Much madness -- is divinest sense"**

*Whitman created an expansive, rhapsodic, sexual poetry for the multitudinous city and nation he perceived. Dickinson's poetry, though quieter outwardly, offers equally arresting subversions of conventional pieties and gender roles.*

T 10 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" from *Leaves of Grass* -- get started on reading it; I will indicate some sections to focus on in particular. Have a look at 1855 Preface too, though you don't need to read every word. (1209-1276).

- Th 12 Whitman, continue. Begin Emily Dickinson: read over all the poems, and the letters, but we'll focus class discussion on these: poem J. 324 (p. 1300), J. 401 (p. 1302), 435 (1302), 465 (1303-4), 709 (1309-10), 732 (1310-11), 1461 (1315).
- T 17 Dickinson, continued. **Preliminary topic proposal and bibliography for Paper 2 due.**

**Unit 7: Realism and resistance: more unconventional women**

*This unit focuses on the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and continues the themes of female rebellion we saw in Dickinson. Writing in different decades and styles, Fanny Fern and Mary Wilkins Freeman use humor to raise questions about what defines proper female behavior, while Chopin adds to Freeman another example of women's regionalist fiction. James's important novella explores the clash of American and European social codes through the scandalizing behavior of an American girl abroad.*

- Th 19 Fanny Fern, extracts 837-840 (more Fern selections available at <http://www.merrycoz.org/voices/leaves/LEAVES00.HTM> if you're interested. Recommended: "Developments in Women's Writing," 1619. Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, "The Revolt of 'Mother'" (1642-54). Kate Chopin, "The Story of an Hour," 1519-1525.
- T 24 Henry James, "Daisy Miller: A Study," 1454-96. **Response 4 due.**
- Th 26 Finish with James. Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Justice Denied in Massachusetts" (1828); William Carlos Williams, "Spring and All," "To Elsie" (1853-1856), Langston Hughes (all 2006-19), Countee Cullen, (all 2020-2025); Claude McKay, "America" (2045).
- F 27 *Last day to withdraw from course without an F*

**Unit 7: Poetry for America II: New Visions, New Prophecies**

*Writing at different periods in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in different styles, and out of different senses of identity, these poets all address the meaning of America and/or invoke the power of poetry as prophecy – a passionate truth-telling response to issues of the day.*

- T 31 **Paper 2 due.** Robert Creeley, "America" (2332); Allen Ginsberg (all 2366-77); Adrienne Rich (all 2346-51); June Jordan, "Poem About My Rights" (2619-2622); Joy Harjo, "The Woman Hanging from the Thirteenth Floor Window" (2656-59); Lorna Dee Cervantes, "Poem for the Young White Man..." (2670-2672).



## November

### Unit 8: Southern Perspectives in Twentieth-Century Literature

*Many of us raised in the North tend to regard the American South as a kind of cultural "other." In this unit, we will explore three major twentieth-century fiction writers, deeply identified with the South, who address the conflicting and often violent tensions between self and other within society, families, and the individual psyche.*

- Th 2 William Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (1960-74). Strongly recommended as an interesting comparison, though we probably won't get to it in class: Dorothy Allison, "Don't Tell Me You Don't Know" (2520-30). **Response 5 due (focus on material covered prior to today's assignment).**
- T 7 Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (2240-2252).
- Th 9 No class; I will be out of town at a conference. Attend *The Dick Gibson Show* at Theatre UNI and write an extra response for 3 bonus points towards your overall course grade. [Showtimes November 3, 4, 10, 11 @ 7:30 p.m., November 5 & 12 @ 2:00 p.m., Strayer-Wood Theatre; call 273-6381 for a free student ticket (ID required).]

### Unit 9: At Home and In the Field: War and Its Legacies

*America is at war, and the story of war and its effects on the young people who must participate in it is being written around us. In our final unit we look back at two earlier literary perspectives, from WWI and Vietnam, concluding with a broader look at the role of poetry in wartime, and voices engaged in creating literature within our present historical moment.*

- T 14 Ernest Hemingway, "Soldier's Home." I will provide a photocopy of this story, but if you miss getting it or want to read the story sooner, you can find a copy at <http://www.cis.vt.edu/modernworld/d/hemingway.html>.
- Th 16 Tim O'Brien, "In the Field," 2571-79; also explore the rest of the "Vietnam Conflict" section, 2560-2583.
- T 21 Watch *Voices in Wartime* DVD. For reading, you are encouraged to explore the website <http://www.poetsagainstthewar.org/>. **Response 6 due.**
- Th 23 Happy Thanksgiving Day!
- T 28 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America: Part I, Millennium Approaches*. (Activities will involve viewing of portions of film version in class, discussion, minor background research -- precise schedule and activities TBA). Get started on reading the play (1-125 in book).
- Th 30 *Angels in America*, continued

**December**

T 5 *Angels in America*, continued

Th 7 *Angels in America*, continued. **Paper 3 due Monday, Dec. 11 by 5 p.m.**

Th 14 **Final Exam 10:00-11:50 a.m.**

**Readings by Literary Period – A Quick Reference/Clarification Guide**  
 (You can also use this as a “who did we cover?” study guide for the final exam)

This semester we will be grouping writers in ways that often cross periods. Further, the *Heath Anthology*, while structured overall by historic progression, tends to emphasize sub-groups of writers organized around broad issues. But it’s important for you to know which writers belong to which period (and how their work fits within it). Our readings can be historically charted as follows:

**Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century (1500s-1600s)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 1-11, 136-139)

Gaspar Perez de Villagra  
 William Bradford  
 John Winthrop  
 Mary Rowlandson  
 Jesuit *Relations*

**Eighteenth Century (1700s)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 261-274)

Benjamin Franklin  
 J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur

**1800-1865 (American Romanticism, from 1830s)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 605-635, 937-40, 1186-88)

Edgar Allan Poe  
 Ralph Waldo Emerson  
 Henry David Thoreau  
 Frederick Douglass  
 Nathaniel Hawthorne  
 Herman Melville  
 Fanny Fern  
 Frances E.W. Harper

Work straddles pre- and post-Civil War periods

Walt Whitman (key date: 1855, first edition of *Leaves of Grass*)

Emily Dickinson (1862 regarded as a major year)

**1865-1910 (American Realism)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 1323-1347)

Mary E. Wilkins Freeman  
 Kate Chopin  
 Henry James

Charlotte Perkins Gilman  
Gertrude Bonnin (Zitkala-Sa)

**1910-1945 (Modern Period)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 1713-1734)

Edna St. Vincent Millay  
William Carlos Williams  
Langston Hughes  
Countee Cullen  
Claude McKay  
Ernest Hemingway  
William Faulkner  
Meridel LeSueur  
Richard Wright  
Carlos Bulosan (1946, but wrote mostly in 1940s)

**1945-Present (Contemporary Period)**

(Relevant background reading: *Heath* 2169-73, 2378-86)

Flannery O'Connor  
Robert Creeley  
Allen Ginsberg  
Adrienne Rich  
June Jordan  
Joy Harjo  
Lorna Dee Cervantes  
Tim O'Brien  
Dorothy Allison  
Tony Kushner

### Short Written Responses – Guidelines

At six points in the semester, you will be required to turn in a 1-2 page written (typed) response to readings we have done recently.

**Each response you turn in is worth 10 points, for 60 points total to your final grade.** To be eligible for 10 points, the response must be turned in at the class meeting when it is due. To be eligible for 5 points, the response must be turned in within 24 hours of the class when it is due, unless you have made arrangements with me in advance or have a documented illness or emergency. I will accept responses for some credit up to a week after they are due, but (barring very unusual circumstances) not if they are more than a week late. If you've done your response but can't make it to class, I will accept responses by e-mail (as Word attachments).

The point of these responses is to get you writing outside your formal papers: because writing is good, it helps you figure out what you think and remember what you've read, and it gives me a fuller idea than I can get from class discussion of what everybody's thinking, understanding or not understanding, wondering about, etc.

I also want to experiment with calling on various people to read their responses aloud on the day they are due. I'm trying this because I want to get people's independent thoughts about the readings into the mix of what happens in class—I've tried assigning people to be responders to particular works, but people seem to fall into a (boring) presentation format with more background than ideas, and that seems less likely to happen here.

I don't have a set way I want you to respond (other than showing you've read whatever work(s) you're writing about attentively, and are thinking about whatever you're saying. You may write about one work or write about two, assuming your response connects them in some way. I wouldn't generally take on more than two in such a short piece of writing, though you could certainly *mention* others. Think of your response as a well-crafted journal entry, not as a paper requiring an introduction, conclusion, etc.

Before each response is due, I will review the texts it would be appropriate to consider responding to, and will try to give you some suggestions/writing prompts either in class or by e-mail. But here are some questions you could use as the basis of your response at any time:

- Did you struggle with reading this piece, or understanding some aspects about it? What do you think was the source of that struggle? Where did you come out? Can you explain what your process of working with it (hopefully involving repeated readings, and perhaps class discussion) revealed to you?
- Is there a particular passage or aspect that really stood out for you in one or more of the texts? Which, and how, and so what? What do you see when you look at it in detail? Can you connect it to other passages?

- Did the editor's headnote for the reading you're choosing to discuss help you understand it? Why or why not? Did it leave you with more questions than it answered (about the writer? the work?) -- what were they? Were you able to find any answers in other sources? What questions do you still have?
- Did my mini-note under the title of each pairing in the syllabus help you put the two readings together? How does the work we're reading manifest any element I pointed to there? Are there other ideas you have about why these works might go together? Or do you think they don't work as a pairing – why?
- How do works written in earlier periods speak to you as a reader in 2006 (if, indeed, they do)? If there's a great distance, can it be overcome? How or how not?
- Do you personally have distinctive, individual ideas about the images, dreams, stories, encounters that create the idea of "America"? If so, how do you think they shaped your response as a reader of the text(s) you're discussing? Does some aspect of your background (in terms of your cultural origins, family history, identification with a particular social class, gender, sexuality, or whatever) shape how you respond as a reader of a particular text?
- If you were (or are planning to be) an English teacher, is a particular text we're reading one you'd want to teach in a high school class? Why or why not? (Are we reading a writer you read earlier in school? Do you recall anything about how s/he was treated? Does his/her work strike you differently now?)

620:053:02 Major American Writers S 06 Myles

### Guidelines for First Paper – due Friday, September 22

For this first paper (3-5 pages; worth 50 points), your assignment is to choose two works assigned within the first three units of the course (“Confronting New Worlds,” “American Dreams and Disillusionments,” “Only That Day Dawns...”) and discuss the connection(s) and/or contrast(s) you perceive between them. The works may be from one unit or may cross units, but unless you choose to pair Emerson and Thoreau at least one of the works you discuss must have been written before 1800.

There are probably many different ways you could connect or contrast the two works, so you will have to choose some particular focus. You might pick up on the stated theme of a particular unit, you might decide to focus on how the two works illuminate some aspect of the “Imagining America” idea, or you might see some other element you’d prefer to address, particularly something we didn’t get around to in class.

A few sample ideas for focus-points for a paper like this: the different perspectives on economic opportunity in Crèvecoeur and LeSueur; how a female perspective shapes Rowlandson’s and Zitkala-Sa’s accounts; how Franklin’s and Wright’s styles are shaped by the different readers they are writing for. . . .

Here’s what I will be hoping to see in this paper:

- Evidence that you have read (and reread!) the texts you’re discussing carefully and with understanding (or at least with thoughtful, articulate perplexity). You should quote from the texts and/or refer to details, not just make statements about them with no specific textual evidence. If you feel confused about a particular passage in or aspect of a text you wish to write about, please come to me and I’ll happily go over it with you.
- Evidence that you’re *thinking*, engaging with ideas, reflecting on America or anything else. I will *not* be pleased if it looks like you’re simply regurgitating the substance of class discussion (though it is fine to pursue further a point you or someone else made in class). I’ll be happy if you can come up with a new angle or a fresh insight. I’ll be delighted if it looks like you’re examining through your own beliefs/commitments as an American (or as a visitor in America, if you are a foreign student). If writing about your own or your family’s background/experiences helps you explain your perspective on the readings, go for it! However you approach it, do not feel pressured to come up with some grand overall conclusion.
- Good organization, clear sentences, good proofreading, etc. etc. You can use a traditional introduction/discussion/conclusion structure if you want, but you don’t have to. Write a paper that expresses in a coherent way what you want to say. For this paper, you do not need a Works Cited page, unless you use sources other than the anthology or handouts in class.

\*\*\* *For this and for all papers (Papers for me! Papers for anyone!) give your paper a good, full title that both tells the reader an idea who/what you’re writing about and at least hints what your focus, approach, or argument is. A great title goes the extra step and makes us eager or intrigued to read the paper that follows. \*\*\**