

EN 4900/6990: Special Topics
American Literature to 1800
Stories of Early America
Dr. Bonnie Carr O'Neill
TR 2:00 p.m.



THE CAPTURE OF FRANCES BLOOM.

Long before anyone thought to write the “great American novel,” Americans used stories to help shape and explain the places, peoples, and experiences the country contained. The frontier and the future were alike unknown, but writers used narrative to make experience legible and meaningful. Our readings will emphasize the diverse genres of narrative in play, including creation myths, tales of contact, captivity narrative, spiritual autobiography, slave narrative, historical chronicle, travel writing, and the novel. Thematically, we will take up questions about “newness,” the unknown, and narrative’s function in creating order and meaning in complex and novel circumstances.

Requirements: All students will be required to lead class discussion and submit two essays, including one research paper, and the class will include both a midterm and a final exam. Assignments will be modified for graduate students as appropriate.