Primary Texts

(A) Colonial and Early Republican Literature

Christopher Columbus, *Journal of the First Voyage to America* (selections)

Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca, *The Relation of Alvar Nunez Cabeza de Vaca*

Bartolemé de Las Casas, *The Very Brief Relation of the Devastation of the Indies*


William Bradford, *Of Plymouth Plantation* (selections)

Thomas Morton, *New English Canaan*, Book III

Roger Williams, *A Key Into the Language of America* (selections)


Michael Wigglesworth, “The Day of Doom”

Mary White Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*.

Edward Taylor, selections from *Preparatory Meditations*, First and Second Series, especially “Meditation 8 (First Series)”; selections from *God's Determinations*, especially “The Preface,” “The Souls Grown to Christ for Succor,” “Christ’s Reply,” “The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended”; selected other poems, including “Upon a Spider Catching a Fly,” “Upon Wedlock and the Death of Children,” “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold,” “Huswifery,” “A Fig for Thee, Oh! Death”

Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World*, selections from *Magnalia Christi Americana*

*The Bay Psalm Book* (1640) and *The New England Primer* (1683?)

Samuel Sewell, *Diary* (selections)

Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight*
Ebenezer Cook, *The Sot-Weed Factor; or, A Voyage to Maryland*

Richard Lewis, “A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis, April 4, 1730”


Elizabeth Ashbridge, “Some Account of the Fore-Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge”


Milcah Martha Moore’s Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America (ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki) (selections)


J. Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer*

Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, “The Crisis No. 1,” *The Age of Reason*


*The Federalist Papers*, numbers 10, 51, 78

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African.*

Philip Freneau, Selected poems, including “On the Civilization of the Western Aboriginal Lands”

Timothy Dwight, *Greenfield Hill: A Poem in Seven Parts*

Joel Barlow, *The Columbiad* (selections), “The Hasty Pudding,” “Advice to a Raven in
Russia”

Royall Tyler, The Contrast


Hannah Webster Foster, The Coquette

Charles Brockden Brown, Wieland

(B) American Renaissance

Washinton Irving, “Rip Van Winkle,” “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow”

James Fenimore Cooper, The Last of the Mohicans

Catherine Maria Sedgewick, Hope Leslie

William Cullen Bryant, “Thanatopsis,” “To a Waterfowl,” “The Prairie”

William Apess, A Son of the Forest, “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man”


William Lloyd Garrison, Statement of purpose published in the first number of The Liberator

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, selected poems

Humor of the Old Southwest (Ed. Cohen and Dillingham), selections, especially George Washington Harris, Thomas Bangs Thorpe, and Augustus Baldwin Longstreet


John Greenleaf Whittier, Selected anti-slavery poems, “Snowbound: An Idyll”

Sarah Margaret Fuller, “The Great Lawsuit”
Fanny Fern (Sara Willis Parton), *Ruth Hall*

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments” (from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention).

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*


Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, “What to the American Slave is the Fourth of July?”


Maria Susanna Cummins, *The Lamplighter*

Walt Whitman, Preface and poems from *Leaves of Grass* (1855), sections from the “death-bed” edition of *Leaves of Grass*: “Children of Adam,” “Calamus,” “Drum Taps,” “Memories of President Lincoln”

Emily Dickinson, “Her breast is fit for pearls” (Fr 121), “Safe in their alabaster chambers” [all seven versions] (Fr 124), “Title divine is mine!” (Fr 194), “Come slowly Eden!” (Fr 205), “I’m ‘wife’--I’ve finished that” (Fr 225), “I’m nobody! Who are you?” (Fr 260), “Rearrange a ‘wife’s’ affection!” (Fr 267), “Wild nights—wild nights!” (Fr 269), “I felt a funeral in my brain” (Fr 340), “I’m ceded—I’ve stopped being their’s” (Fr 353), “It was not death, for I stood up” (Fr 355), “A bird came down the walk” (Fr 359), “The soul has bandaged moments” (Fr 360), “I tend my flowers for thee” (Fr 367) “After great pain a formal feeling comes” (Fr 372), “The soul selects her own society” (Fr 409), “This was a poet” (Fr 446), “I died for beauty but was scarce” (Fr 448), “I dwell in possibility” (Fr 466), “Because I could not stop for death” (Fr 479), “I heard a fly buzz when I died” (Fr 591), “The brain is wider than the sky” (Fr 598), “Much madness is divinest sense” (Fr 620), “I cannot live with you” (Fr 706), “My life had stood a loaded gun” (Fr 764), “Publication is the auction” (Fr 788), “A narrow fellow in the grass” (Fr 1096), “In winter in my room” (Fr 1742)

Harriet E. Wilson, *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black.*

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Abraham Lincoln, “Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetary,” “Second Inaugural Address.”
Secondary Texts

Reference Works

For brief critical discussions, historical overviews, and biographical information, students should consult histories like the Columbia Literary History of the United States and the Cambridge History of American Literature, volumes one and two; Russell Reising’s The Unusable Past; and various anthologies such as the Norton and Heath, as well as more specialized collections such as Perry Miller’s anthology on the Puritans or Joel Myerson’s on the Transcendentalists. Other useful books include the Cambridge Companion series, the MLA Approaches to Teaching series, and the Dictionary of Literary Biography.

(A) Colonial and Early Republican Literary Criticism

A. Owen Aldridge, Benjamin Franklin and Nature’s God (1967)


William C. Dowling, Poetry and Ideology in Revolutionary Connecticut (1990)


Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (1956)

Carla Mulford, ed., Teaching the Literatures of Early America (1999)

David S. Shields, Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America (1997)

William C. Spengemann, A New World of Words: Redefining Early American Literature (1994)


(B) American Renaissance Literary Criticism


Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (2nd edition, 1966)

Michael T Gilmore, American Romanticism and the Marketplace (1985)

D. H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (1923)


David Leverenz, Manhood and the American Renaissance (1989)

F. O. Matthiessen, American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman (1941)


David Reynolds, Beneath the American Renaissance: The Subversive Imagination in the Age of Emerson and Melville (1988)

John Carlos Rowe, At Emerson’s Tomb: The Politics of Classic American Literature (1997)


Stephanie Smith, Conceived by Liberty: Maternal Figures in Nineteenth-Century American Literature (1994)

Core List: Primary Sources


2) Mary White Rowlandson, *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restauration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*.


4) Benjamin Franklin, *Autobiography*.


7) James Fenimore Cooper, *The Last of the Mohicans*.


14) Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

15) Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*.

16) Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (1855), including the preface. Also read these sections from the “death-bed” edition of *Leaves of Grass*: “Children of Adam,” “Calamus,” “Drum Taps,” “Memories of President Lincoln.”

17) Emily Dickinson, “Her breast is fit for pearls” (Fr 121), “Safe in their alabaster chambers” [all seven versions] (Fr 124), “Title divine is mine!” (Fr 194), “Come slowly Eden!” (Fr 205),
“I’m “wife”--I’ve finished that” (Fr 225), “I’m nobody! Who are you?” (Fr 260), “Rearrange a “wife’s” affection!” (Fr 267), “Wild nights—wild nights!” (Fr 269), “I felt a funeral in my brain” (Fr 340), “I’m ceded—I’ve stopped being their’s” (Fr 353), “It was not death, for I stood up” (Fr 355), “A bird came down the walk” (Fr 359), “The soul has bandaged moments” (Fr 360), “I tend my flowers for thee” (Fr 367) “After great pain a formal feeling comes” (Fr 372), “The soul selects her own society” (Fr 409), “This was a poet” (Fr 446), “I died for beauty but was scarce” (Fr 448), “I dwell in possibility” (Fr 466), “Because I could not stop for death” (Fr 479), “I heard a fly buzz when I died” (Fr 591), “The brain is wider than the sky” (Fr 598), “Much madness is divinest sense” (Fr 620), “I cannot live with you” (Fr 706), “My life had stood a loaded gun” (Fr 764), “Publication is the auction” (Fr 788), “A narrow fellow in the grass” (Fr 1096), “In winter in my room” (Fr 1742)

18) Colonial American Poetry


Michael Wigglesworth, “The Day of Doom”

Edward Taylor, selections from Preparatory Meditations, First and Second Series, especially “Meditation 8 (First Series)”; selections from God’s Determinations, especially “The Preface,” “The Souls Grown to Christ for Succor,” “Christ’s Reply,” “The Joy of Church Fellowship Rightly Attended”; selected other poems, including “Upon a Spider Catching a Fly,” “Upon Wedlock and the Death of Children,” “Upon a Wasp Chilled with Cold,” “Huswifery,” “A Fig for Thee, Oh! Death”

Ebenezer Cook, The Sot-Weed Factor; or, A Voyage to Maryland

Richard Lewis, “A Journey from Patapsco to Annapolis, April 4, 1730”

Milcah Martha Moore’s Book: A Commonplace Book from Revolutionary America (ed. Catherine La Courreye Blecki), selections


19) American Enlightenment
Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* and *The Age of Reason Part I*

Thomas Jefferson, *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* and “Declaration of Independence” from his *Autobiography*


Joel Barlow, *The Columbiad* [selections]

*The Federalist*, numbers 10, 51, 78

Timothy Dwight, *Greenfield Hill*

20) Literature of Reform and Resistance

Henry David Thoreau, “Resistance to Civil Government,” “A Plea for Captain John Brown”

Margaret Fuller, “The Great Lawsuit”

Angelina Grinké, Appeal to the Christian Women of the South

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments”

David Walker, “An Appeal . . . to the colored Colored Citizens of the World”

William Lloyd Garrison, Editorial from the first issue of The Liberator

Core List: Secondary Sources


