

American Studies 335
New England
Roger Williams University
CAS 228
M, W, & F 11:00-12:00
Fall Semester, 2008

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Week of August 27, 2008

Plotting and Planning

If you got my e-mail this summer (I hope you did), you know that I'm revising the course from previous offerings of it: dropping one book and instituting a project requirement based on investigating New England Towns. I asked you to think about this a little...particularly about whether you'd prefer to work individually or in small groups, or, if opinion is fairly evenly divided on this, to allow you all to choose whether to work alone or collaboratively based on your own preferences. There are certain advantages to either procedure. In the case of individual work, we can look at more towns. In the case of group work, we can study fewer towns in greater depth.

Wednesday, August 27.

I'm going to do wee bit of the traditional show and tell, but I want to minimize that. After all, you can read the syllabus yourselves as well as I can read it to you. But you may have some questions about this or that, and I'll do my best to give answers to them.

Following that, I'm going discuss my ideas about the two kinds of projects with you and get your ideas about them. If we reach some sort of consensus I'll make a decision on the spot...otherwise, I'll mull it over and continue the discussion on Friday.

Friday, August 29

I'm going to do a bit of a tutorial on internet resources and how we're going to use Blackboard. If you have a laptop, this would be a good day to bring it with you. I Because I hope to have you talking to me and to each other, I'm not all keen on having you bring the laptop every class period. I'll tell you periods where it will be useful, and, while you can bring it with you whenever you want, I get grumpy when I see students looking at facebook or in chatrooms during class.

Looking Ahead

I'd like to have you get a start on William Wood's *New England's Prospect*. We'll be discussing the *introduction* by Alden Vaughan (pp. 1-14) the Wednesday after you get back. I'm recommending a head start on it not because it is particularly difficult, but because it isn't the most exciting thing you'll ever read. You may need to attack it more than once to get the sense of it, and I'm betting it *will* be worth your while to get the sense of it, even if it isn't exciting.