FIELD VIII: AMERICAN LITERATURE TO 1865

STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS

As Published on May 19, 2014

The Early American Field Exam is intended as a measure of the student’s mastery of the field as represented by the reading list. During the written portion of the exam, the student is expected to demonstrate a command of primary and secondary materials, show familiarity with important issues and developments in the field, and articulate an individual perspective on the material. The examiners will ask questions that can—and should—be addressed with texts on the reading list. If relevant to a question, however, the candidate may use any texts in the field, whether studied independently or through course work. Students who successfully complete the field exam demonstrate a proficiency to undertake advanced scholarship and to teach courses in this field.

Students should be prepared to articulate:

- major genre conventions and evolutions in these conventions during the period (for instance, poetry, drama, fiction, life writing of various sorts, captivity narratives);
- the historical and literary subfields that comprise the larger field of “Early American” Studies and the historical, cultural, and literary significances of those subfields (for instance, the Age of Exploration; Early Settlement; Puritanism; the Eighteenth Century; the Revolutionary Era; Early National Era; Antebellum Era; American Renaissance);
- formations of American identity or American identities in both the colonial and early US period;
- the significance of revisions to the American literature canon, especially with turns toward multicultural, multilingual, inter-religious, and gender inclusivity;
- recent shifts in conceptualizing the geographies of Early America (Transatlantic and Oceanic, Transnational, and Hemispheric Studies).
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READING LIST
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*We suggest students own copies of the most recent editions of the Norton Anthologies of American Literature (Vol. A and B) and the Heath Anthologies of American Literature (Vol. A and B) and be familiar with the table of contents and the period introductions included these two most frequently taught textbooks. (This list was assembled using Norton’s eighth edition and Heath’s sixth edition).

Primary Texts

Apess, William. A Son of the Forest.
Black Hawk. Life of Black Hawk.
Bradstreet, Anne. Selections in Norton Vol. A.
Brockden Brown, Charles. Wieland.
Brown, William Wells. Clotel; or, the President’s Daughter (1853).
Bryant, William Cullen. Poems in Heath Vol. B.
Champlain, Samuel de. The Voyages. Norton Vol. A.
Channing, William Ellery. “Unitarian Christianity.”
Child, Lydia Maria. Hobomok.
Child, Lydia Maria. “Slavery’s Pleasant Home.”
http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/gcarr/19cusww/lb/SPH.html
Child, Lydia Maria. Appeal in Favor of That Class of Americans Called Africans. Heath Vol. B.
“The Coming of the Spanish and the Pueblo Revolt” (Hopi); Vargas, Don Diego de. “from Letter on the Reconquest of New Mexico, 1692.” Heath Vol. A.
Cooper, James Fenimore. The Last of the Mohicans.
Dickinson, Emily. Poems in Norton Vol. B.
Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass.
Douglass, Frederick. “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” *Heath* Vol. B.
Fern, Fanny. *Ruth Hall.*
Fuller, Margaret. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century.*
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Blithedale Romance*;
Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *House of the Seven Gables*.
Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl.*
Jefferson, Thomas (et al.). “Declaration of Independence” (Jefferson et al.) *Norton* Vol. A. [recommended for its inclusion of the original draft with revisions.]
Melville, Herman. *Moby-Dick.*
Melville, Herman. “Bartleby, the Scrivener”; "Benito Cereno; Billy Bud, Sailor. *Heath* Vol. B.
Rowlandson, Mary. *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson.*
Rowson, Susannah. *Slaves in Algiers; or, Struggle for Freedom.*
Sedgwick, Catharine Maria. *Hope Leslie.*
Sigourney, Lydia Howard. Poems in *Norton* Vol. B.
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady (et al.). “The Declaration of Sentiments.” *Heath* Vol. B.
Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *Eighty Years and More. Heath* Vol. B.
http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/etas/41/
Tyler, Royall. *The Contrast.*
Wheatley, Phillis. Selections in *Norton* Vol. A.
Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass* [1855 edition].
Williams, Roger. *A Key Into the Languages of America. Norton* Vol. A.
Wilson, Harriet, *Our Nig.*

**Secondary/Critical Texts**

Kolodny, Annette. *In Search of First Contact* (2012).
Matthiesen, F. O. *American Renaissance* (1941). [read alongside the Walter Benn Michaels collection below.]