

AML4503-U01

Antebellum Transoceanic Memoirs

Spring 2019

MW 11:00 am-12:15pm

Graham Center 283A

Dr. Mark B.
Kelley

Contact

makelley@fiu.edu (best)
669-228-1906

Office Hours

English Department
DM 471B
Monday 12:30pm-2:30 pm
& by appointment
(please do!)



Course Manifest

The sea was (& is) more than the abstract space between bodies of land. In this course, we will consider major figures in antebellum American literature (1789-1856) with an eye to the sea and to maritime memoirs.

The course contains not only nonfiction memoirs, but also logbooks, journals, and poetry created by and for persons at sea. These texts will force us to consider the generic, geographic, gendered, and racial fluidity of American identities, as well as their connection to oceanic systems of exchange and bondage. Life at sea- and the sea itself- could be a workplace, a home, a passage, a penitentiary, and a promise. Likewise, contestations over oceanic space shaped and defined the contours of national citizenship and its alternatives.





Captain's Orders

Learning Outcomes

- to critically re/examine early American nationalism and literature as indebted to the ocean.
- to apply and improve your analytic skills through written and oral investigations of these debates.
- to evaluate the intersections between maritime travel and constructions of race/sex/gender/class/ability.
- to practice and improve your academic and workplace communication skills.
- to create ties between our chosen theme and modern ecological, political, or social issues in maritime space.

COURSE TEXTS:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast*
ISBN: 0140390081

Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative...*
ISBN: 0142437166

Thompson, *The Life of John Thompson*
ISBN: 0143106422

Prince, *A Narrative of the Life...*
ISBN: 1558760199

Assessment

You will have a series of **written assignments or presentations (see assignment page)**. These assignments will be the basis for group discussion and may build off one another. You will need to **POST each** assignment online (Google or Canvas) and, when told, **PRINT** assignments for class.

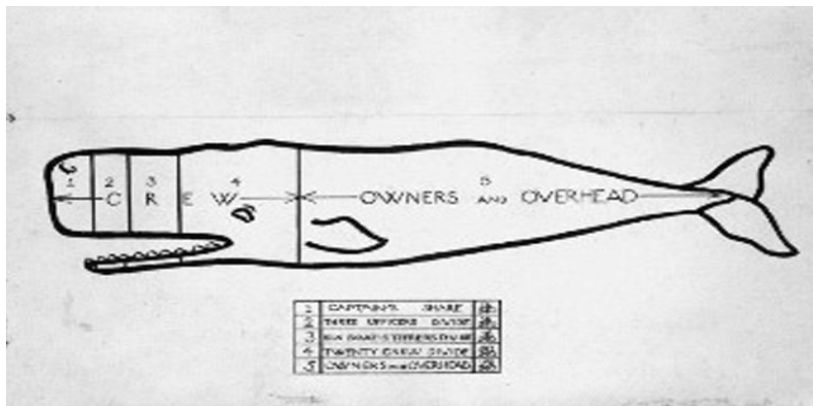
Attendance

Since this is a **discussion-based course**, **attendance** is vital to our success.

Nonetheless, if you are feverish or come down with the flu or a nasty cold (are coughing, sneezing, or vomiting), notify me of your absence by email. Please do not attend class. The absence will count toward your **three (3) allowed absences**. You do NOT need to detail your symptoms or provide a doctor's note. If you think that your illness will last longer than the **three (3) allowed absences**, please email me so we can consider your options. Please see the next page for more information.

Technology

Please do not use your phone in class. Recent research suggests that 'laptop/tablet bans' negatively impact some students. Yet the problem of distraction persists. To strike a balance, I will allow any technology so long as your technology use negatively impacts other students. Moreover, if you can only access a text online I may request that you bring a device.



Canvas

Grading Scale

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89 B = 82-86 B- = 79-81

C+ = 77-80 C = 70-76

D = 60-69

F = 59 and below

Information about the course, changes in readings, announcements of campus events will be presented on Canvas (<https://canvas.fiu.edu/>) Please check prior to every meeting.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance:	15 points
Reading Log:	30 points
Discussion Lead:	20 points
Make a Meme:	5 points
Final (Un)Essay:	25 points

Attendance (Continued)

You will get the full 15 points for attendance with up to three absences. Each further absence will cost 1 point, except FIU sanctioned activities or pre-set accommodations. However, you can make up an absence point if you meet with me in office hours (in person or virtually) within three days of your absence.

Note: two arrivals after 11:15 or two departures before 12:15 equal one absence.

Due Dates

I understand that life/emergencies happen, so I am quite liberal with extensions. Above all, I need you to be communicative. If it appears that you will be unable to meet a deadline, please let me know as soon as you think so. Extensions are easily given (even if you don't end up using it) and I am happy to do so.

If you do not arrange something beforehand, your earned grade will be **lowered one point per course day** for a late submission.

Academic Integrity

If you are having difficulty completing an assignment for any reason, please come speak with me. Most academic integrity cases are the result of a misplaced idea— often brought on by late-night panic or grade pressures—that misconduct is the only way to completing the assignment.

"Academic Misconduct" includes:

Cheating – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not.

Plagiarism – The use and appropriation of another's work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student's own.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester. Again, please consider me your #1 resource and advocate!

Accommodations

Your success in this class is important to me. Above all, I strive to provide access to all students according to their needs. Please see me if there are ways I can better support you. This may include speaking more slowly in class, increasing the number of visual aids, or organizing the classroom in a more equitable way. Also, the Disability Resource Center (DRC) works with students, faculty, staff, & community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305/348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center (GC) 190. Please also notify me of any DRC accommodations as soon as possible. We can then work together to best coordinate your official as well as informal accommodations for this course.

Additional Resources

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) (305-348-2797). Furthermore, please let me know if you need additional support in accessing these resources below.

Violence and Harassment Resources

[Title IX](#) makes it clear that violence & harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, sexual orientation, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can file a complaint through FIU's [Equal Opportunity Programs & Diversity Office](#). Alternatively, you may file an anonymous complaint using our **Ethical Panther Reporting Line** at 844-312-5358 or online at <https://compliance.fiu.edu/hotline.html>

Crisis Resources

If you are in crisis, you can find the appropriate resources at [Counseling & Psychological Services](#) (CAPS). CAPS provides free and confidential mental health services to students.

CAPS Modesto Maidique Campus: UHSC 270, 305-348-2277

CAPS Biscayne Bay Campus: WUC 320, 305-919-5305

Food Insecurity Resources

The [Student Food Pantry](#) is an initiative to address the prevalence of food insecurity on campus. This project assists students who are experiencing financial difficulty to purchase groceries. No proof of need is required and students can access the pantry once a week.

Modesto Maidique Campus: DM 166, 305-348-6995

Biscayne Bay Campus: WUC 307, 305-919-5620 Ext. 4

Center for Excellence in Writing & Center for Academic Success

The [CEW](#) (GL 120) can help you brainstorm, draft, revise, or polish your written work. It is open Mon-Thu 9:00-8:00 and Fri 9:00-5:00. The [CAS](#) can assist you with reading skills, study techniques, and grammar. Open Mon-Thu 8-8 and Fri 8-5. Tutoring assistance begins at 9:00.



Course (Treasure) Map



Please check 'Canvas' weekly for updates to this schedule.

You should have access to readings in class— when available, you may bring digital copies on a computer/tablet (no phones).

Setting Sail

Mon., Jan. 7

IN CLASS:

Oxford English Dictionary: “Memoir”; “Transoceanic.”

Wed., Jan. 9

READ:

Emily Dickinson, ‘Exultation is the Going’ (Canvas)

Dana Jr. and the Maritime Archive

Mon., Jan. 14

READ:

Sorenson, “Logging-In: The Ship's Log as Medium” (Canvas)
Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH1- CH5 (pgs. 37-75)

Wed., Jan. 16

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH6-CH10 (pgs. 76-113)

Mon., Jan. 21

NO CLASS (Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

Wed., Jan. 23

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH 11- CH15 (pgs. 114-166)

Mon., Jan. 28

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH16-CH19 (pgs. 167-219)

Wed., Jan. 30

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH20-CH23 (pgs. 220-267)

Mon., Feb. 4

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH24-CH27 (pgs. 268-320)

Wed., Feb. 6

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH28-CH29 (pgs. 321-362)

Mon., Feb. 11

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH30-CH32 (pgs. 363-417)

Wed., Feb. 13

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH33-CH35 (pgs. 418-461)

Mon., Feb. 18

READ:

Dana Jr., *Two Years Before the Mast* CH36-Conclusion (pgs. 462-483)

Sailing Women

Wed., Feb. 20

READ: Sigourney, Selections from *Poetry for Seamen*
Wheatley, "On Being Brought..." (1773)
Nancy Prince, Preface to *Narrative of the Life...* Second Edition

Mon., Feb. 25

READ: Prince, *Narrative of the Life* "Beginning to St. Petersburg" (pgs. 1-45)

Wed., Feb. 27

READ: Prince, *Narrative of the Life* "Voyage Home to End" (pgs. 45-89)

Mon., Mar. 4

READ: Lawrence, Selections from *Journal of Mary Chipman Lawrence* (Canvas)
"There Once Was a Dildo in Nantucket" (Canvas)

Wed., Mar. 6

"What is Scrimshaw" (Canvas)
Scrimshaw Examples (Canvas)

Mar. 11- 13

NO CLASS/SPRING BREAK

Mon., Mar. 18

READ: Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* Prefatory-CH2 (pgs. 5-61)

Wed., Mar. 20

READ: Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* CH3-CH4 (pgs. 62-94)

Mon., Mar. 25

READ: Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* CH5-CH7 (pgs. 95-146)

Wed., Mar. 27

READ: Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* CH8-CH9 (pgs. 147-177)

Mon., Apr. 1

READ: Equiano, *Interesting Narrative of the Life* CH10-CH11 (pgs. 178-236)

Wed., Apr. 3

READ: Thompson, *The Life of John Thompson* Preface-CH9 (pgs. 1- 41)

Mon., Apr. 8

READ: Thompson, *The Life of John Thompson* CH10-CH15 (pgs. 42-78)

Wed., Apr. 10

READ: Thompson, *The Life of John Thompson* CH16-Conclusion (pgs. 79-107)
WRITE: (UN)ESSAY Proposal Due (as part of "reading log")

Mon., Apr. 15
Finals Workshopping/TBA

Wed., Apr. 17
Finals Workshopping/TBA

V. Final Exam

Wed, Apr. 24 CLASS MEETS FROM 945AM-1145AM

We will have an all-class display/discussion of your (un)essays- plus cake!

Assignments

(I may post updates to these assignments on campus)

I. Reading Log (30 points)

Reading quizzes are not fun for anyone. But I need you to read. To strike a balance, you are tasked with keeping a “reading log” throughout the semester that shows me you’re keeping up. I strive to keep things open-ended, so the topic is totally up to you so long as it demonstrates a connection (no matter how strange) to the week’s readings. Some examples include:

- 1) What is a passage that seemed interesting to you and why? Feel free to paste the passage on the response, but know that it doesn’t factor into the word count :P
- 2) How does something we’ve read connect to your other courses?
- 3) What are some questions you have about the reading or about our class discussion topics?
- 4) Who would play a figure/character in a movie based on a scene and why?
- 5) What annoys you about this reading? Why?
- 6) How would you stage or score this scene in a play/film/video game?
- 7) What kind of “unessay” could you develop around this reading?
- 8) Literally anything that connects to the reading!

It is my hope/expectation that you’ll get the readings done before class, but I know that things happen. Therefore, I will do the final check of the logs on Fridays at noon. I am not grading on style, so think of it as a brainstorming document. Feel free to stop and jot down a thought when you’re reading and cut it off mid-thought. Give me stream of consciousness. Pick it up (or not) the next day. Write a poem. Make a meme. I don’t care when/how you do this! You will get full credit (three points a week) so long as you write 225-250 words for the week (about 1/3 of a single-spaced page). You can’t “backlog” responses for prior weeks unless you’ve cleared it with me.

Everyone has a personal Google document to record their entries in one place. Week one will be Wed Jan 16- Wed. Jan 23rd, but all others will be the normal Mon/Wed week. You will not be required to do a separate log on your “discussion leadership” week (see next assignment), final proposal week, or on the final week of class (unless you’d like to make up for a prior lost week). That makes ten weeks, with three points per week for a total of thirty points!

Assignment Aims/Outcomes:

1. Getting you to write in a low-stakes environment.
2. Incentivizing (close) reading/analysis.

3. Generating ideas for class discussion.
4. Fostering connections across your courses.
3. Giving you ideas for a final assignment.

II. Discussion Leadership (20 points)

This assignment is less of a formal presentation and more of a co-teaching exercise. That is, each chosen student must come up with at least two questions for discussion during a designated day's class. I want to be open-ended, so what those questions are up to you. That is, you could:

- 1) Focus on a specific passage of the day's text that you'd like the class to consider.
- 2) Introduce part of an outside text (narrative, visual, or audio) that connects to a course concept. This could be a passage from a literary text from another course, from a recent news item, a painting, a song, a tweet, a meme, or really anything!
- 3) Introduce a passage of a prior day's text to circle back to and discuss.
- 4) Ask the class a personal question that connects to a concept or idea.
- 5) Come up with a quick game or activity that concretizes a concept.

On the designated day (to be chosen at random), you will join the head of the class with me to navigate/lead discussion for a few minutes. I recommend you chat with me about your idea in office hours, but it is not required.

You will receive full credit if you provide your questions/plan to me 24 hours before class via email, make a good-faith effort to navigate discussion (I'll be there to help!), and write a brief 200-225 word reflection on the topic of discussion and/or how you thought it went. Please write your reflection no later than one week after your presentation and post it in the "reading log" document for the week (you don't need to write another log entry for that week) no later than four days after class.

Assignment Aims/Outcomes:

- 1) Get you more comfortable speaking in public with a supportive community.
- 2) Introduce myself to new ideas to enrich discussion.
- 3) Advance you skills at working with others without a dreaded group-work task.
- 4) Model how scholars come up with things to write about – they ask questions!

III. Make a Meme (5 points)

How do you do, fellow kids? All joking aside, some students in my class last semester sent me memes and they were hilarious. More importantly, they demonstrated a knowledge of a course concept/theme as applied to a new form. That is, memes have clear generic structures that require you to make a claim/statement using understood tropes. My only requirement is that the meme not defame/degrade any group (no Pepe the Frog) and be overall suitable for class consumption. Google "meme generator" and get started!

You will get full credit if you upload a meme to Canvas and tell the class a little bit about it during the meeting that follows your submission (think 1 minute informal "mini-presentation"). Also, feel free to make your "reading log" for the week a discussion of how you came to your meme and why you think it's funny/applicable.

You can make it/send it at any point of the semester, but I recommend not leaving it until the end. Note: If you have no idea what memes are and/or prefer not to do this assignment for any reason, let me know and we can arrange an alternative task (most likely, you will create a more standard captioned cartoon like those in *The New Yorker* magazine)

Assignment Aims/Outcomes:

- 1) Get you more comfortable speaking in public with a supportive community.
- 2) Foster your creativity in preparation for a potential final unessay.
- 3) Become comfortable working across/between genres.
- 4) Advance your analysis of literary texts.

IV. Final (Un)Essay (25 points)

You can respond to the final paper prompt with either an essay or an unessay. In a traditional essay, you will write 2000 to 2500 words on a chosen element of maritime memoirs or a related topic using close reading and, as you choose, outside texts and research.

In an “unessay,” students choose their own topics, they present it in any way they choose, and we evaluate based on how compelling it is. In practice, the unessay is your opportunity to break free of restrictions of the traditional essay. Be creative. Find alternative ways to address course themes. Consider your strengths, talents, and skills and think about how to apply them. Students have turned in ceramics projects, cookbooks, paintings, 3-D and 2-D collages, drawings, original song lyrics presented as an album, a bond financing deal for a faux 501(c)(3), a video, a play, even a couple fitness routines. Some have simply adopted an alternative writing format, such as a letter or log. There are numerous other ways to approach the assignment as well. Don’t feel constrained by this list of previous unessays. Play to your strengths. If the concept of the unessay intrigues you, it is required that you meet with me in advance to talk through your idea. This way we can make sure that you meet the assignment requirements.

Done well, an unessay constitutes a critical and active engagement with the course material that shows insight and creativity and demonstrates time and effort devoted to creating something thoughtful. The chosen medium works persuasively with the design and polish of the unessay. The project’s structural and formal elements productively serve the core concept of the unessay. The unessay reflects a convincing and nuanced thesis. Feel free to use your “reading log” as a brainstorming space.

Your ‘unessay’ must be accompanied by a 500 to 700 word narrative description. You can address: what course concepts/questions/passages led you to your unessay; the argument/thesis you see the unessay making; stylistic/creative choices you made and why; ways you would revise/expand your unessay; what personal or professional skills you see this unessay advancing; any other elements you feel are useful for framing your unessay and its claim.

I will provide more expansive prompts later in the semester.

Thank you for joining me this semester!
-Professor Kelley