

## **AML 2070 (0481): Survey of American Literature, Spring 2017**

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Location: CBD 0212

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The American literature tradition encompasses a broad range of experiences and narratives. Because the scope of the canon is so large that it would be impossible to fit into a semester-long period, we will be examining a selection in order to situate our understanding of the way “American-ness” is expressed in literature, and even how the very notion of it is sometimes rejected. To do this, we will be reading shorter novels, short stories, essays, and poems. For the most part, we will be looking at the twentieth-century, although a few of our texts will come before that. The texts have been selected to provide you with a variety of historical and sociopolitical perspectives that explore “American-ness” in quite different ways, especially in a country that is constantly being re-imagined, revised, and re-translated.

The aims of this course are to expose you to a variety of foundational works, especially marginalized writers, to develop critical thinking and original, sophisticated arguments about the texts, and to be able to discuss the texts in a thoughtful manner.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Convey an understanding of the foundations of American literature
- Synthesize textual observations and course themes into essay-length arguments
- Situate the texts in relation to one another and within the context of the canon
- Conduct formal research in an academic manner
- Develop critical reading and thinking skills
- Improve grammar and mechanics, as well as revision skills

### **General Education Objectives**

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.

- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

### **General Education Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS**

*(Other texts not listed below will be available in pdf form on Canvas.)*

- The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B Du Bois. 978-0679428022 (1903)
- Cane, Jean Toomer. 978-0871401519 (1923)
- In the American Grain, William Carlos Williams. 978-0811218498 (1925)
- Other Voices, Other Rooms, Truman Capote. 978-0679745648 (1948)
- The Bell Jar, Sylvia Plath. 978-0061148514 (1963)

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

- Weekly Response Papers- (5 x 400 words = 2000 total) Throughout the semester, you'll be asked to "respond" to the reading in some way. Share your original insights about the text, questions the text poses, how the text relates to others, or anything else that would make for a fruitful discussion.
- Presentation- For each of our readings, one of your classmates will give a brief presentation as an introduction to the text as well as a way to guide our discussion. You'll be asked to provide background context, critical ideas, and some questions to initiate the conversation. When it is your time to present, you'll

turn in a short write-up of your notes and questions so that the class can follow along.

- Paper #1 Close Reading- (1000 words) You'll choose a selected passage or section from one of the texts we have read so far and you'll apply critical reading skills to demonstrate your understanding of the selected passage. We'll discuss strategies in class. The point is to show how effectively you can examine a passage and relate it to the larger theme of the text it belongs to.
- Paper #2 Midterm Paper- (1000 words) You will look at the critical history of a text, describing the different approaches critics have taken over the text's life history. You should be putting them in some particular order that allows you to develop an argument. This will be good practice for incorporating sources into your final paper.
- Paper #3 Final Paper- (2000 words) As the final assignment, you'll develop (at the very least) an 8-page paper that explores an original argument about the text. You should consult at least five critical sources, and you will develop a thematic analysis of the text that examines and reveals a sophisticated argument.
- Outlines- For both of the papers, you'll turn in an outline sometime before the assignment illustrating your intentions and organization of your thought process to your argument. I will provide feedback and suggestions.

### *Grading Percentages*

Assignment	Value
Weekly Response Papers	25% (5x5)
Presentation	10%
Close Reading	10%
Midterm Paper	15%
Final Paper	20%
Outlines	10% (2x5)
Class Preparation/Participation	10%
	100%

### **CLASS POLICIES**

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. **Attendance**- Attendance is mandatory, though exemptions can be made for religious holidays, medical or family emergencies, and university-sponsored events such as athletics and band. Please provide documentation in advance. Vis-à-vis the University attendance policies, you are allowed up to six absences of a fifty minute class. If you are expecting to be absent, be sure to email me your work sometime before class AND bring a hardcopy of your work to class the following week.

3. **Paper Format & Submission-** Please double-space all papers, unless otherwise specified. Papers should be stapled and handed in at the beginning of class.
4. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities-** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
5. **Late Material-** Late material will be accepted only once during the semester—that means you have one grace period to have a printer malfunction or a brain slip-up. I am happy to provide extensions, but please see me at least 4 days in advance (before the due date). I will go over your reason and decide if an extension is needed.
6. **Tardiness-** Please arrive on time—late arrivals disrupt the entire class, and it is frustrating for your peers to have to re-listen to the instructions again. Tardiness will be defined as being more than 5 minutes late. Two tardies= 1 absence.
7. **Preparation & Participation-** Come prepared. This means printing out all of the reading and/or hard copies of the texts AND coming armed with comments and reactions to the readings. Participation livens up the class and produces more fruitful discussions, and I'd like to hear from everybody in the class. Please try to contribute at least once per class meeting.
8. **Disruptions-** No cell phones or computers, nor talking in class at inappropriate times. I will write you down without warning, and two instances of this = 1 tardy. Also remember that people come from all types of backgrounds and have gone through all types of experiences. It is our job to make this a welcoming environment. Any disruptions will have you dismissed from the class.
9. **Revisions-** I allow one revision from one of your response papers—this leaves room for trial and error. I want to see you break out of your comfort zone and push yourself.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### *Statement of Composition*

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>.

### *Statement of Writing requirement (WR)*

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>.

### *Student Disability Accommodations*

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>.

### *Harassment*

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/sexual/>.

### *Academic Honesty*

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

### *Evaluations*

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### *UF Grading Policies*

For questions about the University's grade policies, please see, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### *Grade Appeals*

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

(Last names correspond to short stories, titles are longer texts. Four of the response papers are assigned due dates. You will choose one of the other readings to respond to (anytime during the semester) for your last one.)

### ***Week 1: January 4<sup>th</sup>-January 6<sup>th</sup>***

**W:** Introduce Syllabus

**F:** Anderson, read Sherwood Anderson's "The Book of the Grotesque," "Hands," and "Paper Pills"

### ***Week 2: January 9<sup>th</sup>-January 13<sup>th</sup>***

**M:** selection of Emily Dickinson poems  
**W:** selection of Emily Dickinson poems  
**F:** Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper", RESPONSE PAPER 1

***Week 3: January 16<sup>th</sup>-January 20<sup>th</sup>***

**M: No Class**  
**W:** Henry James, "The Jolly Corner"  
**F:** Henry James, story TBA

***Week 4: January 23<sup>rd</sup>-January 27<sup>th</sup>***

**M:** Melville, Benito Cereno  
**W:** Melville, Benito Cereno RESPONSE PAPER 2  
**F:** Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk," Chapters 1, 2

***Week 5: January 30<sup>th</sup>-February 3<sup>rd</sup>***

**M:** Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk," Chapters 9, 13  
**W:** Du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk," Chapters 10, 14  
**F:** Douglass, Excerpt from "Narrative of the Life" and "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?"

***Week 6: February 6<sup>th</sup>-February 10<sup>th</sup>***

**M:** Cane, Section 1  
**W:** Cane, Section 1  
**F:** Cane, Section 2, CLOSE READING PAPER DUE

***Week 7: February 13<sup>th</sup>-February 17<sup>th</sup>***

**M:** Cane, Section 2  
**W:** Cane, Section 3  
**F:** Cane, Wrap-up,

***Week 8: February 20<sup>th</sup>-February 24<sup>th</sup>***

**M:** Welty  
**W:** Cather, RESPONSE PAPER 3  
**F:** Jackson

***Week 9: February 27-March 3<sup>rd</sup>***

**M:** Jackson  
**W:** O'Connor  
**F:** O'Connor

***Week 10: March 6<sup>th</sup>-March 10<sup>th</sup>- Happy Spring Break!***

**M: No Class, OUTLINE OF MIDTERM PAPER DUE VIA EMAIL**

**W: No Class**

**F: No Class**

***Week 11: March 13<sup>th</sup>-March 17<sup>th</sup>***

**M: Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms**

**W: Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms**

**F: Capote, Other Voices, Other Rooms, MIDTERM PAPER DUE**

***Week 12: March 20<sup>th</sup>-March 24<sup>th</sup>***

**M: Selections from “In the American Grain,” William Carlos Williams**

**W: Selections from “In the American Grain,” Williams**

**F: Williams, “Paterson,” Book 1**

***Week 13: March 27<sup>th</sup>-March 31<sup>st</sup>***

**M: Sylvia Plath, The Bell Jar**

**W: Plath, The Bell Jar**

**F: Plath, The Bell Jar**

***Week 14: April 3<sup>rd</sup>-April 7<sup>th</sup>***

**M: Plath, selection of poems**

**W: Plath, selection of poems, RESONSE PAPER 4**

**F: Berryman, selection from “The Dream Songs”**

***Week 15: April 10<sup>th</sup>-April 14<sup>th</sup>***

**M: James Wright**

**W: Amy Clampitt, OUTLINE OF FINAL PAPER DUE**

**F: Elizabeth Bishop**

***Week 16: April 17<sup>th</sup>-April 19<sup>th</sup>***

**M: Claudia Rankine**

**W: Wrap-up**

**FINAL PAPER DUE APRIL 21**

**GRADING RUBRIC**

### *Letter Grade System*

**“A”** –A paper at this grade was done at an extraordinarily high-quality level. The work demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the concepts covered, and shows a thoughtful amount of creativity. This paper shows all the qualities listed below for a “B”, but goes beyond what was asked in terms of developing content and analysis. Papers at this level are usually free of grammatical errors.

**“B”** –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment at a high-quality level. The work is complete and may need further revision, but works at an elementary level. The style is straightforward and the organization is logical. It may contain grammatical errors, but it is otherwise readable.

**“C”** –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment. The work may need significant revision, but is complete in content and has logical organization. This paper may contain more grammatical errors that render it unreadable at times.

**“D”** –A paper at this grade has completed the assignment at level of poor quality. The work needs significant revision. It is usually incomplete and the organization doesn’t make sense. Attention to style is nonexistent.

**“E”** –A paper that does not address the needs of the assignment or shows little effort will result in a failing grade.

### *Check System*

√+ — “Check-plus quality work” is thoughtful, sophisticated work that goes beyond what is asked of the assignment. (The point value is at 10 points.)

√ — “Check quality work” is work that does what the assignment asks, no more and no less. (7.5 points)

√- — “Check-minus quality work” is usually that of a hurried and sloppy quality, or a disregard for the prompt or assignment. (5 points)

Sometimes you might fall between a check and a check plus (or minus) and the points will be averaged.

### *Grading Scale*

<b>A</b> 4.0 93-100%	<b>C</b> 2.0 73-76%
<b>A-</b> 3.67 90-92%	<b>C-</b> 1.67 70-72%
<b>B+</b> 3.33 87-89%	<b>D+</b> 1.33 67-69%
<b>B</b> 3.0 83-86%	<b>D</b> 1.0 63-66%
<b>B-</b> 2.67 80-82%	<b>D-</b> 0.67 60-62%
<b>C+</b> 2.33 77-79%	<b>E</b> 0.00 0-59%