

Final Exam for English 320

This final exam is due **Friday, December 19** by 4:00pm. You may turn it in early if you wish, but let me know when you will be turning it in early so that I can be sure that I have your second paper graded to return to you. I am expecting you to spend no more than 3-4 hours writing your responses. I will be holding you to the word limits, so make sure to eliminate repetition and get right to the point as you answer the questions, making the words count.

You will respond to **six** questions from the exam sheet, each in a short essay of 220-250 words. These questions are worth 30 points each. Your choice of questions themselves is worth another 20 points, bringing the total number of points on the exam to 200. The attached rubric will give you an idea of how I will grade each of the questions and how I will grade your choice of questions. We will go over an example together in class to prepare you further. **For each question, you will need to choose 3 authors from those provided (you may substitute one author not on the list for one of the authors on the list if you wish.)**

1. The first cluster in the anthology is “America in the European Imagination.” It contains excerpts from what Europeans said about America during early European exploration. One way of reading the American story in these early centuries is to see American authors reacting to European traditions and authors. In what ways can an analysis of texts by three of these authors speak to this claim?

Columbus Smith Knight Crèvecoeur Jefferson Emerson
Thoreau Irving

2. One of the things we discussed this semester was the place of truth in life writing. How important is it for life writing to be factual? Does the genre of the text affect how factual it has to be? Use texts by three of these authors to respond.

Sewall Knight Franklin Hammon Equiano
Douglass Jacobs

3. Attitudes toward science and the place of superstition and the unconscious in relation to science are very complex during these centuries. In what ways can an analysis of the place of science in the texts by three of these authors speak to conflicts concerning the use of empirical evidence to describe the world?

Bradford Increase or Cotton Mather Jefferson Franklin
Brockden Brown Hawthorne Poe

4. The second cluster in the anthology, “Cultural Encounters,” provides excerpts that describe contact at the borders between cultures. These descriptions of encounters can be applied to situations throughout the early centuries of American history. Choose one of the excerpts and talk about how accurately it describes the encounters in three of the texts you choose by these authors.

Pueblo Revolt texts Handsome Lake Rowlandson Equiano Jefferson
Douglass Melville

5. Some people see the defiance of authority as a quintessential American trait. In what ways can an analysis of texts by three of these authors speak to this claim?

Morton Bradstreet Franklin Equiano Emerson
Thoreau Whitman Dickinson

6. Several of the texts we read dealt with attitudes towards romantic love. In what ways can an analysis of how texts by three of these authors speak to the challenges presented by romantic love and relationships during these centuries?

John Williams Bradstreet Foster Jacobs Hawthorne
Stoddard Whitman Dickinson

7. Several of the authors we read this semester used literary genres to make arguments for social change. How effective are literary genres for this purpose? Choose texts by three of these authors to discuss this.

Bradstreet Crèvecoeur Foster Melville Stoddard Whitman

8. We read several texts this semester that were originally oral texts – transcribed and sometimes also translated by another person. We read others that were translations of written texts. Studying these texts raises issues about what is being lost in (or added to) the experience of translation or transcription. Should these texts be studied in an American literature class? Why or why not? Use three of these texts (or texts by these authors) in your response.

“Changing Woman and the Hero Twins” “The Bungling Host” “Creation of the Whites”

Sojourner Truth’s speeches Columbus de Vaca Champlain

9. Some people see Americans as people who are fascinated with the wild and the wilderness, and indeed, the relationship of people to the wild is complex in these centuries. In what ways can an analysis of how people interact with the wild or the wilderness in the texts by three of these authors show what the wild meant to people?

de Vaca Champlain Bradford Crèvecoeur Thoreau Irving

10. The female authors we have read this semester lived in cultures where most people thought women should not write. How did they respond in their writing to the expectations of their societies for women? What arguments did they make for women who write?

Sor Juana Rowlandson Foster Jacobs Stoddard Dickinson