

Autobiographical | Sentimental | Satirical | Picaresque

## Novels and Narratives of Early America

EN 8553: Seminar in American Literature to 1865

Dr. Bonnie Carr O'Neill

Spring, 2018

The unsettled nature of the early Republic is on display in the strange variety of novels that appeared after the American Revolution. Reading across several genres and modes, this seminar will consider the role of fiction in negotiating national and cultural identity and the significance of the individual, especially in relation to race and gender. We will consider as well the narrative uses of place and of the past to offer a comprehensive and inclusive representation of the nation in all its complexity, uncertainty, and strangeness.

Representative literary and critical works:

Benjamin Franklin, *The Autobiography* (1771-90)

William Hill Brown, *The Power of Sympathy* (1789)

Hugh Henry Brackenridge, *Modern Chivalry* (1792)

Hannah Foster, *The Coquette* (1797)

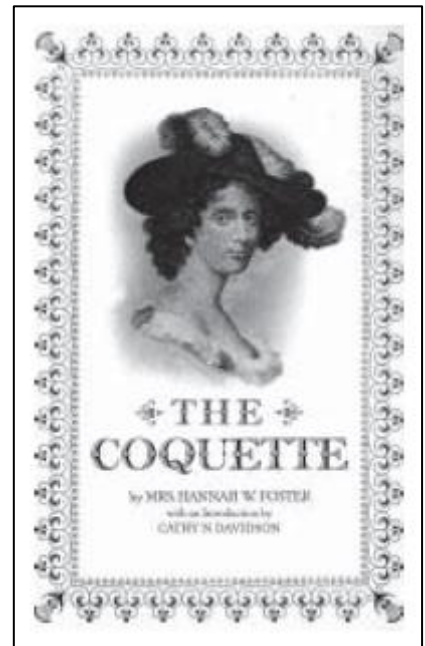
Charles Brockden Brown, *Edgar Huntly* (1799)

Catherine Maria Sedgwick, *Hope Leslie* (1827)

Robert Montgomery Bird, *Sheppard Lee, Written by Himself* (1836)

Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man* (1857)

Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (2004 edition)



Requirements: Students will write and present brief weekly response essays; write two essays, including a research paper; and complete midterm and final exams.