

Who?

- 你們.

What?

- *The Literature of American Empire I* "Take-Home" Final Exam.

When?

- Sometime between 1月4日 and 1月15日.

Where?

- Anywhere! Everywhere! Nowhere! Somewhere outside the...

"plantation."

Why?

- To assess your comprehension of the first 15 weeks of "my" course.

- To give you the opportunity to synthesize and advance "your" thinking about the course topics. My ideas and those of your classmates will be your starting point, but you should be a tricky rabbit and arrange ideas together in your own way.

~~- To assess the grammatical precision and stylistic artistry of your writing in English.~~

- Because the Boss says so.

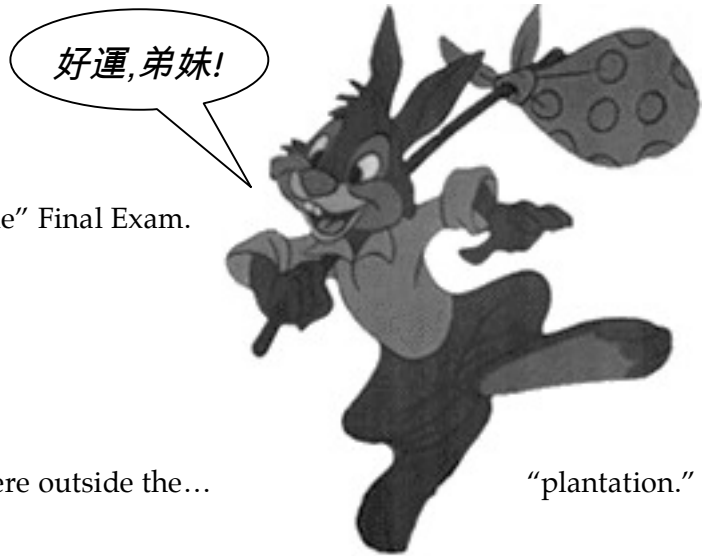
How?

- There are three questions on the exam. My intention is for a three hour exam, with one hour per question. But you will submit by emailing a .PDF, .DOC, .RTF, or .JPG file to my Gmail address. So obviously I cannot measure the time you spend. Therefore, we will make 750 words the legal maximum per question. 500 words per question is your target. 250 words per question is a recommended minimum. The same citation and anti-plagiarism standards apply as the previous exam. And my advice for preparation is quite the same; use the exam as a map to choose your key topics. Then review your *Norton*, your notes, and the blog - both Boss posts and worker replies. Then try to form some kind of discussion group so you can organize your ideas in dialogue with other students. Then compose a framework or outline of your answers, which you will then complete more fully by returning to further review of certain areas of the map. Textual quotations are welcome, but quality is better than quantity. Use of secondary resources besides the *Norton* is discouraged, but if you do so please cite properly. By properly, I mean simply cite them somehow without keeping it secret; I am not concerned with your citation format for this exam.

- You must discuss *Connecticut Yankee* somewhere on the exam. (The only way to avoid this is by writing a separate essay of 1500-2000 words to replace the entire exam.) Conversely, don't write only about *Connecticut Yankee* on your exam; try to demonstrate your intellectual variety and balance. So I would suggest writing about the novel for Question 1 or Question 2 or Question 3.

- It would be permissible to replace one of the following three questions with a topic of your choice, written within the same maximum, minimum, and target length. But as with the longer replacement essay, I'd prefer you email me by 12月26日 so I can confirm that your "freelance" topic is workable.

- **Question 1.** Describe the development of one U.S. literary genre by comparing three texts from our course syllabus that fit that genre. How did the genre change in form and/or content when used in different time periods, in different geographical places, or by different groups? How did it stay the same? How was it reapplied to new contexts or situations?



- This is mainly a question of form or technique, but of course it is impossible to answer it properly without analyzing why the authors chose their techniques (consciously or unconsciously), and this means some consideration of ideology or content. Really it's quite similar to the questions on the midterm, except we are now grouping the authors in a different way.

- Suggested genres are: a) *humor/satire*, b) *narrative fiction*, e.g. *story or novel*, c) *lyric poetry*, d) *jeremiad*, e.g. *speech or essay*, e) *autobiography*. Of course some texts are difficult to classify into a genre, or easily fit more than one genre. Or you may wish to make a surprising reclassification. Or you may wish to import some other genre category from another class. Or simply invent one. Whatever you do is permissible, as long as you "signal" properly and then provide brief justification.

- The special rule for this question is that when you select your three authors, you cannot take all three from before the midterm, or all three from after the midterm. So one pre-midterm plus two post-midterm authors, or two pre-midterm authors plus one post-midterm author. And as for your pre-midterm authors, please try not to select the same authors as you discussed on your midterm, unless you can say something new and different about them. If there is any ambiguity about who is a pre-midterm author and who is a post-midterm author, please email me.

- **Question 2.** Choose one post-midterm text and find a small piece of that text that we did not previously analyze in detail. As in question 1, you are trying to link a technical or formal analysis to a thematic or content analysis in some way. Why these particular words, these particular metaphors, this particular structure, etc? How does this piece harmonize (or not) with the author's broader objectives? With the genre of the text? With the ideologies of the time? Etc.

- Try to avoid overlap with question 1 by discussing different texts and genres. The difference from question 1 is that you will spend more of your space for this essay on "microscopic" analysis.

- Generally this type of answer will fall into two tendencies, which is why I say "harmonize (or not)." Before the development of deconstructive criticism, scholars would try to find harmony between microscopic technical structures and macroscopic ideological structures – I suppose you could also say isomorphism between them. But lately it is probably more common for critics to look for weird exceptions wherein the microscopic structure is not isomorphic or harmonious with the macroscopic structure. You've seen me do both of these maneuvers, and they are both good for the exam.

- You must copy (i.e. type) the selected "piece of text" at the start of your answer, because I'll be damned if I'm packing this enormous *Norton* to take home with me on my vacation. I love the book, but I just don't have the space in my bag! Obviously typing your selection will not impact your word maximum/ minimum/target for the question.

- "Small" piece of text is another possible legal controversies that this exam seems to be in danger of propagating. Let us say about half of a page. I think the amount of text on half a page is rather the same in *Norton*, in *Yankee*, and in the other handouts I gave, but please try to apply common sense.

- The other possibility is to return to a small piece of text that we (I) did analyze in detail previously, but to offer a radical rejection or reinterpretation of our (my) analysis.

- **Question 3.** What is the value in reading Early American Literature, if you are a Taiwanese university student in the year 年2009? Or perhaps you think there is none?

- Really and truly, you can answer in the negative as long as you offer justification. This would be like executing a higher difficulty dive in the Olympics, perhaps. Not without its risks, but not without its rewards.

- By Early American Literature, I mean simply the texts that we read this semester, considered as a combined whole. Obviously this term "E.A.L." is used by scholars in various ways; more typically it means 年1492-1776. But sometimes 年1776-1865. And sometimes 年1634-1776. Well you get my point; "Early" is a sort of scholarly controversy. But then so are "American" and "Literature." I think our "Early" for this course is something like 年1492-1903. So that's the span you should worry about.