

Six Week Course on *Scarlett Letter*

You may skip the so-called introductory essay, “The Custom House.” Hawthorne is very angry that because the Whigs have turned out the Jeffersonian Democrats, he has lost his lucrative post at the Salem Custom House. Torn between the need to write and the need to support his family, Hawthorne rationalizes his “expulsion” by saying that his duties at the Custom House were keeping him from his first love—writing. Browsing among a former appointee’s papers and materials, he finds the scrap of cloth embroidered with the scarlet letter A, holds it to his breast, feels its heat, and then drops the piece. Thus, his conceit here: the “find” that will take him to the story of Hester and her badge.

Week One: Read Chapters 1-4 and short story “Young Goodman Brown”

Week Two: Read Chapters 5-8 and short story “Minister’s Black Veil”

Week Three: Read Chapters 9-12

Week Four: Read Chapters 13-16 and short story “Ethan Brand”

Week Five: Read Chapters 17-20

Week Six: Read Chapters 20-24