

English 360
B103 JFSB
MWF 8-8:50 AM

4164 JFSB
Office Hours: MW 9-10:30
hutchinz@byu.edu
Office: (801) 422-1359

AMERICAN LOVE LETTERS

Required Texts

The Algerine Spy in Pennsylvania, Peter Markoe (ISBN: 978-1-59-416063-9)
Ella Minnow Pea, Mark Dunn (ISBN: 978-0-38-572243-8)
Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, John Dickinson (ISBN: 978-1-14-071514-6)
Letters from an American Farmer, J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur (ISBN: 978-0-19-283898-9)
The Letters of Abigaill Levy Franks, 1733-1748, Abigaill Levy Franks (ISBN: 978-0300103458)
My Dearest Friend, John and Abigail Adams (ISBN: 978-0-67-405705-0)
Pamela, Samuel Richardson (ISBN: 978-0-14-043140-7)
The Power of Sympathy, William Hill Brown & *The Coquette*, Hannah Webster Foster
(ISBN: 978-0-14-043468-2)
To Marry an Indian, Theresa Strouth (ISBN: 978-0-80-785602-4)

Course Description

In a world where audiovisual forms of interpersonal communication (telephone and videoconferencing) are in the ascendancy and where dominant textual modes privilege brevity (email, Facebook posts, texts, and tweets), the letter—and particularly the handwritten letter—is increasingly an historical artifact rather than an object of current concern. This course will ask students to rediscover the value and unique power of epistolary writing by examining the letters that, quite literally, shaped our nation. During the formative period of United States history, no genre had a greater effect on the course of public affairs; letters to the editor entertained and mobilized the masses; private letters between powerful men and women swung votes and swayed policy, while epistolary novels advocated for social or political interests beneath a veneer of fiction. In stark contrast to this public sphere of letters, private epistles articulated the concerns and domestic struggles of citizens learning to cope with the new-found freedoms of the republic. We will read the love letters of John and Abigail Adams alongside novels of seduction by William Hill Brown and Hannah Webster Foster; we will read letters written for love of the United States (Peter Markoe and William Hill Brown) alongside letters written for love of a colonial North America lost during the Revolution (John Dickinson and J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur). By the end of this course students will be able to articulate the role that public and private letters played in shaping eighteenth-century history; describe the development of epistolary culture and the genre's distinguishing characteristics; and compose thoughtful, moving letters of their own.

Learning Outcomes for the English Major

1. English graduates will be able to read critically and analyze traditional literary genres and other forms of text.
2. English graduates will be able to develop and communicate their ideas clearly in writing. This includes sound sentence-level mechanics and style, a clear focus, and cohesive overall development.
3. English graduates will be able to identify and evaluate appropriate research sources, incorporate these sources into well-documented formal academic writing, and formulate their own arguments based at least in part on those sources.

4. English majors will gain an understanding of literary and cultural theories and methods that will manifest itself in the critical sophistication of their written work.
5. English graduates will demonstrate, where applicable, an understanding of the historical development of literature written in English and be able to identify and discuss representative authors, works, and movements.
6. English graduates will engage with literature as a source of practical wisdom, spiritual insight, and aesthetic pleasure, as a vital perspective upon history and the diversity of human experience, and as a guide for making ethical choices in their daily lives.

Participation

You are expected to complete the assigned reading prior to each class and to bring the text with you to class. During class, I will frequently ask you to refer to the text in order to answer a question or to read a particularly potent passage aloud. As it is difficult to read or refer to a text you do not have with you, you will not receive credit for your attendance if you leave the text in question at home and cannot participate in class.

In order to receive credit for attending and participating in class, you will also need to buy a pack of 3x5 note cards. Each day when you enter the classroom, you will hand me a note card with your name and an argumentative thesis statement or a question pertaining to the day's assigned reading; **folded up sheets of paper will not be accepted.** I will use these note cards to track your attendance and to guide our class discussions. If we had read Langston Hughes' "I, Too" for that day's class, you might argue, "In 'I, Too,' Langston Hughes appropriates the prophetic mantle and uniquely American style of Walt Whitman," or ask, "Does the 'too' in Langston Hughes' 'I, Too,' refer to a specific person and poetic predecessor, or does it refer more broadly to a class and race?" The arguments and questions that you share on these note cards will provide you with daily practice in the type of close reading which I will expect in your papers. These note cards will also be used to conduct regular reading quizzes; on days when such a quiz is to be administered, I will not collect your note card until after the quiz has been completed.

If you miss more than **four** classes during the semester, you will lose three points off your final grade and three points for every subsequent absence. Students who miss **ten** or more classes will automatically fail the course. If you do happen to miss class, understand that you are not excused from the material covered or the assignments due. Make arrangements for your work to be turned in on time, and borrow notes from classmates. Emailing me to ask "What did I miss?" is not a good idea; I hold class specifically so that you don't have to "miss" anything, and if you choose not to attend my class, I am disinclined to offer a repeat performance for your benefit. You should also arrive on time to every class. Two tardies are equivalent to an absence.

Due Dates

Some assignments have specific due dates, listed in both the assignment description and course schedule. All other written assignments for this class must be turned in before 4 PM on the last day of class, **4/11**. I will not assign any other due dates. However, because turning in at least one assignment during the first weeks of the semester may help students to better understand instructor expectations and because some students work more effectively under pressure, you will be given the opportunity to create your own due dates, allowing you to optimize your learning experience. On the second day of class, you must turn in a completed "Class Contract" (available online) indicating the date on which you will turn in each essay for which I have not already assigned a due date. Once delivered to me, the due dates you select become binding. Before turning in the contract, please record the due dates that you have selected in a personal calendar, as I will not re-post them online. **Because you have complete control over due dates, late assignments will not be accepted. There are no exceptions to this policy. Work is considered late at**

any point after 4 PM on the due date you select. You are, of course, always welcome to turn in work early.

Assignments

All papers should be typed in 12 point Times New Roman and double spaced, in proper MLA format (one inch margins, page numbers, parenthetical citations, titles and headings). To ensure that you receive credit for all of your good work, you should staple your papers before arriving in class. Electronic copies of your work will only be accepted in dire emergencies or if a hard copy will soon arrive in my box. **For any assignment you complete with a stipulated word count, you MUST include a word count at the end of your paper.** During the semester you will complete the following assignments:

- **Reading Quizzes. (10%)** During the semester you will have 12 unannounced quizzes testing your knowledge of the day's reading. These quizzes are not meant to trick you; they are a reward for being prepared, easy points for those who read. There are no makeup quizzes; your top 10 grades will be kept; the worst two grades will be discarded. *See Learning Outcome 1.*
- **Take Home Final Exam. (15%)** For this assignment you will read the brief epistolary novel *Ella Minnow Pea* and respond to an essay prompt that asks you to consider *EMP* in terms of the American epistolary tradition. You are, of course, more than welcome to read *EMP* before the date of the final, but the exam prompt will not be distributed until the last day of class. *See Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5.*
- **Letters to Me. (4%)** You will write eight letters during the course of the semester. Your first (**due 1/6**) and last (**due with the Final Exam**) letters will be addressed to me. In approximately 500 (typed) words, your first letter should A) introduce yourself; B) describe your past experience with letters (Have you ever received them? Sent them? Why? To whom?); C) explain why you're taking this class; and D) state how you hope to change as a result of this class. In approximately 500 (typed) words, your second letter should A) bid me farewell; B) express gratitude for those aspects of the class which you have enjoyed and found beneficial; C) offer candid suggestions for improving the class; and D) provide an honest assessment of your own effort level and personal growth (or lack thereof). Most students who write letters that fulfill the above criteria will receive a B+ (which I consider a relatively positive/neutral grade). Exceptional letters (**Not** exceptionally flattering—exceptionally well-written. And yes, this miniscule aspect of your grade is completely subjective.) will receive an A; letters that do not fulfill the assignment well or that reflect a disregard for spelling and proper usage may receive a grade lower than B+. *See Learning Outcomes 2, 6.*
- **Personal Letters. (3%)** Write and mail/deliver three letters, each of which should be at least 500 typed words or one full handwritten page, to an individual or individuals of your choice. To receive credit you **MUST** email me to indicate that you have **ALREADY** mailed or delivered your letter by 4 PM on the due date you have assigned yourself for each of these three letters. *See Learning Outcomes 2, 6.*
- **Letter to an 18th Century Editor. (16%)** In up to 1,000 words write a letter to the editor of an eighteenth-century newspaper in response to one of the following topics: the Albany Plan of Union; the First Rhode Island Regiment; the Capitol building's cornerstone dedication ceremony; or, the XYZ affair. You will sign up for a topic in class on **1/18**. Your letter should be dated, signed, and addressed to a specific audience. It will be graded—by me and by three of your peers—using a rubric available on Blackboard, which you should consult before completing the assignment. This assignment is due **ELECTRONICALLY** on Blackboard at midnight on **2/8**. The electronic copy should **NOT** have your name attached to it; it should be identifiable only by **BYU ID #**. A paper copy, with your name attached is due to me in class

- on 2/10. As preparation for our conferences on 2/10 and 2/13, each student will use the rubric to grade three of her classmates' editorials, one from each of the three historical topics she did NOT write on. You should bring those three completed rubrics to class on 2/10 and turn them in to me. During our two days of in-class conferences I will invite each topical group of students (everyone who wrote editorials on the XYZ affair, for instance) to the front of the room, where they will briefly summarize the content of their editorials ("I opposed the formation of the First Rhode Island Regiment because . . ." or "I supported the formation of the First Rhode Island Regiment because . . ." or "I warned of X consequence attendant upon the forming of the First Rhode Island regiment. . ."), after which I will invite class members to question the editorialists. *See Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3.*
- **Thank-you Note. (1%)** Write and mail/deliver one thank you note of at least 5 sentences to an individual who has NOT recently performed a service or given you anything tangible. You may thank the individual for his/her example or for a significant gift/service/lesson that you received in the distant past. To receive credit you MUST email me to indicate that you have ALREADY mailed or delivered your letter by 4 PM on the due date you have assigned yourself. *See Learning Outcomes 2, 6.*
 - **Handwritten Love Letter. (1%)** Write and mail/deliver one handwritten letter that covers at least one full 8½ x 11 page expressing your love for the recipient and discoursing on the virtues of the recipient's character. Those of you without an appropriate romantic interest are welcome to express love for a parent, sibling, child, or other significant presence in your life. To receive credit you MUST email me to indicate that you have ALREADY mailed or delivered your letter by 4 PM on the due date you have assigned yourself. *See Learning Outcomes 2, 6.*
 - **Critical Essays. (45%)** Our readings for the semester can be divided into three general categories: public, political letters; personal letters written to a family member or friend; and romantic, epistolary fiction. You will write three critical essays of at least 1,800 words on a letter or series of letters from each one of these categories. These essays should address a significant theme or question evident in the language of the text; your discussion of that theme/question MUST be contextualized with three or more **substantial, peer-reviewed secondary sources**. Essays will be graded using the Critical Analysis Rubric available online. *See Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.*
 - **Revised Essay. (5%)** Using my feedback as a prompt, substantially revise the ideas, organization, and language of one critical essay. When you turn in your revised essay, it should be attached to the original essay, with feedback and rubric. The revised essay should identify altered text in **BOLD** unless doing so would leave the majority of the essay in **boldface**. I will grade, comment on, and return the original essays as soon as possible, but this rewrite must be turned in no later than the course's university-scheduled final exam period, which means that individuals who turn all three critical essays in on the last day of class will have less time to rewrite the essay. Your grade for this assignment will not be a second grade on the essay itself, but rather a subjective assessment of the degree to which your revisions improved the essay. A good essay made excellent will receive the same positive assessment that a mediocre essay made good receives; I will not penalize writers who turned in excellent textual analyses the first time. *See Learning Outcomes 2, 4*

Grading Standards

At BYU, a grade of "A" indicates that student performance is "Excellent," a grade of "B" equates to "Good" performance, and a grade of "C" indicates that student performance is merely "Satisfactory." I understand the use of the word "good" in the sense defined by the *American Heritage Dictionary*: "superior to the average." Accordingly, in order to earn a grade of "B" or higher, you must submit above-average work on a consistent basis. If you understand the definition of "average," you should be able to

figure out that most of the students in most of my classes will receive a grade lower than “B”; the odds against an entire class being “above-average” are astronomical. You should also know, however, that I do not subject your GPA to any rigors I myself do not endure. There is always a good chance that a class will collectively receive above average grades. There is absolutely no chance that the English department will collectively receive above average student ratings. Exactly half of English faculty will receive below average ratings in any given semester; exactly half will receive above average ratings.

Plagiarism

Students will avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Plagiarism consists of the intentional or inadvertent submission of another’s work as your own. Two examples of plagiarism are turning in a paper or parts of a paper purchased on or copied from the internet or from another student, and failing to adequately cite quoted or paraphrased source material in an otherwise original paper. I actively seek out plagiarism in student writing, and if I suspect plagiarism, I will interview the student or students involved. You should know that plagiarism personally offends me; I work very hard to detect it. It will be more difficult for you to cheat without my knowledge than it will to do the actual assignment—so don’t take that risk.

The Writing Center

As a former tutor at the BYU Writing Center, I think very highly of the services they offer and STRONGLY encourage you to take advantage of their skills. I recommend that you take each of your papers there at least once before submitting them to me because there is nothing that will help you to improve more quickly as a writer than discussing an actual piece of your writing one-on-one with someone who can help you to see its strengths and weaknesses.

Student Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this course, you should get in touch with the Office of Services for Students (1520 WSC). This office can evaluate your disability and assist me in arranging for reasonable accommodations.

Sexual Harrassment

Sexual discrimination or harassment (including student-to-student harassment) is prohibited both by the law and by Brigham Young University policy. If you feel you are being subjected to sexual discrimination or harassment, please bring your concerns to me. Alternatively, you may lodge a complaint with the Equal Employment Office (D-2409C ASB) or with the Honor Code Office (4440).

Schedule

Week	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
1/2, 4, 6	NO CLASS	Introduction	Dierks, <i>In My Power</i> , Preface & Introduction; Phillis Wheatley & Samson Occom Letters; 1st Letter to Me
1/9, 11, 13	Spectator 1-4	Silence Dogood Letters 1-7	Silence Dogood Letters 8-14
1/16, 18, 20	NO CLASS— Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	<i>Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania</i> , 1-7; Sign-up for Letter to the Editor Topics	<i>Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania</i> , 8-12

1/23, 25, 27	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> , 1	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> , 2-3	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> , 4-8
1/30, 2/1, 3	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> , 9-10	<i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> , 11-12	<i>The Algerine Spy</i> , 1-7
2/6, 8, 10	<i>The Algerine Spy</i> , 8-15	<i>The Algerine Spy</i> , 16-24 Letter to the Editor due online	Letters to the Editor Conference; Letter to the Editor due in Class
2/13, 15, 17	Letters to the Editor Conference	<i>Letters of Abigaill Levy Franks</i> , 1-80	<i>Letters of Abigaill Levy Franks</i> , 81-161
2/20, 22, 24	NO CLASS—President’s Day	<i>A Father’s Legacy to His Daughters</i> , Introduction & “Friendship, Love, Marriage”	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 3-28;
2/27, 29, 3/2	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 28-92	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 93-200;	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 201-58
3/5, 7, 9	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 259-311	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 313-93	<i>My Dearest Friend</i> , p. 395-479;
3/12, 14, 16	<i>To Marry an Indian</i> , Introduction	<i>To Marry an Indian</i> , 79-143;	<i>To Marry an Indian</i> , 153-203
3/19, 21, 23	<i>Pamela</i> , thru 121	<i>Pamela</i> , thru 231	No Class—Departmental Symposium
3/26, 28, 30	<i>Pamela</i> , thru 320	<i>Pamela</i> , thru 434	<i>Pamela</i> , thru END;
4/2, 4, 6	<i>Pamela</i> Roundtable on Gender	<i>The Power of Sympathy</i> , thru 53	<i>The Power of Sympathy</i> , thru 103
4/9, 11, 13	<i>The Coquette</i> , thru 172	<i>The Coquette</i> , thru 242	COURSE OVER; 2nd Letter to Me due with the Final Exam.

Class Contract

By signing this contract, I agree to turn in all assignments before **4 PM on April 11, 2011** or 4 PM on the date(s) which I have selected below, whichever is earlier, and to accept full responsibility for whatever illness, acts of nature, or family emergencies might arise during the course of the semester. I have carefully considered the workload that I am carrying this semester and have budgeted all the time necessary to successfully complete these assignments while still fulfilling all other extant, anticipated, and unanticipated commitments this semester. I have also read and pondered the research of Dan Ariely:

“We found that the students in the class with the three firm deadlines got the best grades; the class in which I set no deadlines at all (except for the final deadline) had the worst grades; and the class in which Gaurav and his classmates were allowed to choose their own deadlines finished in the middle, in terms of their grades for the three papers and the final grade.

“What do these results suggest? First, that students do procrastinate (big news); and second, that tightly restricting their freedom (equally spaced deadlines, imposed from above) is the best cure for procrastination. But the biggest revelation is that simply **offering the students a tool by which they could precommit to deadlines helped them achieve better grades.**

“What this finding implies is that the students generally understood their problem with procrastination and took action to fight it when they were given the opportunity to do so, achieving relative success in improving their grades. But why were the grades in the self-imposed deadlines condition not as good as the grades in the dictatorial (externally imposed) deadlines condition? My feeling is this: not everyone understands their own tendency to procrastinate, and even those who do recognize their tendency to procrastinate may not understand their problem completely. Yes, people may set deadlines for themselves, but not necessarily the deadlines that are best for getting the best performance.

“When I looked at the deadlines set by the students in Gaurav’s class, this was indeed the case. Although the vast majority of the students in this class spaced their deadlines substantially (and got grades that were as good as those earned by students in the dictatorial condition), some did not space their deadlines much, and a few did not space their deadlines at all. These students who did not space their deadlines sufficiently pulled the average grades of this class down. Without properly spaced deadlines—deadlines that would have forced students to start working on their papers earlier in the semester—the final work was generally rushed and poorly written.” (*Predictably Irrational*, pp. 115-16)

I will mail **Personal Letter #1** on _____.

I will turn in **Critical Essay #1** on _____.

I will mail **Personal Letter #2** on _____.

I will turn in **Critical Essay #1** on _____.

I will mail **Personal Letter #3** on _____.

I will turn in **Critical Essay #1** on _____.

I will mail my **Thank-you Note** on _____.

Non-binding, estimated **Rewrite** date: _____.

I will mail my **Love Letter** on _____.

Name

Signature

Lesson Goals/Objectives:

Readings/Preparation/Materials/Handouts: **Rhetoric of Sexual Slavery Handout**

Segment #0 Title/Name: **QUIZ**

of minutes: 5

Segment #0 Description: We learn at the end of the novel that Fatima has changed her name. **What is at least ONE of the reasons behind her name change?** As a sign of her freedom from slavery, as a token of her conversion to Catholicism

Segment #1 Title/Name: **No really, you should thank me! (Socratic Exchange)**

of minutes: 10

Segment #1 Description: We've talked about this at least a little bit, but refresh my memory: **Why is Markoe writing these letters? And why is he writing from the point of view of an Algerine Muslim?**

Among other reasons, Markoe writes—and writes from this perspective—in order to provide a cultural critique, to estrange practices that might seem OVERLY normal to his audience. This might seem normal to us, but it was anything but in the eighteenth century. **If you were to criticize the monarchy in the seventeenth, eighteenth centuries, what would happen?** At best, social ostracization. At worst, death, as Markoe reminds us on p. 93. But, in the United States—in a republic, where we're not depending on the virtue of a single man, but the virtue and collective wisdom of an entire nation—criticism of any SINGLE individual's ideas/policies makes sense, and is even necessary. In other words, Markoe (a journalist) is one of the first to identify the key functions of the FOURTH BRANCH of government. **Anyone ever heard that phrase, know what it means?** The Fourth Branch refers (most often) to the press, and Markoe refers to the benefits of journalistic freedom on pp. 65-66.

Segment #2 Title/Name: **Fatima and Mehemet's Women (Class Discussion)**

of minutes: 15

Segment #2 Description: The press served to preserve freedom, to watch government and prevent any one individual from seizing power, from tyrannizing the population. I want to move now from the press's role in protecting freedoms to what might seem like a wholly unrelated topic: women and Fatima.

What do we know about Fatima? What are some of the occasions when we see Mehemet interact with women?

FATIMA: On p. 31, we learn that is reserved, quiet. On p. 46, we learn that she's wife #1, that she's beautiful. On p. 82, we learn that she has written several letters to him (but he only ever writes one to her). She's an attentive mother, which he resents as being an improper gift/expenditure of herself (which should be reserved for him). On p. 120, we learn that she really was a slave/unwilling partner of the 60-year-old Mehemet.

WOMEN: On pp. 28-29, his first encounter with Western women, Mehemet is shamed and overwhelmed. On pp. 40-45, he watches a dance and comes away charmed. In his letter to Fatima, on pp. 84-85, Mehemet reverts to his sensualist Oriental ways, but on the whole you get the sense that his encounters with Western women have both charmed and shamed him—that he's realized the inappropriateness of his prior behavior/outlook on women.

Mehemet's ultimate conversion to Christianity, democracy, and women's rights is a fairly typical ending for contemporary Anglophone depictions of oriental culture. **DISTRIBUTE Rhetoric of Sexual Slavery Handout.**

Notwithstanding Markoe's (offensive) depictions of women and relations between the sexes, I think we should read this novel as a text that TRIES—whether or not you think it succeeds—to advocate for sexual equality as one aspect of a free, republican society. In other words, I think that Markoe's portrayal of Fatima and Mehemet's reform, as much as his satire and encomiums on the press, are meant to uphold and establish freedom.

Segment #3 Title/Name: **FORTUNATE FALL (Socratic Exchange)**

of minutes: 10

Segment #3 Description: Any claim that this book makes to advance the cause of equality is predicated on Mehemet's reform, but **who remembers WHY Mehemet converts, assimilates?**

On p. 112, we learn that Mehemet has been betrayed, accused of converting and fleeing the Dey's authority. **Where does this accusation come from?** It originates with that Rabbi, who told a story of Lileth and Adam. Mehemet had unkind words regarding this Rabbi, and the Rabbi took his revenge. I think the context of Mehemet's FALL from grace is particularly significant. We get a

story of a tyrannical man (Adam/Mehemet), who's sexually oppressing a woman (Lileth/Fatima) and is therefore undone. There's certainly a bit of irony here—that Mehemet, who recognized the injustice of the Rabbi's story, couldn't see that it was really a story of his own life—but there's also a message of hope.

Mehemet's betrayal is clearly a type of Fall. Remember the Adam/Lileth parallels? Well, there seems to be a second set of parallels in Fatima's escape with Alvarez. **What is Alvarez?** A gardener, just like Adam—who leaves the garden because of a sexual transgression. So we have these two sets of people—Mehemet, Alvarez and Maria—who have fallen, but Markoe insists on **p. 122** that this is NOT a Fall. (Note that RUIN is Latin for fall.) At the very least, it is a FALL FORWARD, a FORTUNATE FALL.

Whereas **Crevecoeur** insisted that there could be no return to the garden, that the US was stuck in a cycle of degeneracy, Markoe sees the US as a place where old things ARE made new, where there IS a happy ending, where Eden CAN be regained. It's a much more optimistic work written at a much more optimistic time—not in the midst of a bloody war that cost both sides significantly, but at a time when independence was secure, and an old, imperfect system of government was giving way to a new.

Segment #4 Title/Name: **Cultural Toleration or Imperialism? (Class Discussion)**

of minutes: 15

Segment #4 Description: I want to close our discussion of this text by talking about the ethics of representation and assimilation. Markoe touts the virtues of tolerance, and the implication of this book is that ANYONE can become an American. On the one hand, this seems like a very positive, welcoming attitude. On the other hand, becoming an American involves religious and political conversion.

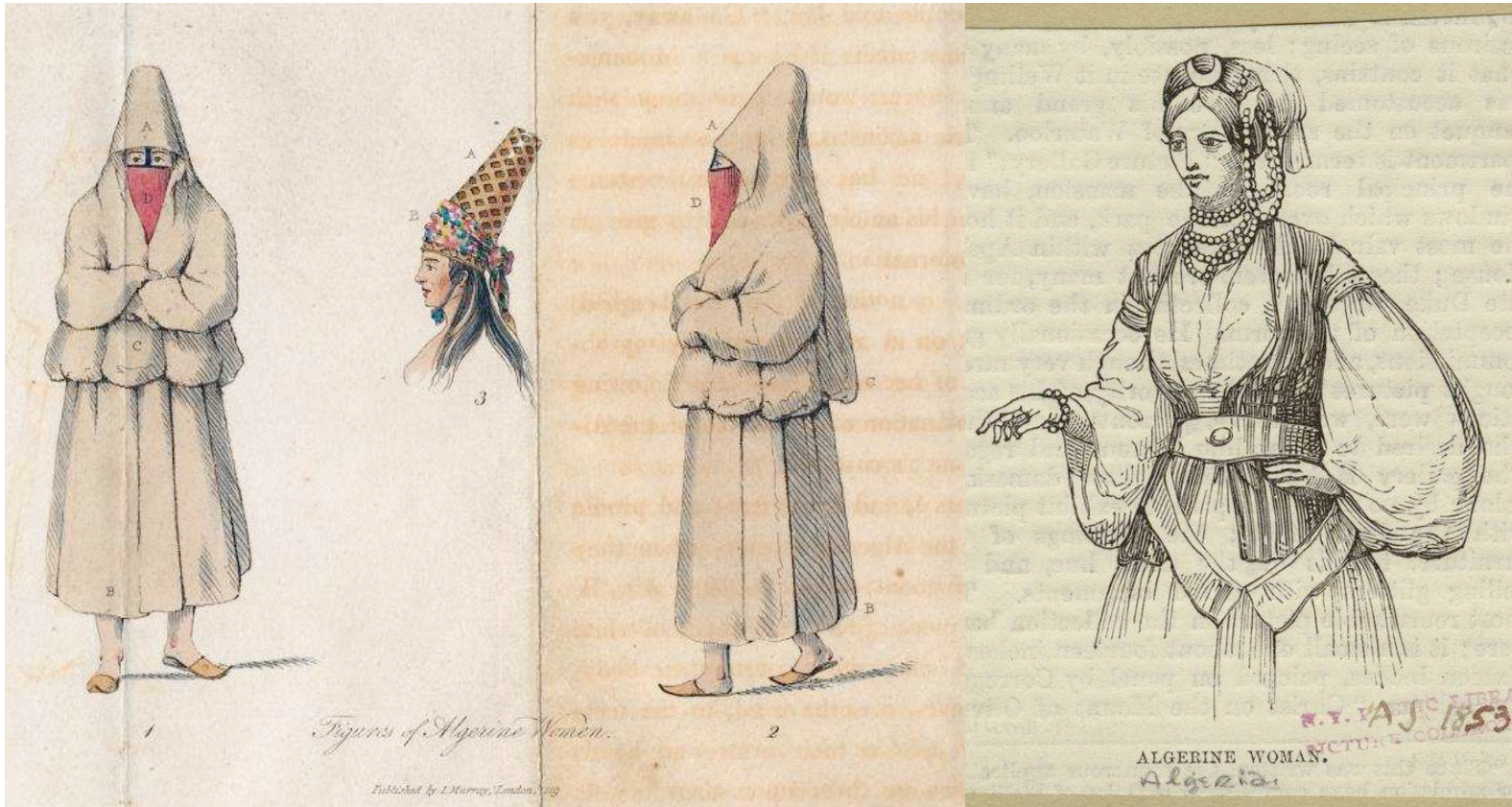
So is this book Cultural Toleration and Cosmopolitanism or Cultural Imperialism?

And, in a related query, is it ethical for Markoe to assume the identity of someone from another cultural sphere at all? Is it okay for me to write a first person narrative from a woman's point of view? From an African American's? From a Jew's?

If I do it, can those words ever be "authentic"? Worth reading?

Curtain Down (5 minutes): Come with your letters/the graded letters of those you're evaluating next class period and be ready to present on your historical topic.

The Rhetoric of Sexual Slavery



Eighteenth-century descriptions of oriental culture invariably included one or more accounts of a seraglio, or harem; Western commentators complained about the sexual excesses of Islamic men, and fictional portrayals of the seraglio generally depicted rebellious women who resisted or overthrew the repressive demands of a husband or suitor. English and American advocates for women's rights regularly compared the plight of western women to the bondage of a sultan's sexual slaves, suggesting that Christian patriarchal culture differed only in degree, not kind, from its Islamic counterpart. After the female protagonist resists a sultan's coercive invitation to join his harem, Susanna Rowson ends her 1794 play, *Slaves in Algiers*, with an invitation to invert the hierarchy entrenched in patriarchal institutions such as the seraglios she's just depicted:

Well, Ladies tell me—how d'ye like my play?
“The creature has some sense,” methinks you say;
“She says that we should have supreme dominion,
And in good truth, we're all of her opinion.
Women were born for universal sway,
Men to adore, be silent, and obey.
[. . .]
To raise the fall'n—to pity and forgive,
This is our noblest, best prerogative.
By these, pursuing nature's gentle plan,
We hold in silken chains—the lordly tyrant man.

The victory of virtuous Christian women over Islamic despots was understood as a triumph over tyranny in all aspects (including the tyranny of monarchical or aristocratic government), and republican writers frequently made common cause with advocates for gender equality, jointly emphasizing the need for well educated women willing and able to promote the twin causes of honor and freedom.

Student Name: _____
Critical Analysis Rubric

	1	2	3	4	5	Multiplier
Interpretation & Argument	The paper summarizes the content of a text; if there is an original argument or connections to larger ideas or social issues, they are poorly reasoned and developed. Or, the essay concentrates on modern issues, using the text to talk about current social conditions/problems.		The paper fails to fully persuade; it lacks a unified or sophisticated argument. It repeats arguments made during class or restates points made explicitly in primary or secondary sources. The argument's relation to historical contexts, its significance to critical conversations is unclear.		The paper presents several of the student's own original and socially significant insights into the content and form of the text in a sophisticated, persuasive, unified argument, then contextualizes and connects those insights to current critical conversations (or highlights a hole in criticism).	___ x 4=
Organization	The thesis is difficult to find or non-existent. There is no logical progression to the arguments presented. The paper follows no discernible organizational strategy.		Intro is too short, long, or general. The thesis is weak. Some body paragraphs lack strong topic sentences and/or a unifying idea. The transitions between them are choppy. They lack conclusion sentences. Concluding paragraphs introduce new evidence or fail to provide outside context. Paragraphs follow the plot sequentially or catalog characters even when that is not the best organizational strategy.		Intro paragraph(s) provide a brief intro to and summary of a problem and end with an important, argumentative solution (thesis). Body paragraphs are driven by strong, argumentative topic sentences and transition smoothly. Concluding paragraphs restate the thesis and explain its significance to current criticism. The paper is logically organized.	___ x 4=
Primary Sources	There are no quotations. If quotations are employed, they do little or nothing to illustrate the argument in the thesis. The primary evidence provided is a summary of textual content. No citations.		The body paragraphs have some quotations, but these selections provide limited support for the thesis, are too few in number, and may be poorly introduced or cited. Too many block quotes.		Each body paragraph includes primary evidence (usually at least 2 short quotes or 1 long quote). These selections provide the best possible proof for the argument stated in the thesis and are well contextualized.	___ x 3=
Secondary Sources	There are too few secondary sources; or an inappropriate reliance on ONE source; or sources are uniformly of poor quality; or sources are consistently irrelevant to the argument and surrounding text. There are no citations.		Many sources are of questionable value, old, or irrelevant to the point being made in the paragraphs. The essay's contribution to critical conversations is unclear, or its importance not established. Quotes are poorly introduced or cited.		Most body paragraphs either quote, paraphrase, or allude to secondary sources discussed earlier in order to contextualize or support arguments. Sources are recent, reputable, and relevant, and are used in intro and conclusion paragraphs to establish the essay's importance.	___ x 3=
Analysis	There is little or no analysis; instead, the writer simply restates the evidence in his or her words without explaining why the evidence is present or what it means.		The discussion of evidence is overly brief, unpersuasive, or fails to fully explicate the evidence's relevance to the paper's argument.		The discussion of evidence is rich and detailed, offering new insights into the text. Supporting quotations are carefully explicated and related back to the thesis.	___ x 3=
Language	The essay is riddled with grammatical errors and or spelling mistakes. There are multiple spelling errors, incomplete or run-on sentences. Sentences are rudimentary or overly complex and confusing.		There is one spelling error, incomplete/run-on sentence or other easily identifiable mistake. Alternatively, there are a host of less obvious grammar mistakes. Individual sentences are repetitive, over-wordy, dependant on vague pronouns, or employ passive voice in excess; paragraphs are formulaic, repeating the central argument ad nauseam.		The paper is flawless; it is properly formatted and cited, and there are no spelling errors, incomplete sentences, or obvious mistakes. Any grammar mistakes are so minor as to be unnoticeable. The writer employs dynamic verbs in varied sentence structures to hold the reader's interest. I want to shout "Hallelujah!" after reading your paper.	___ x 3=
Total						

Flip for additional comments.

Student Name: _____
Letter to an 18th-Century Editor: Rubric

	1	2	3	4	5	Multiplier
Historical Grounding	The letter reflects a lack of understanding of one or more important aspects of the historical event. Major players are mis- or unidentified. The letter includes multiple significant errors or anachronisms.		The letter reflects a basic understanding of some important aspects of the historical event; it gives too little historical background or nothing but background. It misses one or more important issue. The author identifies some critical groups / parties / individuals, perhaps with minor errors. Writing reflects a Wikipedia-level familiarity with the topic. The letter includes one or more anachronisms.		The letter reflects a sophisticated understanding of the most salient issues relevant to this historical event, providing a brief account of actions / proposals as they have unfolded thus far. The author identifies and situates herself with respect to the pivotal groups / political parties / individuals at the center of this event. Writing has clearly been prefaced by significant research in primary and secondary sources.	__ x 4=
Argumentation	There is no central point. There are no (potential) opposing arguments. There are no stakes. There is only summary.		Either the central point of the letter is not clear, or it is not persuasively argued. Opposing viewpoints are ignored, or the letter fails to challenge them effectively. The stakes of this argument—the consequences of acceptance / rejection—are unclear or missing.		The letter persuasively makes a clear, relevant point. Potential counter-arguments are acknowledged and persuasively refuted. Recommendations, and / or a simple plan of action, are presented, with consequences of its acceptance / rejection clearly delineated.	__ x 4=
Evidence	The letter's argument is supported by bad evidence that would not have been available to an eighteenth-century writer, or there is no evidence.		The letter's argument is supported by compelling evidence that would NOT have been available to an eighteenth-century writer, or they employ brilliant logic without supporting evidence, or the letter employs an abundance of evidence that is not particularly compelling.		The letter's arguments are supported by compelling evidence that would have been available to an eighteenth century writer, including well-known facts, basic math, and quotes from the Bible or other influential books published before the letter's date (legal documents such as the Magna Carta or Blackstone's <i>Commentaries</i> and philosophical writings by Hume, Locke, etc. are especially encouraged here).	__ x 4=
Artfulness	Even obvious opportunities to highlight the letter's artfulness are undeveloped; or, the letter is such a mish-mash of allusions that the reader would require hours just to decode all of them; literary allusions and devices confound rather than clarify.		Obvious opportunities for artistic development are well used, but the letter does not deploy other recognizable literary allusions or devices. If the letter does use literary allusions or devices, they are obscure or otherwise ineffective.		Obvious opportunities for artistic development—the date, address, and signature—are well used. In addition, the letter bolsters its arguments with significant, recognizable literary allusions and / or devices (metaphor, personification, etc.)	__ x 4=
Language	The paper's MODERN ENGLISH is bad; there are easily identifiable mistakes. Individual sentences are repetitive, over-wordy, dependant on vague pronouns, or employ passive voice in excess; paragraphs are formulaic, repeating the central argument ad nauseam.		The paper's MODERN ENGLISH is flawless; there are no spelling errors, incomplete sentences, or obvious grammatical mistakes. The writer employs dynamic verbs in varied sentence structures to hold the reader's interest.		The letter reads like a standard piece of eighteenth-century writing, full of archaic spellings, random capitalizations, run-on sentences, semicolons, colons, dashes, and lists. Despite these obvious distractions, it is witty, well-organized, and compelling. Ben Franklin would be proud.	__ x 4=
Total						

Flip for additional comments.