



Spring 2025

English 3327- 001: American Literature to 1865

**What does it mean to be an American? Social Justice, Reform,
and Literature in a Democratic Republic**

MW 12:40-1:35pm

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- America as both a utopian ideal and an egalitarian republic has been perceived as a place where individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds can live free from oppression. In this course we will conduct a comprehensive survey of social reform movements including religious freedom, Native American rights, women's rights, and abolition in order to determine how literature functions as a medium to advocate for social justice and democratic equality.
- Readings and genres will include: Freedom narratives, Indian captivity narratives, sermons, speeches, autobiographies, political tracts, poetry, criminal narratives, gothic tales, and two novels.



Class discussions will explore such pressing questions as:

- What does it mean to be an advocate for democratic equality and justice?
- How does an individual promote meaningful social reform and change in one's community and coalition-building and advocacy?
- How does early republican reform literature provide us with an activist model for advocating for democratic reform in our present time?