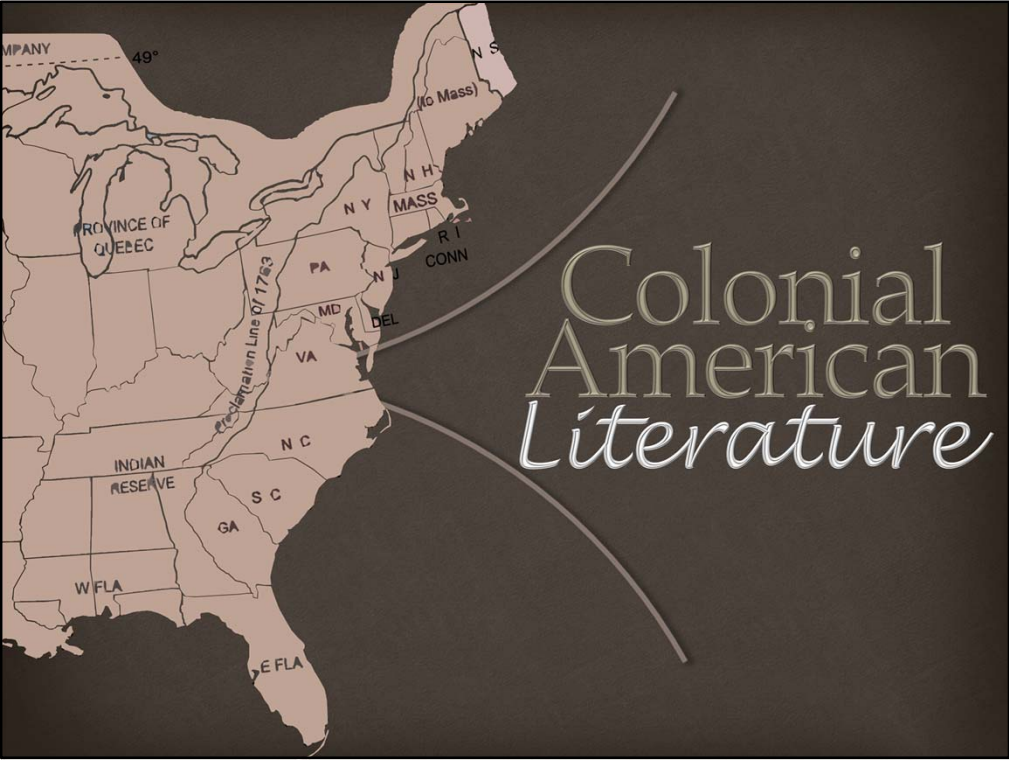
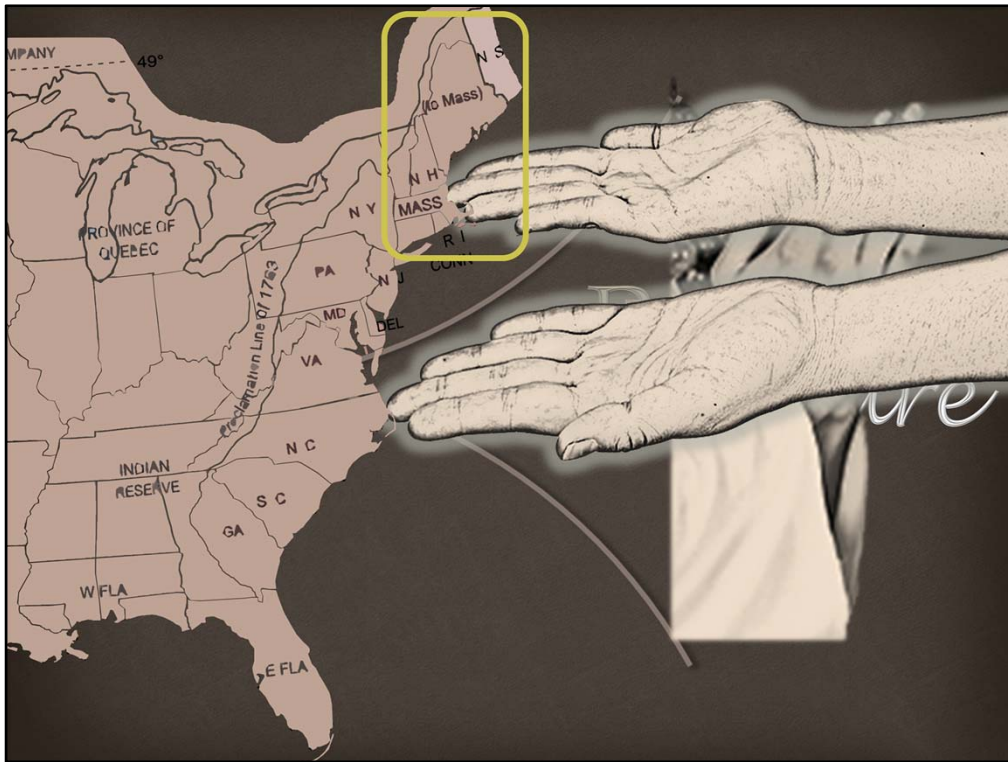


Module 3: The Influence of Faith on Colonial American Literature
Topic 1 Content: Colonial American Literature Presentation Notes



Colonial American literature



The Puritans were a religious group that originated in England. They wanted to “purify” the English church and the country’s monarchy. They brought their strong Christian beliefs from England to what would later be New England in America, where they established settlements and their religion. Their faith that God would lead them and provide for them gave them the hope and confidence that they would survive and prosper in the New World. The Puritans placed their struggles in the hands of God and put their life’s focus on Him rather than on human or worldly desires or objects.



The Puritans' God-devoted lifestyle was seen in their churches and throughout their everyday lives. Because they did not overly indulge in worldly things, they also did not over-embellish their writings. Instead, the focus of their writing was most commonly on God and Scripture. Their writing took on a plain, straightforward style that frequently used Biblical allusions and imagery. Since the Puritans were constantly trying to build a personal relationship with God, they also looked for daily symbols of God's messages and ways to follow God's word. This led to frequent uses of symbolism and personal reflection in their writing.



From the seventeen thirties to approximately seventeen forty-three, the Great Awakening reignited faith in Christianity and a focus on God. During that time, the Age of Enlightenment also approached the colonies in the New World and brought with it a focus on human reason, science, and democracy. In the last half of the eighteenth century, the American colonists were at the forefront of a revolution that was influenced by both movements. By declaring and fighting for democracy and freedom, and by having faith in their religious ideals and in human capabilities, they began a trend that European nations soon followed. Writing and speeches used persuasive language to garner support for an independent nation.



It was important for these colonists to communicate the importance of religious freedom and of freedoms of many types. Persuasive techniques in their writings and speeches helped them express their opinions on issues that were important to the establishment of a new nation apart from Great Britain. Among many persuasive techniques, these colonists emphasized logical reasoning, repeating their points, addressing any arguments that ran counter to their beliefs, appealing to their audiences' emotions, and making comparisons between their ideals and those of the government of Great Britain in an effort to build support for the formation of a nation separate from England.