**ENGL4664,** Spring 2014 Office: 405 Holmes Hall

Professor Elizabeth Maddock Dillon Office Hours: Tues. 3-4:30 p.m.

[e.dillon@neu.edu](mailto:e.dillon@neu.edu) and by appointment

**Eighteenth-Century American Literature:**

**Gender and Empire**

The eighteenth century was an era of revolution in the Atlantic World: the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Haitian Revolution all occurred in the closing years of the century. In this class we will survey 18th-century American literature in light of the tumultuous changes wrought by revolution, viewing the literature and culture of the period through the shifting lenses of empire and nationhood. We will focus, in particular, on the relation of gender and race to empire and nationhood and will read across a range of genres, from slave narratives, to captivity narratives, to poetry, novels, and plays of the period.

**Learning Goals:**

* Read, critically interpret, and analyze literary texts from earlier periods
* Gain fluency in advancing arguments, in written and oral forms, based on textual and historical analysis
* Gain a sense of the history of the 18th-century Atlantic world and its relevance to literary production and circulation of the period
* Gain an understanding of how and why gender and race are historically flexible and mutable categories of identity; apply this understanding to the 18th century and to today
* Become familiar with concepts of genre and their significance in the 18th century
* Become familiar with 18th century archival sources in digital and non-digital forms
* Become familiar with key theoretical arguments about the nature and meaning of gender

**Required Books:**

Please purchase the following books at the Northeastern Bookstore or online. Note the ISBN numbers, which should be used to verify that you are purchasing the correct edition of the work in question.

* Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God: with Related Documents*, ed. Neal Salisbury (Bedford) ISBN-13: 978-0312111519
* Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (Norton) ISBN-13: 978-0393970142
* Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (Vintage) ISBN-13**:** 978-0307276766
* *Milcah Martha Moore’s Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America*, ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki and Karin Wulf (Pennsylvania State University Press) ISBN-13: 978-0271030050
* Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette and the Boarding School*, (Broadview) ISBN-13: 978-1551119984
* Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo and Laura* (Broadview) ISBN-13: 978-1551113463
* Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Narrative* (Dover) ISBN-13: 978-0486438634
* *The Woman of Colour. A Tale. Anonymous*, ed. Lyndon J. Dominique. (Broadview) ISBN-13: 978-1551111766

**Course Requirements/Grading:**

* Attendance and Participation: 5%

This class requires active participation and attendance. You will be graded for both. More than three absences will affect your final grade: please save these absences for when you most need them—i.e., illness or family matters. They are not intended as “skip” days. Please arrive in class on time, with your books in hand. Three late arrivals will count as an absence. Please make a print copy of any reading available on Blackboard and bring that copy to class. I encourage you to annotate your texts: write in the margins, underline passages, circle words—interact with the text as you read it. Please get in the habit of summarizing key thoughts and ideas about the reading, in writing, after you complete it. And when you come to class, be prepared to share your questions, responses, and observations. Your participation grade will be based on your ability to share these ideas and questions with the class in our discussions. Please note that I will communicate with you by e-mail through Blackboard; you are responsible for having an accurate e-mail address posted to your Blackboard account and checking this e-mail regularly. Cell phone use is strictly not allowed in class; texting is forbidden. Computers will be allowed for the purpose of taking notes, but if you are using the computer for non-class related uses and/or paying more attention to the screen than to the discussion and your classmates, you will no longer be allowed to bring the computer to class.

* Class Blog: 15%

We will have a class blog on which you will be required to post four kinds of assignments:

* + Archival Find: An archival document that you have found that offers historical context for the reading we are engaged in for the following class.
  + Contemporary Conversation: A contemporary document that engages in issues and questions related to the reading we are engaged in for the following class.
  + Passage Analysis: An analysis of a particular passage that you choose from the text we are reading for the next class.
  + Response: A brief written response to any of the three items above.

We will have training in class in using the blog and in discovering and using archival sources. Over the course of the semester, you will be required to post one archival find, one contemporary conversation, and two passage analyses. You will also be required to post at least one response per week to a classmate’s post. Archival finds, contemporary conversations, and passage analyses should be posted to the blog by noon the day before class; responses should be posted by 9 a.m. the day of class.

* Group project: 10%

You will participate in one group project over the course of the semester. Your group will create an on-line Commonplace Book, using Pinterest, on the model of Milcah Martha Moore’s Commonplace Book. Each group will be responsible for a class presentation describing their finished project.

* Three Short Essays: 15% each

You will write three short essays (3-5 pages) that focus on the analysis of specific texts and that are aimed to develop skills of close reading and argument.

* In Class Quizzes: 10%

Several times during the semester, short in class quizzes will be given on readings assigned for discussion and terms we have covered in class.

* Final take home exam: 15%

A final take home exam will be due on April 23. In the exam, you will be asked to synthesize theoretical, historical, and literary materials that we have covered in the class.

**Academic Integrity Policy:**

Plagiarism in any form is strictly forbidden and you should take particular care to cite the sources of your work and ideas in any assignments produced for the class. For additional information on the Academic Integrity Policy, see <http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html>

If you have *any* questions about how or when to cite printed or digital materials, please ask me.

**Schedule of Readings:**

Week 1:

1/6: Introduction: Early American gender: reading Pocahontas

1/8: Pocahontas Narratives and Debates (readings on Blackboard)

Week 2:

1/13: View: *Pocahontas* (Disney: Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg, 1995)

View: *The New World* (Terrence Malick, 2005)

Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women” (Blackboard)

1/15: *Inkle and Yarico* (Blackboard)

Week 3:

1/20: No class: MLK day

1/22: Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682)

Week 4:

1/27: Mary Rowlandson, *The Sovereignty and Goodness of God* (1682)

“Undoing Gender,” Judith Butler (Blackboard)

1/29: View: *The Searchers* (John Ford, 1956)

Week 5:

2/3: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

2/4: Close readings and thesis statement for first paper due

2/5: Snow day!!

Week 6:

2/10: Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

“Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book,” Hortense Spillers (Blackboard)

2/12: Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (2008)

2/14: First essay due to [e.dillon@neu.edu](mailto:e.dillon@neu.edu) by 6 p.m.

Week 7:

2/17: No class: Presidents’ Day

2/19: Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*  (2008)

Week 8:

2/24: Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes” (Blackboard)

John Locke, “Two Treatises on Government” (Blackboard)

2/26: Milcah Martha Moore, *A Commonplace Book*

Week 9: No classes: Spring Break

Week 10:

3/10: Milcah Martha Moore, *A Commonplace Book*

3/12: Phyllis Wheatley, selected poems (Blackboard)

Week 11:

3/17: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (1797)

3/19: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette* (1797)

Week 12:

3/24: Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808)

3/26: Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808)

Week 13:

3/31: Leonora Sansay, *Secret History; or, The Horrors of St. Domingo* (1808)

4/2: *The Woman of Colour* (1808)

4/3: Second essay due to [e.dillon@neu.edu](mailto:e.dillon@neu.edu) by 6 p.m.

Week 14:

4/7: *The Woman of Colour* (1808)

4/9: *The Woman of Colour* (1808)

Week 15:

4/14: Class presentation: Commonplace/Pinterest projects

4/16: Third essay due to [e.dillon@neu.edu](mailto:e.dillon@neu.edu) by 6 p.m.

4/21: Final take home exam distributed at 9 a.m.

4/23:Final exam due to [e.dillon@neu.edu](mailto:e.dillon@neu.edu) by 6 p.m.