HMAN 1971F (= History 1973 Section U/ Crosslisted as HIST 1960W)

**World of Walden Pond: Transcendentalism as a Social and Intellectual Movement**

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World of Walden Pond examines the 19th century phenomenon of Transcendentalism: this country’s most romanticized religious, philosophical, and literary movement. Focusing especially on Emerson, Thoreau, and Fuller, we’ll examine the ideas of the Transcendentalists in the age of reform and evaluate the application of their principles to abolition, feminism, and nature. The central problem which they wrestled with will be the focus, too, of our investigations: the tension between individualism and conformity. **Note the mandatory paper due Sept. 10 (details below). Students should be prepared to do a fairly large amount of reading weekly and to participate actively in all discussions.**

Books to Buy:

* *The Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Modern Library Paperback Classics), [Brooks Atkinson](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-url/index=books&field-author=Atkinson%2C%20Brooks/102-0075400-2912136) editor, 0679783229
* *Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Other Writings*, (Modern Library, 2000) 0-679-78334-2
* Gura, Philip F (2007), *American Transcendentalism: A History*, New York: Hill and Wang paperback is: **ISBN-10:** 0809016443 Also available on Kindle cheap

RESERVE AT THE ROCK: ***NOTE***: **It is under HI 1973 Section U**

Class password is: emerson

* Bell Gale Chevigny, *The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller’s Life & Writings*
* Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*
* Daniel Walker Howe, What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848 **and on-line through the Rock**
* Kenneth S. Sacks, *Understanding Emerson: “The American Scholar” and His Struggle for Self-Reliance*
* Carolyn Karcher, *A Lydia Maria Child Reader*
* Carolyn Karcher, *The First Woman in the Republic: A Cultural Biography of Lydia Maria Child*
* Joel Myerson, *Transcendentalism: A Reader*
* *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, ed. Joel Myerson

At Rock Ref at PS 217.T7 094 3010 and also on-line

* Richard Francis, “The Ideology of Brook Farm” *Studies in the American Renaissance* 1977, 1-48 (also on Canvas)

Essential Websites: <http://www.transcendentalists.com/>

<http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transcendentalism/criticism/litcrit.html#emer>

**SHORT PAPERS:**

Every student is to post on Canvas a 350-500 word paper ***every week*** on one of the study questions for that week. Papers are due by 11:00 p.m. the night ***before*** the seminar.

1. I’ll assign different questions to different students each week.
2. Papers will be graded by: check, check plus, and check minus. Papers are to be posted on canvas by 11:00 pm on the Wednesday evening before the seminar. Papers posted after that but before the 4:00 seminar cannot receive higher than a check; papers posted anytime after the 4:00 seminar begins cannot receive higher than a check minus.

**DISCUSSION LEADERS:** After the first couple of weeks, students will lead the week’s discussion. Discussions will be based on the questions posed on the syllabus. Discussion leaders must *individually* take ownership of specific questions in leading part of each discussion. Your grade depends on it!

**Class rules:**

* ***Everyone is expected to do the readings weekly and participate actively in discussions*. This is Brown: take risks! If you don’t feel comfortable engaging actively in discussion weekly, this isn’t the right class for you.**
* I communicate on email and assume that that you check your account a couple times of day and that your brown.edu account will not be stuffed with so much email that it won’t accept anymore.
* We’ll take a short break half-way through the class. Please try to time bathroom breaks accordingly.
* No cell phone use during class except for emergencies. A seminar consisting of a professor with an open computer facing 20 other open computers is not conducive to discussing Transcendentalism. Therefore, most of the time we will have a “no computer zone.” So print out your notes and the ***primary texts****\** and have them ready to discuss:

***\* IMPORTANT: all readings emboldened & italicized are PRIMARY SOURCES posted on Canvas. These should be printed out and brought to class.***

* Anyone missing a class meeting must email me a three page discussion of that week’s reading by the next class meeting, along with a doctor’s note.
* No rescheduling of final exam: it’s a take home exam and you’ll have plenty of time to budget your time.

**Grading:**

Class leadership and participation: 50%

Short papers: 25%; Final Paper: 25%

**CLASS MEETINGS**

**Sept. 4th**: **Welcome & Organize**

**Mandatory: due by Wed. Sept 10 at 11:00 pm**

350-500 word paper uploaded on Canvas on:

What does Emerson mean in “The Transcendentalist” when he says: “You think me the child of my circumstances: I make my own circumstance”?

**Sept 11th: Religious & Philosophical Background (Sacks leading)**

Read in the following order:

Gura, intro, chapters 1 & 2

Sacks, *Understanding Emerson*, ch. 1 (Reserve)

Howe, chapters 5 and 12 (Reserve)

Canvas:

* Grey: Enlightenment and Scottish Common Sense Philosophy
* Martin Bickman “Transcendental Ideas”
* Ann Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement, 1830-1850*. cc. 1-2: read 21-top of 24 closely; skim the rest.

Emerson, “The Transcendentalist” in *Essential Writings of Emerson*

Emerson, *Nature* in *Essential Writings of Emerson* (the essay that starts on p. 3) &

read to p. 7 (introduction and c. 1)

Be prepared to discuss the following questions when reading “The Transcendentalist”:

1. What does Emerson mean when he says that “You think me the child of my circumstances: I make my own circumstance”?
2. What is the conflict between Locke and Kant and why is it important (also in Sacks and Bickman)?
3. How do Transcendentalists view social reform (see also Bickman)?

Be prepared to discuss the following questions when reading *Nature*:

1. What does E. mean by enjoying “an original relation to the universe” (3)?
2. How is E. a “transparent eyeball” and how can he then “nod” to nature (6)?

**Sept. 18th: America Builds an Identity: Struggling with Reform (Sacks leading; 1 page paper due)**

Thoreau, “Life Without Principle” in *Walden and Other Writings*

**Canvas:**

* ***Carlyle, The Age of Machinery 16-19; on Canvas called: Buell: Carlyle, 2x Full***
* ***Emerson, “The Young American (1844)***
* ***Emerson, Gloucester Lyceum talk 1850***
* Thomas Haskell, “Capitalism and the Origins of Humanitarian Sensibility” 1 & 2

1. How did America conceptualize its past and present?
2. Do Emerson and Thoreau conceptualize nature and commerce the same? Does Thoreau have Emerson in mind in his criticisms of “the best men that I know” (p. 759)?
3. What is modernity? Was Emerson’s America modern?
4. What, in Haskell’s argument, is “Recipe Knowledge,” (part 1, p. 357) and how does it constitute the psycho-sociological preconditions for reform (specifically, abolition)? How does capitalization and the growth of the markets come into play? Pay very close attention to these issues as we begin to confront Emerson and Thoreau on cultural modernity/capitalism and the marketplace/and reform.

**Sept. 25th: NO CLASS**

***But you are expected to read the following and write a FOUR (4) page paper due*** **Thursday SEPT 25TH at 4:00** on ***CANVAS*** on the following question:

What is the range of social and political reform issues confronting the ante-bellum U.S., mentioned in Thomas and Rose; and how did it related to “perfectionism” (as detailed by Thomas)? Were Thoreau and a Emerson impelled towards reform by some sort of "recipe knowledge"?

**Transcendentalism in its Immediate Social Context:**

Gura, chapter 4

Thoreau, “Civil Disobedience” in *Walden and Other Writings*

Canvas:

* ***Emerson, “Man the Reformer”***
* Digital History 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5
* John L. Thomas, “Romantic Reform in American, 1815-1865”
* Ann
* Rose, *Transcendentalism as a Social Movement*,chapter 3

1. What is the range of social and political reform issues confronting the ante-bellum U.S., mentioned in Thomas and Rose,
2. What, according to John Thomas, is “perfectionism” and how did it play out in American social reform? How do Lockean philosophy, perfectionism, revivalism, and the market economy help account for the rise of these reform movements?
3. What does Thoreau mean when he says, after leaving jail, that "I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax" (683)?
4. Emerson, in valorizing manual labor, includes "the negro" in his list of people who "have intercepted the sugar of the sugar, and the cotton of the cotton." He continues, "They have got the education, I only the commodity" (12). What does Emerson mean here and how does he treat slavery and reform generally? What, in fact, does he mean by the title, “Man the Reformer”?
5. Are Thoreau and Emerson impelled towards reform by a "recipe knowledge"?

**Oct. 2nd Emerson and Early Transcendentalism**

Sacks, *Understanding Emerson* (all): on reserve

Gura, ch. 4

Howe, chapter 16: on reserve

Emerson, “The American Scholar” and the Divinity School Address (called “An

Address”) in *Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*

My NPR interview on Emerson at:

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1274593>

Canvas:

* ***Andrews Norton, "The New School in Literature and Religion" (Myerson 246-250)***
* ***Perry Miller, Miracles readings: read esp. Andrews Norton***
* Harvard entrance exam of 1869 (probably more formalized than what Emerson took)
* Dereisiewicz
* Rothman
* Romeo

1. What, to Emerson, is self-reliance and does his life to 1838 help account for “The American Scholar” and the Divinity School Address? How is it that Emerson needed to become less self-reliant in order to preach self-reliance?
2. What was the problem with Emerson saying at the Divinity School that, “the very word Miracle, as pronounced by Christian churches, gives a false impression; it is Monster. It is not one with the blowing clover and the falling rain”(p. 68)? Does Andrews Norton have a point? Harold Bloom has said that Emerson invented the only truly American religion: self-reliance. How is that manifested in the Divinity School Address?
3. Think back to the Howe reading. Are the core messages of Emerson’s Divinity School Address extendable to a wider American audience (farmers, educated men, etc.) outside of Harvard and the Eastern elite? What aspects of the “common” experience of men does Emerson embrace? Why? What does he reject?
4. Consider the old Harvard entrance exam and Deresiewicz, Rothman, & Romeo: has education really changed? How valuable is Emerson’s critique in “The American Scholar”? What is the “job” of college?

**Oct. 9th:**  **Thoreau**

Review “Civil Disobedience”: ***this is essential***

From *Walden and Other Writings*:

Introduction by Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Walden* chapters entitled, Economy, Where I Lived, The Bean Field, The Pond in

Winter, and Conclusion; skim or read the rest (it’s all wonderful).

Read a biography at <http://www.thoreausociety.org/life-legacy> or <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_David_Thoreau>

On Canvas:

Pierre Hadot

Richardson’s discussions of *Walden* at: 254-55; 305-310 ; and 316-319

Sherman Paul

Voluntary readings:

Robert Gross, “Transcendentalism and Urbanism: Concord, Boston, and the Wider World”

Robert Gross, “‘The Most Estimable Place in All the World’ A Debate on Progress in Nineteenth-Century Concord”

1. What do you make of Thoreau’s admonition, “As long as possible live free and uncommitted. It makes but little difference whether you are committed to a farm or the county jail”? (p. 79) Is that how he understands “self-reliance”? (pp. 65-75) Is it similar to Emerson’s “self-reliance”? Consider that in his eulogy, Emerson writes, “I so much regret the loss of his rare powers of action, that I cannot help counting it a fault in him that he had no ambition. Wanting this, instead of engineering for all America, he was the captain of a huckleberry-party. Pounding beans is good to the end of pounding empires one of these days; but if, at the end of years, it is still only beans!”(xxviii)
2. Think **hard** about why Thoreau entitles his very first (and far the longest) chapter “Economy.” What does he mean by “economy of living?” and why, following his discussions of clothing, shelter, and food, does he conclude a chapter on economy with social observations (starting on p. 69)? “Where is the division of labor to end? and what object does it finally serve?” (44). How does this relate to the themes of labor and the market economy we’ve discussed thus far?
3. Richardson (310) states, “Walden is not about submission to nature, nor is it an effort to exalt the individual above the community. Nature teaches us to want to reach beyond nature.” In Emerson's eulogy, he says of Thoreau "His interest in the flower or the bird lay very deep in his mind, was connected with Nature—and the meaning of Nature was never attempted to be defined by him" (xxiii). What did Thoreau think of nature and how did it relate to the market economy?
4. Thoreau concludes that “I left the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seemed to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time in that one” (p. 303). Do you buy that explanation? Did his experiment in living deliberately succeed? Is that something that one could try, in one’s own way, today? (Richardson 316 ff.)

**OCT 16: NO CLASS** ***Fieldtrip to Concord. Saturday October 18th. It is an essential part of the course and everyone MUST attend.*** ***It is absolutely essential that everyone gather at Faunce Arch by 7:45 a.m. SHARP!! The bus will leave promptly, and we have left without students in the past.***

***THOSE WHO DO THIS ARE EXEMPT FROM THE PAPER FOR NEXT WEEK***

Field trip assignments (you must practice these ahead of time to assure that you speak for no more than THREE (3) minutes; points deducted for going on too long.)

* *describe creation of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery:* <http://www.concordma.com/magazine/summer03/sleepyhollowcemetery.html>

and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sleepy_Hollow_Cemetery_%28Concord,_Massachusetts%29>

* *talk about E’s aesthetics for the cemetery****:*** Nadenicek in Canvas: Fieldtrip Readings
* speak about one of the following people buried there at their grave sites (which you need to find) at:

<http://www.findagrave.com/php/famous.php?FScemeteryid=91709&page=cem>

Alcott Family; William Ellery Channing; Mary Moody Emerson; Daniel Chester French; Nathaniel and Sophia Hawthorne; Elizabeth Palmer Peabody; the Hoar Family (especially Samuel and Elizabeth); Mary Colman Wheeler

These will help for some:

* <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/famousSearch.cgi?mode=cemetery&FScemeteryid=91709>
* <http://www.graveaddiction.com/slhollow.html>
* <http://www.danielharper.org/yauu/2014/07/sleepy-hollow-cemetery/>
* Talk about the Minute Man Statue: who created it and why?
* Give us the background to Longfellow’s “Midnight Ride of Paul Revere”
* Old Manse: who has lived there? we aren’t going in, but we will see it from North Bridge

***EVERYONE MUST READ THE FOLLOWING:***

* Reread carefully “Civil Disobedience,” 682-685 (Thoreau in jail)
* Review *Walden*, “The Pond in Winter”
* Emerson’s Eulogy of Thoreau at the beginning of *Henry David Thoreau, Walden and Other Writings*
* “Concord Hymn” in *Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (707)
* Canvas: Fieldtrip Readings (all)
  + Robert Gross, “Transcendentalism and Urbanism: Concord, Boston, and the Wider World,”
  + Walt Whitman, “By Emerson’s Grave”
  + Bosco Concord
  + Important on “Concord Hymn”: Ziser World Revolutions
  + <http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h655.html>
  + Emerson’s address and dedication of Sleepy Hollow in: OTHER CONCORD MATERIALS 1 and 2
  + Print out maps

**Two PAGE paper emailed to me by 4:00 Oct 23 for those NOT giving reports:**

What did Emerson try to express in his “Concord Hymn”? How does what you experienced in Concord help you interpret the poem?

**Oct 23rd:** **Self-Reliance as a Way of Life**

Everyone, including those writing 2 page papers on field trip, must write 1 page paper on this week’s readings.

* Review Sacks, *Understanding Emerson* chapter 4
* “Self-Reliance” & “Compensation” in *Essential Writings of Emerson* (132-171)
* Review Thoreau’s “Life without Principle”
* Review *Walden*, 69-75
* Canvas:
* ***Emerson’s Journal, “A Self on Trial,” pp. 212-249 (Porte***
* ***Thoreau’s Journal: pp. 71-101, 116-119 (Shepard)***
* Sattelmeyer
  1. Define self-reliance. How do the iron laws in "Compensation" square with an attempt to be self-reliant? In “Self-Reliance,’ Emerson proclaims, “Trust thyself.” Does self-reliance lead to arrogance? What is the relationship between the self-reliant individual and the genius?
  2. What about the decision of Emerson, Thoreau, and other Transcendentalists to write journals reflects self-reliance? Pick 5 pages from both Emerson’s and Thoreau’s journals (don’t everyone pick the first 5 pages!) and be prepared to discuss your favorite entries. How did Emerson and Thoreau transform their thoughts from diary entry into essay or narrative form, and how successful is that transformation?
  3. Compare what Emerson and Thoreau say about women (Emerson journal Nov. 17, 1839 and Thoreau journal Jan. 31, 1852). What does Emerson say about marriage and other women (especially Margaret Fuller) and what can we learn from that? Thoreau proclaims that he does not wish to marry and raise a family. Are his ideas in any way applicable, then, to someone who wishes to support a family?
  4. What does Emerson mean by saying, “Society is everywhere in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members?” And what does he mean in his journal entry of December 25, 1939, Emerson wrote: “all life is a compromise.”

**Oct 30TH: Fuller**

Canvas:

***Bell Gale Chevigny, The Woman and the Myth: Margaret Fuller's Life and Writings, 31-51, 54-57, 66-83, 84-87, 90-101, 121-133, 142-160, 166-169, 173-174, 224-228, 237, 282-303, 366-401***. ***these are NOT posted in order on Canvas, but read them in order.***

Goodwin, Life of Fuller

Myerson, Life of Fuller

Capper, “Margaret Fuller as Cultural Reformer”

Fergenson, “Margaret Fuller in the Classroom: The Providence Period,”

Fuller, “Recollection of a Mystical Experience” in Buell, 158-161 **pdf called: Buell: Carlyle, 2x Full in “Fuller” Folder**

Urbanski “Ambivalence of Ralph Waldo Emerson towards Margaret Fuller,”

Jeffrey Steele, “Transcendental Friendship: Emerson, Fuller, and Thoreau”

1. What was Fuller's relationship with her parents? How did her relationship with her father contribute to her beliefs/personality sense of isolation? Compare the general tone of the autobiographical romance with actual letters to her father (Chevigny, 51-54). Did that isolation contribute to a sense of self-reliance?
2. How was Fuller's teaching at the Greene Street School related to Transcendentalism? Was it a successful method of pedagogy?

What were the Conversations? How were they a radical departure in feminist discourse and aspiration? (Pay close attention to the Capper article.) Class Leaders: Consider conducting such a Conversation for part of the class, such as Fuller did in Chevigny, 225-226. Look to a Platonic dialogue for inspiration; for example: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/plato-phaedo.txt

1. How did Fuller's social and political views change over her life? Was   
   she a revolutionary? Was she a transcendentalist?
2. How did Emerson and Fuller differ on the notions of friendship? Did erotic attachments between them and with others undermine or enhance both their theoretical and practical feelings of friendship?

**Nov 6th**: **Transcendentalism & Feminism**

Howe, “Finale: A Vision of the Future”

Canvas:

* [***Bell Gale Chevigny***](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/search-handle-url/index=books&field-author=Chevigny%2C%20Bell%20Gale/102-0075400-2912136)***, The Woman and the Myth, 210-223 & 237-289***
* Cole “Women’s Rights and Feminism*” in The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism,* ed. Joel Myerson
* Karcheron Child
* ***Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Woman”***
* ***Parker,*** [***A Sermon of the Public Function of Women***](http://www.vcu.edu/engweb/transweb/parkwomen.htm)
* ***Sophia Ripley, "Woman" (Myerson 314-318) in Feminism 1***
* Ronald Walters, *American Reformers,* part of c. 5.in Feminism 1
* Gustafson, “Choosing a Medium: Margaret Fuller and the Forms of Sentiment” in Feminism 1 and 2
* Gilbert, “‘Pierced by the Thorns of Reform’: Emerson on Womanhood,” in Feminism 2 and 3

1. How does Fuller view masculinity and femininity in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*? Was Fuller “masculine”, as she and many of her friends thought; or was that the only way to describe a liberated female at that time? (material from last week)
2. Is “Miranda’s” recollection of her childhood a fair and accurate one? How, in fact, can a child of either sex be raised freely?
3. Did Fuller lead a “feminist” life?
4. Were Emerson and Parker “feminists”? How did their view(s) differ from Fuller’s? Emerson and Parker both address differences between the natures of man and woman. Are their arguments beneficial or detrimental to the feminist cause?
5. Did Child's fight against slavery exemplify what Emerson and Parker described as

woman's natural capacity for abolition?

**Nov 13th:** **Abolition**

* Review “The Transcendentalist” from week 2, where Emerson talks about Transcendentalists joining reform movements.
* Review Sacks, *Understanding Emerson,* c. 3 & Thomas article from second week
* Gura: skim c. 8 and read c. 9
* Thoreau, “A Plea for Captain John Brown,” in *Walden and Other Writings*
* Emerson, *Essential Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, “1854,” p. 740
* Background: Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy* (on reserve) cc. 7, 18-20, 24
* Précis of Frank Sanborn’s personal account at:

<https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/4422>

read chapter 10 on kindle or ibooks, starting on p. 195.

CANVAS:

* Background on John Brown at: Richard Smith (our Thoreau!)
* The Secret Six on pbs
* ***Parker, “John Brown’s Expedition Reviewed”***
* ***Tom Foran Clark Sanburn***
* Petrulionis, “Antislavery Reform” in *The Oxford Handbook of Transcendentalism*, ed. Joel Myerson
* Ronald Walters, *American Reformers*, c. 4
* Emerson hissed at Harvard
* Gougeon, “Emerson, Thoreau, and Antislavery,
* Read Gougeon’s introduction, Thoreau, “Slavery in Massachusetts,” and Emerson “Lecture on Slavery” (both are in response to the Anthony Burns affair—or you can read the entire Thoreau address in *Walden and Other Writings*)
* Bush, “Emerson, John Brown, and ‘Doing the Word’
* Richardson, Thoreau, 368-373
* Ostrander, “Emerson, Thoreau, and John Brown,”
* ***Bell Gale Chevigny, The Woman and the Myth, 238-239***
* Buell Carlyle Fuller 2x: Fuller on Frederick Douglass

1. Review Emerson’s “Man the Reformer” (1841) from week 2 & compare his thoughts there with his 1855 “Lecture on Slavery.” What accounts for the difference in tone? *Importantly, decide precisely when Emerson and Thoreau began speaking publicly for abolition and why*.
2. The Fugitive Slave Law crisis of 1850 presents a moral (abstract) and social (practical) problem: what is the intellectual and moral position one must take when the state demands that you act in a repugnant way?
3. Review Thoreau’s *Civil Disobedience*. Consider what he writes there: “Law never made men a whit more just; and, by means of their respect for it, even the well-disposed are daily made the agents of injustice.” But also consider what he wrote in *Walden*: “What *good* I do, in the common sense of the word, must be aside from my main path, and for the most part wholly unintended” (*Walden*, p. 70). How can we reconcile Thoreau’s view of humanity’s place within nature with his passion for abolition?
4. How did Transcendentalists react to John Brown’s use of violence? What role can the idea of the martyr play in Transcendental thought?

**Nov 20th: Nature and Society**

**Nature:**

Review Thoreau’s *Walden*, especially “The Bean-Field” and “Pond in Winter”

Read new in *Walden* “Higher Laws”

Thoreau, “Walking”

Canvas:

* Newman Environmentalist Thought and Action
* Pollan, “Weeds are Us”
* Appreciate that Thoreau wrote more: Berman NY Times

1. Did Thoreau’s view of nature change? What is first and second nature and how does the distinction between them affect a view of environment?
2. What does Thoreau mean by his famous statement, “In Wilderness is the preservation of the world”?

**Utopianism**: a retreat to or from Nature?:

Gura, c. 6

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Ripley_%28transcendentalist%29>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amos_Bronson_Alcott>

**Canvas**:

* ***Alcott and Social Action: Myerson Fruitlands 428-429***
* *Ripley and Social Action*:
  + Francis, “The Ideology of Brook Farm”
  + Myerson, *Brook Farm* 1 and 2
  + Robinson, “Transcendentalism and the Utopian Philosophy”
  + Guaneri Brook Farm
  + ***Emerson on Fourierism***

1. Is Ripley's reasoning behind his community project similar to the reasoning behind Emerson’s abolitionism? How much does Ripley's opinion contrast with the opinion of Thoreau in "Walden?" Why did Emerson refuse to go to Brook Farm when he believed in the cause so much that he contributed money? (See his letter to Ripley)
2. What is the relationship between social structure & nature in Transcendentalism?

**Dec. 4th Public Intellectuals, Celebrities, and Bullies in a Democracy**

Gura, c. 11

CANVAS:

* ***Emerson, “Fate” and “Power”***

Giamatti, “Power, Politics and a Sense of History,” Wikipedia Giamatti and see who he was.

* Sacks: *Introduction* to *Emerson’s Political Writings*
* Howe-Marx: Emerson and Socialism: An Exchange,
* Boorstin: read 255-261 and skim rest of “A Flood of Pseudo-Events”: pay attention esp. to “Graphic Revolution”; Read “From Hero to Celebrity” carefully
* Cayton, “The Making of an American Prophet”
* Braudy *Frenzy of Renown*, 490-514

1. How does the cult of celebrity emerge in the 19th Century and what does it mean? Did Emerson fall prey to it, and, if so, how did it affect him?
2. Emerson was looked at for leadership in abolition, feminism, etc. How does the private non-governmental person become a “public” leader? What is the difference (if any) between a cultural leader and a celebrity? And what is the cost of either to society or the individual?
3. Was Emerson the bully that Giamatti believes he was? In “Fate” and “Power”, which one wins?
4. The distinguished political theorist George Kateb wrote: “Self-reliance is the soil and fruit and flower of modern democracy. If self-reliance is discredited, democracy is reduced. The status of Emerson is tied to the status of democracy.” (*Emerson and Self-Reliance,* 202). Discuss.

**Dec 11th Emerson’s Civil War: Natural Religion and Pragmatism**

Gura, c. 10

Background at Sean Wilentz, *Rise of American Democracy* **(on reserve) c. 25**

CANVAS:

* ***Emerson, English Traits: “Race”***
* ***Emerson, Representative Men: “Uses of Great Men”***
* ***Emerson, “Fortune of the Republic”***
* ***Emerson, “Natural Religion”***
* Braudy *Frenzy of Renown*, 445-449
* Menand intro. to Pragmatism: A Reader: “Introduction” pdf on Canvas
* American Pragmatism in Jame Konvitz, pp 11-12, 28-44

1. Compare Emerson’s rhetoric in *English Traits* and *Representative Men* with his earliest works, “The American Scholar” and “Self Reliance”. How did he approach the question of human freedom? What accounts for any “shift” in tone?
2. What is Emerson’s “natural religion” and how does it connect to his earliest beliefs? Consider then Emerson’s “Fortune of the Republic” and “Natural Religion”: are they closer in thought and tone to *English Traits* and *Representative Men* or to his earlier works? How might the Civil War account for that new shift?
3. William James discusses method, truth, and religion in American Pragmatism. How do they match up with Transcendentalist thought?
4. In concluding this course, do you think that Transcendentalism has anything to teach us about living today?

**Final Paper: Thursday, Dec 18th by 2:00 p.m. on *CANVAS***

Topic: Compose a three way correspondence among Emerson, Thoreau and Fuller. Use the material from the course to construct an authentic-sounding correspondence, reflecting the style and content of Transcendentalist discourse (for example, honest self-reflection; struggling with self-reliance versus social action, etc.). You may quote brief passages from actual works or letters (please footnote those), but you should also be inventive. Be sure to place the correspondence within an actual historical context. There must be ***at least*** six substantial letters (that is, at least two from each). Papers should be around 2000 words. There are ***no extensions on the deadline*** except for extremely well-documented medical emergencies. ***points deducted for late papers. Have fun***!