

**Class: English 2130**

**Assignment: In-Class Discussion**

**Questions to Consider:**

→What are Hawthorne's attempts to mediate between Puritan beliefs and Emerson's? How does the Scarlet Letter incorporate, accept, or reject these particular beliefs?

→What are Hawthorne's assumptions about what human wholeness and happiness require? These would include the interrelationship of the mind, heart, spirit, will, and imagination, and accommodation though not indulgence of bodily needs.

**Major Themes, Historical Perspectives, and Personal Issues to Consider:**

Self trust vs. accommodation to authority

Conventional vs. unconventional gender roles

Obsessiveness vs. open-mindedness

Hypocrisy vs. candor

Presumed guilt or innocence

Forms of nurturance vs. destructiveness

The penalties of isolation

Crimes against the human heart

Patriarchal power

Belief in fate or free will

Belief in progress (scientific, technological, social, and political) vs. nostalgia for the past

Truths available to the mind during dream and reverie

Impossibility of earthly perfection

**Significant Form, Style, or Artistic Conventions**

Characters—recurrent types and interrelationships

Authorial intrusion

Image clusters and patterns (dark versus light, natural versus unnatural, sunshine versus firelight versus moonlight)

Subjective vision (fantasies, reveries, dreams, narrator's questions about "reality")