

Who?

- You.

What?

- The Literature of American Empire "Transparent" Midterm Exam.

When?

- Tuesday, November 17, 15:20-16:50.

Where?

- Our regular classroom, Humanities C-412.

Why?

- To assess your comprehension of the first 9 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 the format of the exam forces you to be "self-reliant" and compose ideas together in your own way.
- ~~To assess the grammatical precision and stylistic artistry of your writing in English.~~



How?

- There are ten topics on the exam: *literature, frontier, law/contract, nature, empire, America(n), education, savage, liberty, laughter.*

- There are three groups of authors.

Group A: 11 Pre-Revolutionary Euro-American authors (Columbus, Cabeza de Vaca, Champlain, Bradford, Winthrop, Bradstreet, Smith, Williams, Cooke, Edwards, Franklin, Crèvecoeur)

Group B: 12 Post-Revolutionary Euro-American authors (Paine, Jefferson, Hamilton, Freneau, Irving, Hawthorne, Thorpe, Emerson, O'Sullivan, Thoreau, Turner)

Group C: 11 American Indian authors (Iroquois Creation Story, Pima Creation Story, Pontiac, Occam, Red Jacket, Tecumseh, Apess, Black Hawk, Boudinot, Winnemucca, Zitkála-Ša)

- What you will do for the exam is choose three of the *topics* above. For each of your three *topics*, you will write for 30 minutes and compare the stated or unstated views of one *Group A* author, one *Group B* author, and one *Group C* author about that topic. You may not repeat authors, and you should also try to avoid repeating ideas, since many of the themes are overlapping. So you will only write in depth about nine authors on the exam. You are not required to give direct quotations from the authors, but it may be useful to do this in a limited fashion. You may also wish to make brief mention of additional authors, but it is not required. Do not try to do "too much" with your answer, because you have limited time. Try to keep your focus on comparing the major ideas of three authors about a certain topic.
- I would suggest that you begin your study for the exam by duplicating the exercise we will do in class today. Make a group of three students. Together, choose a topic to study and discuss which three authors would be interesting to compare on this topic. Then maybe assign one author to each student, and make that student the "expert" who must read through the blog discussions, the *Norton*, and the class notes to determine the views of the author. Then have an open discussion, talking about the authors in the third person ("he/she believes...") or better yet in the first person ("I believe..."). Repeat this for several of the topics – perhaps all of them. Then continue your study individually and make the final choice for your topics and authors. You may wish to make a brief outline for your answers.
- For the real exam, the only prepared notes you are allowed to use must fit on the front and back of a small paper card. I don't know what the standard sizes are here; in the U.S. it's 3 inches x 5 inches. So let's say 8 x 13 centimeters, more or less.
- I would prefer that you write in a bound examination book, but regular white paper is OK also.
- Your answers will be assessed for your ability to briefly and clearly synthesize course materials, your ability to "navigate" the exam by choosing author comparisons relevant to the topics, and your ability to express a personal mastery of the authors and topics that goes "beyond" our original class discussion. There are a wide range of possible responses, rather than one correct answer. Thus you may treat the exam as three mini-essays, establishing a framework for analysis and briefly stating a thesis.