ENG 254
Week #1: Weekly Writing
DUE: Thursday, January 7

READ
- Begin this week’s reading by browsing the scope of ENG 254 in the Table of Contents: “Literature of the American Renaissance, 1836-1865” pages 461-1288 and “The Literature of an Expanding Nation 1865-1912” pages 1289-1861. Notice which authors you are familiar with and others whom you would like to become familiar with. Finally, who has been left out? Which authors/group voices do you find underrepresented. Begin to think about your Group Project and your area/author of interest.
- Read, re-read, and annotate “The Literature of the American Renaissance 1836-1865” pages 460-475
- Browse the work of Margaret Fuller, pages 711 – 722

Question to Consider as you read
- Our editors ask this question: Could lit as defined by Colonial standards thrive in the New World? What were these “colonial standards”?
- What were the difficulties for literature in the 19th century? Who were the nay-sayers and what were they saying?
- What would you expect a literature of democracy to look like? Can you understand the pessimism of those who believed literature and democracy were contradictory?
- What does the term Renaissance imply in this context? Why do we still use the term “American Renaissance” instead of the simple historical categories of “antebellum” or “mid-19th century literature”?
- People speak of the reformation which preceded the Renaissance, the reformation created by the Transcendentalists. What were they reforming and what environment, social, intellectual, imaginative, spiritual conditions did they create or provide for?

WRITE: Write your first weekly writing in response to a combination of the following (please address at least two questions).
- Explain the Transcendentalist Movement to someone who is unfamiliar with the themes of American Literature.
- Identify and briefly discuss some of the major issues of this time period: e.g. abolition of slavery, women’s rights, labor, land grabs, impending war, etc. Conjecture about the implications of these forces on the literature of this period.
- The American Renaissance has been described as “culturally industrious.” What kind of readers were these Americans? Think about the establishment of public schools and universities as well as the Lyceum System. Again, conjecture about the implications of these forces on the literature of this period.

Guidelines
- Word-process
- Write one full page single-spaced
- Include a heading in the upper left-hand corner: your name; the date; ENG254 Weekly Writing #1.