With a broad approach and wide-ranging course materials, English 301 is an advanced introduction to the field of early American literary and cultural studies. The goal of the course is to study some of the major primary texts as defined by contemporary scholars of the field of study. Our field of study will be the long eighteenth century, with texts spanning from 1678 to 1808. This period featured the spectacular growth of the English colonies in North America. No longer limited to the Atlantic sea-board, Anglo-Americans pushed settlement inland across the Appalachians while simultaneously transforming the cities of Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Charleston into significant metropolitan centers. American culture developed amid the increasing geographic and cultural diversity of Anglo-American settlement. Against diversification, the end of the century would witness the political consolidation of the colonies culminating in the American Revolution and the ratification of the federal Constitution. We will explore the tensions that defined the Anglo-American eighteenth century as British North Americans elaborated upon them to themselves and to their European interlocutors. Because the category of “literature” was broad in eighteenth century America, we will read a wide variety of texts including selections of narrative fiction, poetry, autobiography, travelogues, geographic surveys, sermons, and others.

We will take four often overlapping swipes at the literature of the period, categorized roughly as follows: 1) Autobiography and Life Narratives, 2) Atlantic Studies and the Public Sphere 3) Captivity Narratives, and 4) History and Narrative Writing. Throughout, special attention will be paid to social and political context. We will ask how writing participated in the main conflicts of the era: 1) religious awakening and the enlightenment, 2) republicanism and the emergence of print culture, 3) frontier violence, intercolonial warfare, and Indian diplomacy, 4) race, slavery, and revolution. Course materials are drawn from the writings of Jonathan Edwards, Benjamin Franklin, William Byrd, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Susanna Rowson, Olaudah Equiano, Charles Brockden Brown, and Leonora Sansay among others.

**Requirements and Grading Ratio**

Response Papers—15%
In-class presentation (see below for instructions)—20%
Mid-term take home exam—20%
Final paper—40%
Militant preparation for class discussion—5%

**Absence Policy and Late Work**

Because we meet just once a week, attendance and participation are crucial. If you must miss class, see me in advance to discuss your situation. Late papers will not be accepted unless arrangements are made at least a week in advance of the due date.
Response Papers
During the semester you will write 6 response papers of no more than 1-2 pages on the course readings. These papers should be typed and double-spaced, but need not be formal or finished essays. You will bring them to class to use as a basis for discussion, and you will turn these papers in to me at the end of class. I have divided you in half alphabetically so that you will each turn in one response paper every other week starting the second week of class. These response papers should not be summaries of the reading. They should ask questions and make speculations about the course readings, telling me what you found interesting and why. After the mid-term exam, your response papers may begin to focus on ideas for a final paper. Consider these later short writing assignments as opportunities to have a written dialogue with me about the cumulative work-in-progress you will finish by the end of the term.

In-class Presentations
The in-class presentation exercise is designed to foster a sense of community among class participants, to develop library research skills, as well as to build public communications competency. There are three components of the in-class presentation assignment. You will:

1) Present 15 minutes of prepared remarks on matters of interest from the week’s reading assignment;

2) Write five focus questions for your post-presentation discussion session. Email these to me no later than the Sunday before your presentation. I will distribute them to the class-at-large via email; and

3) initiate class discussion following your prepared remarks.

Your formal presentation should be organized with care and delivered with grace. You may: summarize a thesis from a secondary article and apply it to the week’s reading assignment (discuss article of choice with me prior to your in-class presentation), identify and examine in-detail specific passages from the week’s readings, provide historical or cultural contexts for the work in question, or tie the week’s reading to material that we have covered earlier in the semester. Do not summarize the week’s reading assignment. Do schedule a meeting with me to discuss your presentation.

Mid-term Take Home Exam
The Mid-term is designed to consolidate what you have learned over the first half of the semester. It will test your familiarity with the course materials and topics and themes covered in class by asking you to identify quotes and explain their significance and to respond to several short essay questions. If you have kept up with the readings, attended class, and have diligently completed your response papers, you will have little difficulty excelling on the mid-term exam.

Final Paper
Your final paper is to be a scholarly research essay of 10-12 pages (no less than 3000 words) that places one or a selection of course readings in dialogue with either a) primary documents from the Evans Digital archive or the American Periodical Series or b) a selection of secondary readings (scholarship, theory, or additional primary sources not
covered in class). Your project must have a thesis, an argument about which a reader might disagree, supported by the use of research materials, close readings, and logical analysis. You will be expected to provide bibliographic documentation in support of your thesis. Proper MLA Style documentation is required.

**Pop Quizzes**
If it seems that students are not keeping up with the reading I may give pop quizzes from time to time. These pop quizzes will be included in the exam components of your final grade.

**Texts**
A *Jonathan Edwards Reader*. (JER)
Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative*.
The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin and Other Writings. (please purchase the Oxford Edition) (BF)
Wheatley, Phillis. *Complete Writings*.

**E-Reserves**
Jefferson, Thomas. *from Notes on the State of Virginia*.
Rowson, Susanna. *Slaves in Algiers*.
Sansay, Leonora. *Secret History; or The Horrors of St. Domingo*.
Williams, John. *The Redeemed Captive*.

**Preliminary Syllabus**
**Autobiography and Life Writing**
Week 1
Introduction—Periodization, Genre, Geography
Cotton Mather, from the introduction to *Magnalia Christi Americana* (handout)
John Singleton Copley, “A boy attack’d by a shark”

Week 2
Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” (JER 89-104)
“Spider Letter” (JER 1-8)
“Resolutions” (JER 274-280)
From 3-5 pm we will head over to the library lab for training on the Digital Evans collection and the American Periodical Series online.

Week 3
Jonathan Edwards, “A faithful narrative,” (JER 57-88)
An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God (JER 179-191)
Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*, Part 1
Week 4
Benjamin Franklin, Autobiography, Parts 2, 3, 4

Week 5
William Byrd, Introduction to History of the Dividing Line and The Secret History

**Atlantic Studies and the Public Sphere**
Week 6
Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative

Week 7
Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia (e-res)
Phillis Wheatley, selections TBA

Week 8
Crevecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer

**Captivity Narratives**
Week 9
Mary Rowlandson (ACN)
Cotton Mather, “A Notable Exploit” and “A Narrative of Hannah Swarton” (ACN)

Week 10
John Williams, The Redeemed Captive Returned to Zion (e-res)

Week 11
James Smith (ACN)

**Fiction and History**
Week 12
Susanna Rowson, Slaves in Algiers (e-res)
Judith Sargent Murray (e-res)

Week 13
Charles Brockden Brown, Edgar Huntly.

Week 14
Leonora Sansay, Secret History; or the Horrors of St. Domingo (e-res)

Final Paper Due TBA