Welcome to ENG 2359:
American Literature before 1865

New to the course?
- Be sure to familiarize yourself with the [Syllabus](#) and review the information carefully.
- To succeed in this course, please fill out your [Course Pacing Guide](#) and take no more than 7 days from when you enroll to submit it via Modules.
- Click [Start Here](#) to begin your course.

Returning to the course? Click [Modules](#) to the left and resume where you left off.

Important reminders:
- This is a 6-month course, online, correspondence self-paced course.
- All submissions, including exams, must be completed by the course expiration date. When you registered for the course, you were sent an email to your Texas State account indicating registration and expiration dates.
- You must wait to receive a graded assignment back before submitting the next assignment.
- You must wait to take an exam until all previously submitted assignments have been graded and returned.

At the end of the course, you will be asked
to complete a brief course evaluation.
Your input will help improve the course.
Lesson 1 Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to do the following:

- Identify passages and perspectives represented by early Native Americans and colonists.
- Explain Roger Williams’ use of the phrase “liberty of conscience”, including how it relates to freedom of religious expression.
- Analyze Anne Bradstreet’s attitudes of humble deference and sharp contention as expressed in the poem “Prologue” in terms of her overall goal for the poem.
- Analyze the extent to which Anne Bradstreet’s poetry reflects her Puritan thinking.
Lesson 1 Screencast

Lesson 1 Screencast

Before you begin reading, watch the screencast below. In it, I cover major themes and points to consider about each of the texts you will read for this lesson.

Lesson 1 Screencast (14 min)

Presentation Slides

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In preparation for reading the assigned works listed below, reflect on the following general points about the historical period and specific texts.

The authors covered in this lesson represent some of the earliest examples of Native Americans and colonists exploring their communal and personal identity. As you read Chapter 1 from A People's History of the United States, reflect on the perception of Christopher Columbus you had coming into the course, and how and if that perception changes as you read. Additionally, reflect how Howard Zinn constructs his own narrative of Columbus, utilizing quotes that show Columbus in a negative light. (I assigned this chapter not to persuade you to agree with Howard Zinn's account, but to introduce a perspective of Columbus that contrasts drastically with the one many of us learned as elementary school students. Ultimately, I want you to make up your own mind and come to your own opinion.) As you read Cotton Mather's and Roger Williams' texts, look for the ways the Puritan ideological principles of New World Consciousness and innate depravity influence the colonists' negative view of the Native Americans and the women accused of witchcraft. Finally, as you read the poetry of Anne Bradstreet, consider the extent to which Bradstreet's poetry reflects both the Puritan thinking we find in Cotton Mather's narrative as well as a confident assertiveness of her role as a female poet.

You should already have viewed the Lesson 1 Screencast, but I encourage you to review it and rewatch it as you work your way through the assigned readings. The screencast covers the key points to consider for each respective author and will help deepen your understanding of the selected texts.

Remember to take notes while reading. Doing so will help ensure that you do well on the short quiz (which covers only the assigned texts listed below) that you must complete before proceeding to the next lesson.

Now, stop and read the following:

- Howard Zinn, Chapter 1: Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress in A People's History of the United States
- Cotton Mather, from The Wonders of the Invisible World (pp. 149–155)
- Roger Williams, From A Key Into the Language of America, from "The Bloody Tenet of Persecution, for Cause of Conscience, in a Conference between Truth and Peace," and "A Letter to the Town of Providence" (pp. 102–109)
- Anne Bradstreet, all poems (pp. 110–123)