

American Studies 335
New England
M. W. F. 1:00 - 1:50
CAS 120
Roger Williams University
Fall Semester 2011

Michael R. H. Swanson, Ph. D
Office: GHH 215
Hours: M. W. F 11:00 - 12:00
T. 2:30 - 4:00 and by appointment
e-mail: amst335@gmail.com
Phone: 254 3230

Week of September 7

*We're easing into the semester's work even more gently than usual. One day last week, and then the Labor Day Holiday weekend. Happy Labor Day to you all and **Solidarity Forever**.*

For *Wednesday, September 7*

Read, in *New England's Prospect*,
The Introduction by Alden Vaughan, pp. 1-14.

New England's Prospect is a primary source. It was written in 1634 for William Wood's contemporaries, not for Roger Williams University's students in 2011. From this introduction come away with an understanding of

(a) why this is an important book in the history of American Ideas... locate it as an example of a particular literary genre.

(b) Understand the editorial principles which Vaughan used to create this particular version of the book.

What kinds of choices did he make, and why?

What work is left for modern readers when it comes to developing a thorough understanding of this work conceptually.

To better understand why I chose to use this edition you might want to compare an edition which is available, free, on the internet. It is a facsimile edition of the original, digitized from a copy found in the Oxford University Library. You're free to read it instead, if you wish. Click on the illustration in the top corner left of the web page to find your way to it.

For *Friday September 9*

Read, in *Wood*, part I, chapters 1-9, pp. 15-57

Regarding *Wood*, the *sequence* of subjects in these short chapters is as significant as the materials discussed. See if you can begin to come to an understanding of the logic of his presentation, keeping in mind what his purposes were and also how he personally encountered New England. Next week, we'll look at how Plymouth colony approached the

physical reality of New England, and we'll see that the approach to New England of the Pilgrims at Plymouth was different from that of the Puritans at Boston--sometimes in subtle ways, at other times in ways not so subtle.

We still personally encounter the environments in which we live. Visit Barbara R. Money's website, [Wildflowers of Rhode Island](#). (The link is on the website) In what ways is her purpose different from the purpose of William Wood? It is worth a look to provide an example of how contemporary New Englanders encounter their environment. Does the site suggest that we use our locale in similar or different ways? We'll continue this discussion next week

I'm pushing us a little at the outset, and I recognize this. You have this material in your hands earlier than you normally will have it. If you get started right away you should have no particular problems finishing it by Friday. We may not get through discussing this much material, but it is in all of our interests to test our endurance early in the semester. Read this material and record how much time the reading of it takes. I'll ask you for a reading diary, and I'll use that to determine the length of reading assignments in the future.

ADDITIONAL Internet work.

If you haven't downloaded and installed Google Earth on your computer do so now. Find it at <http://earth.google.com/> You might also consider joining a user's group you'll find by clicking here.

Also go to [Bing Maps](#) and [Google Maps](#) and bookmark them. You'll have occasion to play around with both of these programs during the semester.