

# **Inventing America: Awakening and Enlightenment**

## **English 332 / American Studies 362-02**

Spring 2010  
Pardee 102A  
TR 1:15pm-2:30pm  
1 Unit

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& by appt.

During the 18th century, two major movements profoundly influenced the intellectual, social, and cultural scenes in America and Europe: a wave of religious awakenings that brought new focus to individuals' emotional experience, and what we now know as the Enlightenment, a series of philosophical, scientific, and aesthetic innovations that emphasized reason balanced by experience—a movement big enough to embrace a rise in classical learning and a new investment in empirical science. This course focuses on the ways in which American literary texts influenced and were influenced by those movements, while also raising the question of how ideas of what counts as “literature” have changed since Franklin, Edwards, and Jefferson roamed the earth.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

Catherine La Courreye Blecki, ed., *Milcah Martha Moore's Book* (Penn State)  
Jonathan Edwards, *The Jonathan Edwards Reader* (Yale)  
Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography & Other Writings* (Oxford)  
Thomas Jefferson, *The Portable Jefferson* (Penguin)  
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense and Essential Writings* (Signet)  
Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (Norton)  
John Woolman, *The Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman* (Friends United)  
Journal/commonplace book—available at bookstore  
Other readings available on Moodle

### **RECOMMENDED TEXT**

Jon F. Sensbach, *Rebecca's Revival* (Harvard)

### **COURSE GOALS**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Contextualize key readings and figures in 18th-century America within regional and transnational movements;
2. Analyze and compare a range of genres characteristic of 18th-c. American literature;
3. Conduct library-based research on the course topic involving both primary and secondary sources; and
4. Write and revise an effective response to recent scholarship relevant to the course topic.

## SCHEDULE

Week 1: Discovering the Eighteenth Century (Franklin)

Week 2: Franklin

Week 3: Franklin

Week 4: Franklin/Edwards

Week 5: Edwards

Week 6: Edwards/Moore Commonplace Book  
Field trip to Philadelphia on Saturday, March 6

Week 7: Moore Commonplace Book

Week 8—SPRING BREAK

Week 9: Woolman  
Special guest Prof. James Campbell on Tuesday, March 23

Week 10: Woolman/Paine

Week 11: Jefferson/Paine

Week 12: Jefferson

Week 13: Jefferson

Week 14: Rowson

Week 15: Class Conference & Anthology Project  
NB: Day-to-day reading assignments are listed on the course's Moodle site

## ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments for this course work along two trajectories: one tied to our course reading via the commonplace books we will keep, and the other tied to the “off-list” books you choose to study. We will share in each track together, and my hope is that our discussions will be fueled not only by our common reading but also by the individual work that each of you are doing. During the course of the semester, you will have several meetings with our WA, Adriane Marcellus. Feel free to use her as a sounding board for your ideas, and she will also be working with you on drafts of some of the assignments. All WA meetings are required if you are to receive grades for the relevant assignments. Details are forthcoming.

#### ACADEMIC REVIEW (20% of total grade)

This essay is 4-5pp. long, but despite its brief length, this will be the major assignment of the course. Once you choose your individual book, you will find a recent (within the last 5 years, if possible) essay on that book and write a review of that essay. The first draft will be due at the end of Week 2. Subsequent drafts will be due in Weeks 7, 11, and 14, following milestone assignments that will contribute to the knowledge you'll need to write an effective academic review on a topic you may not have had studied previously. The last version will be written as a conference paper, and will be "published" online for the class to read as part of a panel in a virtual conference that we will share in during the last week of class.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHIC ESSAY (15% of total grade)

This assignment is what is known in scientific fields as a literature review. Drawing on 7-10 secondary sources—preferably a range of articles, books, book chapters, and prefaces—you will write a 4-5pp. essay in which you give your analysis of what the state of the conversation is about your individual book. Essays are due on Moodle by 5pm on Friday of Week 5.

#### PRIMARY RESEARCH ESSAY (15% of total grade)

You will have read your individual book earlier in the semester, but based on your learning from that experience, the critical survey from the bibliographic essay, and class discussions, you will gain more of a sense as to which other *primary* sources are important to the study of your book. Drawing on your book and 3-5 other primary sources, you will present a contextualized reading of part or all of your book in a 6-8pp. essay. Essays are due on Moodle by 5pm on Friday of Week 10.

#### COMMONPLACE BOOK (20% of total grade)

How did the Founding Fathers remember all those classical references? How did women in early America publish their work? How did friends stay in touch with each other's lives without face-to-face contact? Commonplace books were a key part of each of these scenarios; as a kind of interactive journal, the commonplace book served both as a place to preserve one's favorite quotations and to exchange writing with those in one's circle. We will recreate this non-print form of publication by keeping commonplace books through most of the course. You are to use your commonplace book as a reading journal for this course, but it will also be a venue for you to write reflections on and creative responses to aspects of the course that particularly interest you (plus a few reflections officially prompted by me); you will also exchange your commonplace books with other students in the class, and you are encouraged to write in each other's books, copy writings that you like from others, and even develop "page names" (the 18th c. equivalent of screen names) as you write back and forth. Our commonplace writing will continue through Week 13.

#### COURSE ANTHOLOGY (10% of total grade)

After Week 10, we will collaboratively assemble a course anthology made up of highlights from everyone's commonplace books. The format and medium for the anthology will be determined later by the class as a whole. Part of our work will be to explore and reflect on the synergy (if any) between commonplace books and online writing. The anthology is to be completed by the last week of class.

### PARTICIPATION (20% of total grade)

This class's work will focus on class discussion rather than me lecturing at you. In order to make the seminar format work, everyone must be 1.) present, 2.) on time, 3.) prepared, and 4.) willing to join actively in the work of the class. Be here on time, have things to contribute to our discussions and other activities, and you'll be 20% of the way to a perfect grade. If you cannot attend class due to illness or a serious emergency, let me know before the class you have to miss. Two key elements of class participation include a field trip to Philadelphia on Saturday, March 6 and a shadowing project with the students in English 110-09.

A few words about grading policy:

- I don't keep an attendance roster, but I notice when people are absent or frequently late. More than one unexcused absence will affect your participation grade; every two absences beyond the "free one" will result in a reduction of one letter grade from your participation grade. Class events such as the field trip count as a class meeting. An absence can be excused for a personal medical emergency, a family emergency, or a dean's excuse; in all cases, you must notify me before class that you will not be able to attend that day.
- Late work will be penalized one letter grade for every day beyond the due date. The first day past the due date starts one hour after assignments are due.
- I calculate grades based on the point system used for GPA on your Lafayette transcript. Thus, an A=4, an A-=3.7, B+=3.3, and so on. F counts as a 0.
- If you wish to contest a grade, you must do the following: 1.) wait 24 hours after you have received the graded assignment, 2.) write and send me a brief argument as to why I should reconsider your grade, and 3.) come see me in person to discuss what you wrote. Keep in mind that if I decide to reconsider the grade, you may wind up with a lower grade than you had before.

A word about **Academic Honesty**: All students must read and follow the guidelines of academic honesty as outlined in the section entitled "Principles of Intellectual Honesty" in the Student Handbook of Lafayette College. Any infraction of these principles will be referred immediately to the Office of the Dean of Studies for adjudication.

In compliance with Lafayette College policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability.

Requests for academic accommodations need to be made during the first two weeks of the semester, except for unusual circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students must register with the Office of the Dean of the College for disability verification and for determination of reasonable academic accommodations.