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## ENG 3601A-001: Major Writers Before 1800

Angela Vietto

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Eng 3601A  
Spring 2016  
**Major Authors:**  
**Charles Brockden Brown**  
**& Susanna Rowson**

Prof. Angela Vietto  
3345 Coleman  
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Office hours:  
M 10-11; WF 10-12; T 2-4 *and by*  
*appointment*

In the generation following the American Revolution, writers in the U.S. explored the appropriate role of imaginative writing in a democratic republic (something still new in the modern world) and the professional possibilities for writers in a country without traditional systems of patronage. Susanna Rowson (1762-1824) and Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) were among the most prominent of those exploring these questions.

As author of the first American best-seller (arguably the first American literary franchise), Rowson was also among the first American women to attempt to make a living as an author. Her contemporary Charles Brockden Brown also set out to earn a living by the pen, and like Rowson, found it necessary to turn to editing and other lines of work to earn an adequate living.

Brown and Rowson shared other similarities: both came from families with uneasy relationships to the American revolution, yet both found themselves seeking to create uniquely “American” literature. Both chose, at times, to write in the voice of a member of the opposite sex, and both were interested in gender relations and the rights of women. And both were strongly influenced by English literature, despite their interest in American-ness.

**Objectives:** In this class, we will explore what it means to categorize a writer as “major.” Our readings, activities, and discussions are designed to enable you to develop a nuanced sense of how writers find their places in various literary canons. We will also explore the changing category of “authorship” and how it has developed over time, with specific attention to the transitional moment in that history at the end of the eighteenth century. And, of course, we will explore in their literary and political contexts the artistic accomplishments of Rowson and Brown. Finally, of course, like all classes in the English major, this course is designed to help you improve your flexibility and independence as a writer and critical thinker and enhance your reading, analytic, and speaking skills.

**Textbooks from TRS**

Brown, *Wieland* (1798), *Arthur Mercyn* (1799), *Ormond* (1799)  
Rowson, *Charlotte Temple* (1791), *Reuben and Rachel* (1799)

**Students with disabilities**—If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

**English Teacher Education Majors**—Students seeking certification to teach English Language Arts should distribute yellow recommendation for student teaching sheets to all their instructors in English, every semester.

**The Student Success Center**—Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (<http://www.eiu.edu/~success>) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

**Academic Integrity**—Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**The English Department Statement on Plagiarism**—Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Office of Student Standards. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

**The Electronic Writing Portfolio**—Any written project of 750 words or longer (excluding fiction or poetry) written for this class would be suitable for submission to the EWP. Submissions must be made by the last day of finals week at the end of the semester. *Earlier deadlines apply for graduating seniors.*

### Grading and Major Assignments\*

Reading quizzes	20%
Essays (20% each)	60%
Mid-term exam	10%
Final project	10%

### Final Grading Scale

A	90-100%
B	80-89.99%
C	70-79.99%
D	60-69.99%
F	59.99% and below

**Essay 1: *The Sentimental, Then and Now.*** From our contemporary culture, choose a storyline you think fits the category of “sentimental” as we will explore that concept. Ideally, you would choose a story with some claims to “truth” (for example, a narrative about the lives of celebrities, a plot line from a reality show, the narratives told about victims of tragedies like mass shootings). In the essay, you will explore how the storyline fits the category of the sentimental by comparing the story (in whatever textual embodiments you choose) to *Charlotte Temple*, including various uses of sentimentality, the response of audiences then and now, and the relevance or irrelevance of the fictional status of the narrative.

**Essay 2. *Dialogic or Monologic?*** After we read some sections of Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Dialogic Imagination*, explore the theory of “dialogism” in one of the three novels by Brockden Brown that we read together, using both careful attention to the text and its cultural context to argue that the novel you choose is either dialogic or monologic.

**Essay 3. *Open topic.***

**Final project.** May be an essay, creative work, poster, or video; should apply a concept, text, or set of ideas from the course to your personal post-college goals (career or otherwise); will be presented during our final exam time.

## Schedule

M Jan 11	Introductions.
W Jan 13	Contextual material in <i>Charlotte Temple</i> : on women's rights and education, pp. 125-140; on novel reading, 197-203; on sensibility, Janet Todd, 279-285 and June Howard, 310-323.
F Jan 15	<i>Charlotte Temple</i> (1791) pp. 3-48
M Jan 18	<b><u>Martin Luther King Birthday, no classes</u></b>
W Jan 20	<i>Charlotte Temple</i> pp. 49-90
F Jan 22	<i>Slaves in Algiers</i> (1794; to be distributed). Essay 1 assigned. Select topic and contemporary texts; come to class prepared to discuss on Monday.
M Jan 25	Essay 1 workshop day.
W Jan 27	Brown, <i>Wieland</i> (1798), chapters I-IV, pp. 1-41
F Jan 29	<i>Wieland</i> chapters V-VII, pp. 42-80
M Feb 1	<i>Wieland</i> chapters VIII-XI, pp. 81-128
W Feb 3	<i>Wieland</i> chapters XII-XVI, pp. 129-172
F Feb 5	<i>Wieland</i> chapters XVII-XXI, pp. 173-218
M Feb 8	<i>Wieland</i> chapters XXII, pp. 219-278
W Feb 10	<b>**Essay 1 due.</b>
F Feb 12	<b><u>Lincoln's Birthday, no classes</u></b>
M Feb 15	Brown, <i>Arthur Mervyn</i> (1799), preface-chapter IV, pp. 1-35
W Feb 17	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 36-76
F Feb 19	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 77-112
M Feb 22	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 113-163
W Feb 24	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> Vol. 2 (1800), pp. 167-207
F Feb 26	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 208-242
M Feb 29	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 243-283
W Mar 2	<i>Arthur Mervyn</i> pp. 284-330
F Mar 4	Mid-term exam.

M Mar 7	Selections from Bakhtin, <i>The Dialogic Imagination</i> (to be distributed). Essay 2 assigned.
W Mar 9	Brown, <i>Ormond</i> (1799), pp. 1-41
F Mar 11	<i>Ormond</i> pp. 42-82
Mar 14-18	<u>Spring Break</u>
M Mar 21	<i>Ormond</i> pp. 83-129
W Mar 23	<i>Ormond</i> pp. 130-171
F Mar 25	<i>Ormond</i> pp. 172-222
M Mar 28	Essay 2 workshop day.
W Mar 30	Essay 2 complete draft due. Essay 3 assigned.
F Apr 1	Rowson, <i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 37-78
M Apr 4	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 78-118
W Apr 6	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 119-166
F Apr 8	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 167-209
M Apr 11	<b>** Essay 2 due</b> (in D2L). Instead of class, attend this hour of English Studies Day. Browse the poster sessions (lunch provided)
W Apr 13	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 209-246
F Apr 15	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 246-289
M Apr 18	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 290-326
W Apr 20	<i>Reuben and Rachel</i> pp. 326-369. Essay 3 topic due.
F Apr 22	Contextual material TBD based on Essay 3 topics
M Apr 25	Contextual material TBD based on Essay 3 topics
W Apr 27	Final project workshop.
F Apr 29	<b>** Essay 3 due.</b> Course conclusion.
Finals week Weds. May 4 10:15-12:15	Present your final projects during exam time.