Fighting Words
Literature and Violence in Early America
English 657S/American Studies 650S
Fall 2005
Wednesdays, 2:30-5:20

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Office Hours: Thursdays, 2-4 (Heavilon 325B) and by appointment

Description: In this course students will examine and critique seemingly enduring themes of violence and identity as represented in early American literature. Texts will be drawn primarily from seventeenth-century New England, but we will also consider the nineteenth-century memory of earlier times. Events include the Pequot War, Quaker persecution, King Philip’s War, Salem witchcraft trials, infanticide and domestic violence. Texts include Puritan sermons, war histories, court records, captivity and travel narratives, as well as novels. Of particular concern will be the surprising ways that gender intersects representations of violence, whether in descriptions of war or domestic accounts.

Texts at Von’s Books:
   Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*
   History of the Pequot War, Charles Orr, ed.
   *So Dreadfull a Judgment*, Richard Slotkin, ed.
   Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World*
   John Williams, *Redeemed Captive*,
   *Pillars of Salt*, Daniel Williams, ed
   Abigail Abbot Bailey, *Religion and Domestic Violence*
   Susanna Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (Oxford UP)
   Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (Penguin)

Course Packet(s) at Copymat

Please note: the price tag for books in this class is quite high, I know. I will be putting Charles Orr’s book on reserve for those of you who don’t wish to make the investment in the facsimile edition. In *So Dreadfull a Judgment* we will be reading only the Rowlandson and the Church texts, so again, the reserve copy may be of interest. Cotton Mather’s *Wonders of the Invisible world* is available on-line, if awkward to use: [http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/speccol/cmather/table/](http://etext.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/speccol/cmather/table/). Used copies of the novels should be available on-line, and I’ve put the publisher’s information above in case you want to search them out. Please do buy the edition I’ve specified. Finally, note that Slotkin’s *Regeneration Through Violence* as well as *So Dreadfull a Judgment* are available in 2nd editions (though the first should be OK).
Assignments
Thematic bibliography and essay (25%), due electronically by noon on Friday, Oct. 7, but I’ll take it earlier. For this assignment, choose one of the units of the class or create a new unit reflecting the major themes/interests of the class. Create a bibliography of primary and secondary materials (these should be listed separately) that you would include in a graduate-level class such as ours, if only we had the time. Write an accompanying critical essay in which you explain the argument that is inherent in your choices of texts, both primary and secondary. I imagine the length of the essay in the 4-7 page range, depending on what you uncover. You’ll want to consider an angle to the essay—it’s not just a listing of sources but an argument or analysis of them. When you know your topic, sign up to present your findings in a short (5-10 minute) class presentation. All presentations must be completed by Nov. 2.

Seminar Project (60%) hard copy due by noon on Friday, Nov. 18 in my mailbox.
Choose one of the following options:
   a) A combination of leading class discussion and writing a 20-minute (9-10 page) conference paper. The paper can be on any topic related to the major themes/issues of the class. A one-page, formal proposal for the paper is due electronically by noon on Friday, October 21. For the discussion, you may work on your own or with another person. Choose a set of class readings that interest you. Create questions based on the readings, to be distributed in advance, if possible. On the day we are scheduled to discuss those readings, help to facilitate discussion. Write a 2-3 page précis of the class discussion to be handed in a week later, in which you summarize the discussion, note lacunae in our consideration of the texts, and raise questions for continued thought. The presentation must be completed by November 2.
   b) Write a full, 25-35 page seminar paper on a topic related to the major themes/issues of the class. A one-page, formal proposal for the paper is due electronically by noon on Friday, October 21

Presentation (15%)
On November 30 in class, you’ll have 10-15 minutes to present the major finding of your conference or seminar paper. The presentation should be a polished, articulate summary of your argument.

Plagiarism and originality: The submission of plagiarized work in whole or in part is a violation of University policy and will result in penalties up to failure in the course and referral to the dean of the college. See me if you have any concerns about proper citation style. Also, I will only accept original work produced specifically for this class in fulfillment of course requirements. Again, please see me if you have questions.
Schedule

Week 1 (August 24)

**Hannah Duston: A Case Study**
Texts to be handed out and read in class.

Week 2 (August 31)

**Theology of Violence/Frontier of Violence**

Rene Girard, from *The Girard Reader*, Part I, “Overview of the mimetic Theory” and from Part IV, “The Scapegoat as Historical Referent” (CP)

Increase Mather, “The Day of Trouble is Near” (CP)
Emory Elliot, “The Jeremiad” (CP)

Robert Allen Warrior, “A Native American Perspective: Canaanites, Cowboys, and Indians” (CP)
John Cotton, “God’s Promise to His Plantations” (CP)

Week 3 (September 7)

**Pequot War**
*History of the Pequot War* (All four narratives: Mason, Underhill, Gardner, Vincent)

John Wheelwright, “A Fast-Day Sermon” (CP)

Ann Kibbey, “The Pequot War and the Antinomian Controversy” (CP)


Week 4 (September 14)

**Quakers**

Edward Burrough, *Declaration of the Sad and Great Persecution and Martyrdom of the People of God, called Quakers, in New-England* (EEBO)

Humphrey Norton, *New England’s Bloody Ensigne*, excerpt (EEBO)

P: John Norton, *The Heart of New England Rent*, excerpt (EEBO)


Michele Lise Tarter, “Quaking in the Light” (CP)

Recommended: Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument*, pp 1-32 (CP)
Week 5 (September 21)

**King Philip’s War**

Edward Wharton, *New-England’s present sufferings under their cruel neighbouring Indians* (EEBO)

[Nathaniel Saltonstall], *The present state of New-England, with respect to the Indian War* (EEBO)

[Saltenstall], *A Continuation of the state of New-England* (EEBO)

[Saltenstall], *A new and further narrative of the state of New-England*


Richard Slotkin, Intro to *Regeneration through Violence*

Jill Lepore, “The Story of it Printed” (CP)


Week 6 (September 28)

**King Philip’s War**

Mary Rowlandson, *Sovereignty and Goodness of God in So Dreadfull a Judgment*

Benjamin Church, *Entertaining Passages in So Dreadfull a Judgment*

Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence*, Chapters 4-6


Suggested: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Captured Subjects/Savage Others” (reserve)

Week 7 (October 5)

**Witchcraft**

Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World*


Recommended: Emory Elliot, “The Language of Witchcraft” (CP)

**Friday, October 7, noon: Thematic bibliography and essay due**
Week 8 (October 12)

**Witchcraft**

*Wonders*, with an emphasis on Tituba


Week 9 (October 19)

**Slavery**

Samuel Sewall, *Selling of Joseph* (CP)

Abner Goodell, “John Saffin and His Slave Adam” (CP)

Albert J. Von Frank “John Saffin: Slavery and Racism” (on-line)


Friday, October 21, noon: Paper proposal due

Week 10 (October 26)

**Pillars of Salt**

Cotton Mather, *Warnings from the Dead* (CP)

Katherine Garrett, *The Confession & Dying Warning of Katherine Garret* (handout)

Patience Boston, “The Faithful Narrative of the Wicked Life and Remarkable Conversion of Patience Boston” (CP)


Jodi Schorb, “Seeing Other Wise: Reading A Pequot Execution Narrative” (handout)

Recommended: Daniel Williams’s intro to *Pillars of Salt* (reserve)

Week 11 (November 2)

**18th-century Captivity Narratives**

John Williams, *Redeemed Captive*

Jemima Howe, *A Genuine and Correct Account* (CP)

Evan Haefeli and Kevin Sweeney “The Redeemed Captive as Recurrent Seller” (CP)
Week 12 (November 9)
**Domestic Captivity**  
Abigail Abbott Bailey, *Religion and Domestic Violence*

Week 13 (November 16)
**Captivity and Sentiment**  
*Charlotte Temple*

**Friday, November 18, noon: Seminar Project due**
November 23: THANKSGIVING

Week 14 (November 30)
**Presentations**

Week 15 (December 7)
**Romancing Violence**  
*Hope Leslie*