

Syllabus: English 271
The Confidence Game in America

Professor Lewis Hyde
Office: 11 Bailey House

Office phone: 427-5343
E-mail: HYDE@Kenyon.edu

Office Hours: Wednesday 2 to 4 & by appointment

Books to Purchase

Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography (Norton).

Ralph Waldo Emerson & Henry D. Thoreau, *Nature & Walking* (Beacon).

The Life of P. T. Barnum: Written by Himself. (Illinois).

Herman Melville, *The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade* (Norton).

Mark Twain, *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Norton).

Reader (containing Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," and work by Emerson and Poe).

The Work

Come to class on time. Speak up. Hand in your work on time. It is important that everyone do the reading before each class; there will be periodic **quizzes** to try to make sure that that is happening.

Exams. There will be a midterm and final exam. The final will be two hours or less.

Essays. Two short essays are due during the semester. "Short" means 1,000 to 1,250 words (4 to 5 pages at 250 words/page). These are to be critical essays that analyze the works we are reading (or, with permission, some other work).

Grading. The essays you write count for 50% of your grade. The midterm and final are 20% each. The quizzes are 10%. In addition, if your attendance and participation are exemplary, your grade will be boosted; if they are poor, your grade may be lowered. Failure to do any of the assigned work may lower your grade catastrophically.

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On disabilities: If you have a disability that might require some accommodation in order to participate fully in class, please feel free to discuss your concerns in private with me and also

identify yourself to Erin Salva, Coordinator of Disability Services at PBX 5145 or via e-mail at salvae@kenyon.edu.

On essays: A good critical essay presents an interesting and original idea about the work in question, and supports it with evidence drawn from the work. You should imagine your audience for these essays to be the other students in the class. That means, on the one hand, that you need not explain things that everyone in the class knows; on the other hand, you should aim to present an insight or idea that wouldn't have been obvious to a classmate who has read the same book.

For insight into how Professor Hyde grades essays, visit this web site:
<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/GradingPapers.html>

You must give citations for every quotation that you use in your essays. If you are citing a text that we use in class, simply enter the page number in parentheses after the quotation:

Thoreau joins nature, nationalism, and religion, as when he declares that he “should be ashamed to think that Adam in paradise was more favorably situated ... than the backwoodsman in this country” (93).

If you cite a text that we do not use in class, give a simple parenthetical page reference in the body of your paper, and list the work at the end:

In his annotations for “Walking,” Professor Hyde has pointed out that Thoreau’s “false etymology” of ‘sauntering’ comes from Samuel Johnson’s *Dictionary* (*The Essays*, 338).

Works Cited

The Essays of Henry D. Thoreau. Ed., Lewis Hyde. (New York: North Point Press, 2002).

In general, please give citations sufficient that the reader could easily find your source should he or she wish to.
