The University of Texas at El Paso Department of English

**English 5306 (CRN: 17426)**
**American Literature 1800-1865:**
**Spatial Turns, Deep Time, and the Return of Formalism**
Mondays, 6:00 – 8:50 p.m., Hudspeth 213

Fall 2021

Office Hrs: M/W, 12:30-2:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m., in person/Zoom & otherwise by Zoom appt.

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> "There is a Post-Script in Emerson's self-school'd hand, exclamatory ending upon a long Quill-crunching Stop. 'Time is the Space that may not be seen.—'
> ('Pon which the Rev'd cannot refrain from commenting, 'He means, that out of Mercy, we are blind as to Time—for we could not bear to contemplate what lies at its heart.')"
> --Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (1997)

Broadly speaking, this course offers a survey of 19th-Century American literary culture vis-à-vis two major recent trends in critical historiography over the last decade: first, the so-called "spatial turn," a broad critical orientation encompasses large extra-national spaces like transatlantic, hemispheric, and borderlands studies; and, second, the more recent "temporal turn" in American Studies, another highly influential strain of scholarship that has its roots in excavations of "Deep Time" beyond modern temporal schemes of empire and nationhood, and spans from the immensity of geological time to the intimacies of biopolitics and embodied temporal experience. How do these critical modalities intersect, and what do their common critical strategies and archival procedures suggest for future models of work in the field? As a means of triangulating the latter question, we also will be incorporating renewed questions of "the political" as a site of inquiry, particularly by way of thinkers like Giorgio Agamben, Claude Lefort, and Michel Foucault whose own theories of politics and power involve novel ways of thinking about space, time, and history. Guiding our discussions of the primary literature throughout will be a number of interesting and exciting works of contemporary critical scholarship. Why, exactly, are so many 19th-Century American writers so preoccupied with timekeeping and novel ways of imagining interior and exterior spaces of the world? And why do so many contemporary scholars and writers now feel compelled to return to these particular cultural, social, and technological concerns? How might renewed critical attention to the multiple forms of temporal and spatial orientation within the literatures of early America lead us to reimagine the field, and to reimagine the possible futures of our politics today?

Required Texts:

Black Hawk, *Life of Black Hawk, or Mà-ka-tai-me-she-kià-kiàk* (Penguin Classics)
Emily Dickinson, *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Ed. R. W. Franklin (Harvard-Belknap)

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings* (Penguin Classics)
Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (Penguin Classics)
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Harvard-Belknap)
Susan Shelby Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail and Into Mexico* (U of Nebraska P-Bison Books)
Herman Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (Penguin Classics)
Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (Broadview)
Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, *The Morgesons* (Penguin Classics)

Schedule of Readings (to be completed by corresponding date); "(B)" designates an item that will be posted to Blackboard.

| Ses. | Date | Assignment |
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| 1 | Aug. 25 | **Introductions.**<br><br>Barry Lopez, "The Stone Horse" (handout)<br>Cristobal Silva, "Nostalgia and the Good Life" (handout) |
| 2 | Sep. 1 | **LABOR DAY – NO CLASSES** |
| 3 | Sep. 8 | **Temporal and Spatial Frameworks**<br>Wai Chee Dimock, "Deep Time: American Literature and World History" *ALH* (B); Dana Luciano, "The Inhuman Anthropocene," *Aivdly* (B); Michel Foucault, "Of Other Lives," *Diacritics* (B); Lloyd Pratt, "The Spatial Turn and the Scale of Freedom" (B);<br>Anna Kornbluh, from *The Order of Forms: Realism, Formalism, and Social Space* (B); Giorgio Agamben, from *State of Exception* (B); Claude Lefort, from *Democracy and Political Theory*, Part I, "On Modern Democracy" (B) |
| 3 | Sep. 15 | **Captivity, the Transatlantic, and "State[s] of Exception" and Placelessness in the Atlantic Zone**<br>Primary: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*<br><br>Secondary: Ian Frederick Finseth, "In Essaka Once: Time and History in Olaudah Equiano's Autobiography," *Arizona Quarterly* 58.1 (Spring 2002): 1-35; Kaushik Tekur Venkata, "Police Time: Equiano, Blackness, and Custody" *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 36.1 (January 2024): 111-125. |
| 4 | Sep. 22 | **Black Hawk's War and As-Told-To Autobiography**<br>Primary Text: Black Hawk (Sauk), Life of Black Hawk, or Mà-ka-tai-me-she-kià-kiàk<br><br>Secondary Text: Mark Rifkin, "The Territoriality of Tradition: Treaties, Hunting Grounds, and Prophecy in Black Hawk's Narrative" (B) |
| 5 | Sep. 29 | **Blackness at the Edge of the World** |

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| | | Primary: Edgar Allan Poe, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) (see also Appendices A & B)<br><br>Secondary: Cindy Weinstein, "When is Now? Poe's Aesthetics of Temporality," *Poe Studies* 41.1 (2008): 81-107; David Faflik, "South of the 'Border,' or Poe's *Pym*: A Case Study in Region, Race, and American Literary History," *Mississippi Quarterly: The Journal of Southern Cultures* 57.2 (Summer 2004): 265-88. |
| 6 | Oct. 6 | **Gender, the Santa Fe Trail, and the U.S./Mexico War**<br>Primary: Susan Shelby Magoffin, *Down the Santa Fe Trail and into Mexico* (1846)<br><br>Secondary: Amy Kaplan, "Manifest Domesticity." *American Literature*, vol. 70, no. 3, 1998, pp. 581–606; Randi Lynn Tanglen, "Critical Regionalism, the U.S.-Mexican War, and Nineteenth-Century American Literary History," *Western American Literature* 48.1-2 (2013): 180-199. |
| 7 | Oct. 13 | **Dirty Deeds and Unorthodox Architectures**<br>Primary: Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851)<br><br>Secondary: Mark Rifkin, "Romancing the State of Nature: Speculation, Regeneration, and the Maine Frontier in The House of the Seven Gables," from Settler Common Sense (B); Erin Sweeney, "Boarding House Fiction and the American Family in the Boarding-*House of the Seven Gables*" *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 4.2 (1996): 332-357. |
| 8 | Oct. 20 | **Mythical Geographies**<br>Primary: Herman Melville, "The Encantadas; Or, Enchanted Isles," *Piazza Tales* (1855)<br><br>Secondary: Hester Blum, "The Galapagos and the Evolution of the Maritime Imagination," *The View from the Masthead: Maritime Imagination and Antebellum American Sea Narratives* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 133-157; Andrew Bishop, "Deep-Time Tourism: "The Encantadas" and Crystal Palace Park," *Arizona Quarterly* 80.1 (Spring 2024): 83-115. |
| 9 | Oct. 27 | **Passing Queer Spaces**<br>Primary: Herman Melville, "Bartleby, the Scrivener" (1853); "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids"<br><br>Elizabeth Freeman, "Defective Chronicity in 'Bartleby, the Scrivener,' and "Melanctha," from *The Sense of Time* (B); Robyn Wiegman, "Melville's Geographies of Gender," *American Literary History* 1.4 (1989): 739-753. |
| 10 | Nov. 3 | **Swamps, Cities, and Loopholes of Retreat: Rethinking the Spaces of Captivity**<br>Primary: Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)<br><br>Secondary: Michelle Burnham, "Loopholes of Resistance: Harriet Jacobs' Slave Narrative and the Critique of Agency in Foucault," *Arizona Quarterly* 49.2 (1993): 53- |

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| | | 73; Jumi Kim, "Harriet Jacobs's Text of Bodily Repetitions," *MELUS* 50.1 (Spring 2025): 75-96. |
| 11 | Nov. 10 | **Domestic Exteriorities/Foreign Interiorities**<br>Primary: Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard, *The Morgesons* (1862)<br><br>Secondary: Carina D. Pasquezi, "*The Morgesons*: Elizabeth Barstow Stoddard's *Ars Erotica*," *LEGACY* 31.2 (2014): 183-206; Dalia Davoudi, "Creeping in the Crevices: Geology and the Re-Scaling of Women's Mobility in Elizabeth Stoddard's *The Morgesons*," *LEGACY* 37.2 (2020): 213-234. |
| 12 | Nov. 17 | **"The things that Death will buy / Are Room –": Re-Approaching the Aesthetics of Emily Dickinson**<br>Primary: The Poems of Emily Dickinson, Ed. R. W. Franklin<br><br>Secondary: Virginia Jackson, "Beforehand" (B), "Dickinson Undone" (B), from *Dickinson's Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading*; Erica Fretwell, "Emily Dickinson in Domingo," *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists* 1.1 (2013): 71-96. |
| 13 | Nov. 24 | **Disaggregation and Reassembly: Digital Data Mining and Secondary Revision**<br><br>This session will take place in the UTEP Library, and will feature a hands-on training in Digital Humanities data mining—including how to produce a usable digital corpus from one of our texts, and how to perform textual analysis of that corpus—using UDPipe and Voyant.<br><br>Secondary: Sigmund Freud, "Lecture XXIX: Revision of the Theory of Dreams" (1929) (B) |
| | **Nov. 27** | **THANKSGIVING** |
| 14 | Dec. 1 | Final Project Presentations |

**Final Seminar Papers will be due via Blackboard on Monday, December 13th, at 5:00 p.m.**

**Course Requirements**:

**Class Participation** (20%): Although I will offer short lectures occasionally to provide historical and cultural context, this is primarily a discussion-based seminar. Your active and ongoing participation in the course is therefore essential to its overall success; all students are encouraged and expected to contribute to class on a daily basis. This requires that you come well-prepared for every class with observations, questions, and comments you have formulated in advance (a practice that will be assisted as a matter of course by the reading journal component; see below); this also means listening attentively to the comments of your fellow seminarians, and engaging their ideas in serious and productive ways. Please be advised that the reading assignments for this class are extensive, and will

take you several hours to read; it is your responsibility to have read all assigned materials thoughtfully prior to class, so be sure to budget your time carefully.

**Online Reading Journal** (20%, graded cumulatively): Each student will be required to post a one-page (roughly 250-300 words) reading journal entry each week under the "Discussion" section of our course Blackboard site. Entries must be posted b 3:00 p.m. every Monday, and should discuss material scheduled for that evening's discussion. You are expected to offer an entry each week, except for the day on which you are scheduled to make your primary text in-class presentation (i.e., you must still post an entry when you are presenting on the scholarship). Although somewhat informal, these entries are expected to consist of deliberative, thoughtful paragraphs that are free of grammatical error. Use the journal entries to articulate the questions and ideas you develop in the course of your reading, taking care to respond specifically to relevant passages from the text.

**Oral Presentations** (10%; 10%): Each student will be required to make two 10-15-minute in-class presentations: one that focuses on a topic you deem significant in that week's assigned primary textual reading; and another (on a different day) on at least one of the secondary texts assigned for discussion. More specific guidelines for each of these presentation types will be provided separately.

**Final Paper Project** (40%): A seminar paper of 14-16- pages will be due on Wednesday, December 13th$^{th}$. Students are encouraged to develop their topics early; a short prospectus will be due on November 15$^{th}$.

**Attendance**: You are expected to attend every session. If you are absent more than three times (for non-medical or emergency reasons), you will either receive a "W" (if prior to the drop deadline of Oct. 31) or an "F" for the course (if after Oct. 31).

**Statement on Plagiarism, A.I., and Academic Dishonesty.** I completely understand that citing sources properly can be confusing at times, and I recognize that, increasingly, A.I. is being integrated into our computing tasks—if you're ever in doubt about these things, just ask me. For this class, I *implore* you to resist assigning A.I. to perform cognitive tasks. A.I. degrades the core educational task of humanistic inquiry: learning to confront and work through complexity and difficulty in the world. As Ted Chiang has argued eloquently, "the task that generative A.I. has been most successful at is lowering our expectations, both of the things we read and of ourselves when we write anything for others to read. It is a fundamentally dehumanizing technology because it treats us s less than what we are: creators and apprehenders of meaning. It reduces the amount of intention in the world."[1]

Plagiarism, or submitting someone (or something) else's work under your own name, are forms of academic dishonesty, and I take it very seriously. Please be advised that you will not receive credit for any work that has been plagiarized or for writing that was generated by A.I.; moreover, any work suspected of academic fraud may be forwarded, as a matter of University Policy, to the Office of the Dean of Students for adjudication. The consequences of academic dishonesty can be very serious, resulting in reduced course grades, course failures, and sometimes in academic suspension or expulsion. In addition, i you are found to have submitted plagiarized work, or writing generated by a language-based generative A.I. model like Chat GPT, I will not write a letter of recommendation for you for future professional use.

[1] Ted Chiang, "Why A.I. Isn't Going to Make Art," *The New Yorker* (August 24, 2024). https://www.newyorker.com/culture/the-weekend-essay/why-ai-isnt-going-to-make-art

**COVID Protocols:**
If you are exposed to someone with COVID, please get tested; if you develop symptoms, please stay at home, get tested, and let me know via email. I promise to do what I can to keep you up to date with our course via Zoom; absences for reason of voluntary quarantine following positive COVID will be fully excused. For more information on COVID at UTEP, including an extensive and regularly-updated FAQ, please click here.

**UTEP Land Acknowledgment Statement:**
As members of the University of Texas at El Paso community, we acknowledge that we are meeting on unceded Indigenous land. We would like to recognize and pay our respects to the Indigenous people with long ties to the immediate region: Lipan Apache, Mescalero Apache, Piro, Manso, Suma, Jumano, Ysleta del Sur Pueblo, Piro/Manso/Tiwa Indian Tribe of the Pueblo of San Juan de Guadalupe, and Tortugas Pueblo. We also acknowledge the nations whose territories include present day Texas: the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, and the peoples of Chihuahua and northern Mexico from whom most/many of our students descend, such as the Rarámuri, Tepehuan, Wixarrika and Nahuatlaca peoples. Finally, we recognize all of the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories here in Paso del Norte, on Turtle Island. The University of Texas at El Paso honors your history and cultures and we seek greater awareness of the myriad ways in which your legacy can guide us in fruitful partnerships and mutually fulfilling relationships.