HL2028 / Wednesdays, 14:30 – 17:30 / LHS-TR+39
Nineteenth-Century American Literature
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Description

America is a nation founded on two documents: the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Over the course of the nineteenth century, people's interpretation of these two texts altered, as new understandings of what it meant to be American emerged. After the Civil War, for instance, the Constitution was redrafted to extend citizenship and voting rights to newly emancipated black slaves.

In this class, we'll examine how literature played an active role in this process of redrafting and reinterpreting the meaning of America. We'll see how Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century, revised many Americans' opinions about slavery. We'll also discover how theatrical adaptations of the book, in which the slave characters were played by "blacked-up" white actors, reinforced the racist stereotypes that Stowe had set out to challenge. More broadly, we'll see how the development of different literary modes of expression, including Transcendentalism, American Gothic, and Realism, reflected changes in the way Americans thought about themselves and their society. The class will also introduce students to digital resources that can enhance their study of literature. Using online collation software, we'll examine Henry James's fascinating revision of his novella *Daisy Miller*.

Required Texts

Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Dover - 0486280489)
Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself* (Dover - 0486414108)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (Dover - 0486284999)
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (Modern Library Classics - 0375756930)

Texts marked with * are in the course reader, which is posted on NTUlearn.
Texts marked with † will be posted separately on NTUlearn.

Discussion Questions

Each week, two LAMS discussion questions about the forthcoming seminar's text(s) will be posted on ntulearn. Please post your answers no later than **6pm on Tuesdays** (the day before class). I will be asking you about your answers during class discussions, so bring a (digital or physical) copy of them to class. The quality of these answers will largely determine your participation grade.

Late Penalties

Late work submitted without an approved extension will be penalized one half-mark per day late – an A paper submitted one day late would drop to an A-, etc.

Assessment

Participation (including preparation of discussion questions for each class) **10%**
Digital Collation Exercise **15%**
Term Paper **25%**
Final Exam **50%**

Digital Collation Exercise
This in-class exercise asks you to compare two versions of Henry James's novella *Daisy Miller* and identify significant revisions in characterisation and narration.

Plagiarism
Please see the School of Humanities' statement on plagiarism here.

Schedule
1. 13th January
Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence"* (1776)

2. 20th January
Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"* (1837); Elias Boudinot, "An Address to the Whites"* (1826)

3. 27th January
Willliam Apess, *A Son of the Forest*† (1829)

4. 3rd February
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850)

5. 10th February
Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," (1855) "Poem of Many in One"* (1856)

6. 17th February
Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher,"* (1839) "The Cask of Amontillado,"* (1846) "William Wilson"* (1839)

7. 24th February
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)

Recess --

8. 10th March
Herman Melville, "Benito Cereno"* (1855)

9. 17th March
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)

10. 31st March
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)

11. 1st April
Henry James, *Daisy Miller* (1878) --- **in-class collation exercise**

12. 7th April
James Herne, *Margaret Fleming*† (1890); Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"* (1892)

13. 14th April -- Revision and Exam Preparation --- **term paper due**