

LIT 315
American Transcendentalism
Fall 2016

LA 235
9:30-10:50

Professor David Gilcrest
Office: LA 218
david.gilcrest@umontana.edu

Office Hours:
TR 11-12:30
and by appt.

Course Description

LIT 315 is an introduction to the literature of American Transcendentalism and its philosophical, theological, social, and political contexts and implications.

Course Goals

LIT 315 will introduce students to important aspects of American Transcendentalism. Students who successfully complete this course will demonstrate through class discussion and written essays:

- familiarity with key Transcendentalist authors and texts
- an understanding of Transcendentalist philosophical and theological principles and terminology
- an understanding of Transcendentalism both as a literary movement and as a theological, social, and political reform movement

LIT 315 Requirements

- Regular class attendance and participation, steady preparation
- Discussion Leader Participation
- Three Essays
- A portfolio of your written work

Grading

Participation/Discussion Leader	10%
Essay #1	30%
Essay #2	30%
Essay #3	30%

Course Policies and Procedures, and Unsolicited Advice

- Attendance and Participation: Because I believe you can learn the material covered in this course only by being here, your attendance and **ACTIVE** participation are required. Your final grade will be dropped one full letter grade after **four** unexcused absences; a failing grade will be assigned after **six**

- unexcused absences. (An **excused** absence requires a **pre-arranged** scholastic or athletic commitment or a **bona fide and substantiated** medical emergency.)
- If you miss a class, **please make arrangements with a colleague to get notes**. Also, please check with me to see if you missed any handouts or special instructions.
 - Each class period requires approximately three hours of preparation—that is, three hours of careful reading and critical thinking (and writing). **If you cannot commit to this work, LIT 315 is probably not the class for you.**
 - If you get confused, or have a question, raise your hand. If your hand is not in the air, I can only assume you understand the texts and ideas under consideration **PERFECTLY**.
 - Texts: The texts under consideration are central to our work in this class, especially during class time. You **MUST** purchase the texts for this class **and you MUST bring the relevant texts to class**. No exceptions, no excuses.
 - Deadlines: All work is due in class on the assigned date. **NO LATE WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED**.
 - Presentation: Essays must be printed. Black ink. 10 or 12 pt. font. Either Arial or Times New Roman is sufficient. Please, no funky fonts. I would like you to follow the MLA citation and documentation guidelines in this class. Make sure you include on your work your name, the title and draft number, this class and section number, my name, and the date.
 - Revision: Because true revision is an essential part of serious writing, you are encouraged to revise **your first two essays** (as necessary). Please observe the **Guidelines for Revision** that I will give you.
 - Please make hard copies of all your work and keep them in a safe place.
 - I do not accept work in electronic form. Recycled paper saves trees.
 - The instructor and the University reserve the right to modify, amend, or change the syllabus (course requirements, grading policy, etc.) as needed.

Scholarship

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrase) must be properly documented. Students who plagiarize face serious consequences that may range from receiving a failing grade on a given assignment to failing the course. Students who plagiarize also face additional University sanctions.

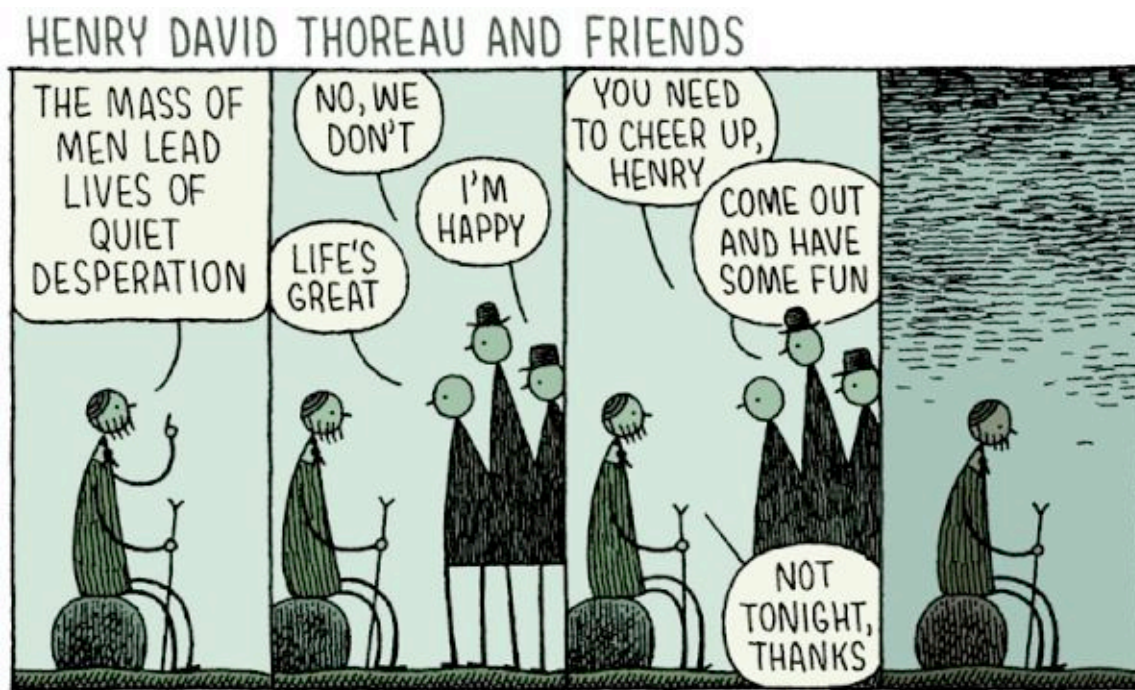
Accommodations

If you have a disability (physical or learning) that you think may affect your performance in this class, please see me during the first week of the term so we can discuss whatever accommodations may be necessary.

Required Texts

The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings. Lawrence Buell
Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson. Ed. Brooks Atkinson
A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers, Henry David Thoreau
Walden, Henry David Thoreau
The Complete Poems, Walt Whitman
Selected handouts, via Moodle

a two-pocket folder for your portfolio



Syllabus

AT = *The American Transcendentalists: Essential Writings*

E = *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*

M = available via Moodle

T 8/30 Introduction: **“there was the promise in the air of a new era of intellectual life”**

Philosophical Contexts

Th 9/1 Coleridge “Reason Versus Understanding” (AT 9-10); Hedge “The Significance of Kantian Philosophy” (AT 23-24); Emerson “The Transcendentalist” (AT 107)

Romanticism

T 9/6 Wordsworth (P); Carlyle “The Age of Machinery” (AT 16-19); Fuller from “Summer on the Lakes” (M); Emerson “Nature” (E 1-39); Thoreau “Ktaadn” (M)

Religious Radicalism and Reform

Th 9/8 Channing “Humanity’s Likeness to God” (AT 11-15); Brownson “The Reconciliation of God, Humanity, State, and Church” (AT 76-81); Emerson “A Young Minister Refuses to Perform a Crucial Duty” (AT 20-22); Emerson “The Lord’s Supper” (E 97-109); Ripley “Letter of Intent to Resign” (AT 103-106)

T 9/13 Emerson “An Address” (E 62-78); Emerson “The Over-Soul” (E 236-251)

Th 9/15 Fuller “Recollection of Mystical Experiences” (AT 158-161); Parker from “A Discourse of the Transient and Permanent in Christianity” (AT 162-174); Norton “The New School in Literature and Religion” (AT 146-49); Ware “God’s Personhood Vindicated” (AT 150-51); Norton from “A Discourse on the Latest Form of Infidelity” (AT 152-54); Ripley from “The Latest Form of Infidelity’ Examined” (AT 155-57)

T 9/20 Emerson “The American Scholar” (E 41-59); Emerson “Self-Reliance” (E 132-153)

Th 9/22 No Class

Secular Reform

T 9/27 Brownson “The Laboring Classes” (AT 193-200); Parker from “A Sermon of Merchants” (AT 244-250); Peabody from “Plan of the West Roxbury Community” (AT 232-234); Ripley et al. “Brook Farm’s First Published Constitution” (AT 235-243); Peabody and Alcott “A Controversial Experiment” [1&2] (AT 281-94)

Th 9/29 Fuller “On The Italian Revolution” (AT 251-256); Thoreau “Resistance to Civil Government” (AT 257-277); Emerson “The Significance of West Indian Emancipation” (AT 347-53); Fuller “On *The Narrative of Frederick Douglass*” (AT 354-356)

- T 10/4 Parker from “The Function of Conscience” and “The Fugitive Slave Law” (AT 357-361); Emerson from “The Fugitive Slave Law” (362-369); Thoreau “A Plea For Captain John Brown” (AT 370-378); Emerson “John Brown” (E 791-798)
- Th 10/6 Peabody (?) “A Margaret Fuller Conversation on Gender” (AT 297-300); Fuller from “The Great Lawsuit” (AT 301-320)

Prose and Poetry

- T 10/11 Emerson “Circles” (E 252-262); Emerson “Intellect” 263-273)
- Th 10/13 Emerson “The Poet” (E 287-306); Emerson “Experience: (E 307-326)
Essay #1 DUE
- T 10/18 Thoreau *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* “Concord River” & “Saturday”
- Th 10/20 Thoreau *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* “Sunday” & “Monday”
- T 10/25 Thoreau *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* “Tuesday” & “Wednesday”
- Th 10/27 Thoreau *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack River* “Thursday” & “Friday”
- T 11/1 Thoreau *Walden* “Economy”
- Th 11/3 Thoreau *Walden* “Where I Lived . . .” through “Visitors”
- T 11/8 **Election Day—No Class**
- Th 11/10 Thoreau *Walden* “The Bean Field” through “House-Warming”
- T 11/15 Thoreau *Walden* “Former Inhabitants . . .” through “Conclusion”
- Th 11/17 Whitman selections TBA
- T 11/22 Whitman selections TBA **Essay #2 DUE**

Thanksgiving Break

T	11/29	Whitman selections TBA
Th	12/1	Whitman selections TBA
T	12/6	Whitman selections TBA
Th	12/8	Conclusions, Loose Ends, Evaluations
M	12/19	Essay #3 DUE in Completed Portfolio no later than NOON