

AML 2070- American Literature (Section 1625), Fall 2017

Instructor: Kedon Willis
Meeting Time: MWW Period 3 (9:35 – 10:25)
Location: LIT 0239
Email: kedon.willis@ufl.edu
Office: TUR 4335
Office Hours: W 2pm - 4pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

In this course, we will investigate how certain texts contribute to the concept of nationhood and what it means to be American. A survey course, by nature, is necessarily selective, so consider your role in this class as that of a surveyor of critical periods, concentrating on selected texts that offer a measure of the hopes and anxieties that preoccupied Americans throughout the country's history. Our readings will touch on concepts such as republicanism, slavery, war and capitalism that have, on the one hand shaped American ethos, but have also complicated the hopes of the nation as one unified by shared beliefs and values.

Our snapshot of texts spans 400 years and covers a variety of genres, including poetry, folklore, fiction writing, memoir and drama. The course focuses on developing critical thinking, reading, communication, research and writing skills through an investigation of the various forms of writing on the subject.

You will be expected to conduct close readings of the texts we will read, lead and participate in class discussions, complete reading quizzes, and compose three short papers, an annotated bibliography and a final research paper. Writing assignments and discussions will challenge you to probe, interpret, reflect on, analyze and synthesize textual material in order to support interpretive assertions. In-class assignments will assess your understanding of the course materials and your ability to present evidence and construct ideas clearly and logistically in manner appropriate to scholarly writing.

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).
- 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

Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country*

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*

Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*

Other reading materials, including poems, short stories and academic essays, will be accessible via the class Canvas page

Assignment Summary

In Class Participation	100
In Class Quizzes	100
Three Short Papers (3000 words)	300
Prospectus (500 words)	100
Annotated Bibliography (1000 words)	150
Final Paper (2000 words)	250
Total Points Possible	1000

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Class Participation. Please note: class participation isn't a simple matter of coming to class regularly; it also entails actively taking part in the pedagogical process during each class session. This includes coming to class having read and analyzed the pertinent texts and having done any relevant assignments; contributing your observations to class discussions; raising questions and building on observations others have raised. We are all a part of a learning community in this classroom; I expect you to be a part of the teaching process as well.

Quizzes. Be prepared to respond to short in-class quizzes given at random intervals throughout the semester. There will be 12 in all; your two lowest grades will be dropped at the end of the semester. As you can imagine, the best way to prepare for these is to ensure that you come to class having done all the reading due by that date.

Short Papers. Throughout the course of the semester, you're expected to complete three thesis-driven response papers that have no fewer than 1000 words. These should be considered as practice for longer papers, and will develop your close reading skills. They will be in response to a prompt question that will be applicable to all the reading you will have already done. Your response is expected to make a contestable claim supported by textual evidence and your own analyses which go beyond mere summary and observation.

Prospectus. In preparation for your final paper, you will write a prospectus outlining your topic idea and why it's worth investigating. You'll also outline the sources you propose to use and rough timeline for the project's completion.

Annotated Bibliography. This next step in the research paper process gives details into the sources you intend to use for that paper. You'll be expected to research and annotate five outside, credible sources (articles in popular trade journals such as newspapers and magazines, blogs, and open-content web sources such as Wikipedia don't count as credible sources). A polished and concise prospectus will serve as the introduction to your annotations.

Final Paper. In this assignment, you will use the skills developed throughout the course and in previous papers. This assignment is a sustained, formally researched critical analysis in which you will make an original argument about one or more texts through a particular theoretical, historical, or critical lens. This assignment is an opportunity to develop unique, interesting arguments. The paper should incorporate both primary and secondary texts and offer evidence of your critical thinking and interpretive abilities.

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Active participation is crucial to learning in this course. You are expected to be in class and on time. Much of the learning that takes place is spontaneous and difficult to reproduce outside of class. Consequently, if you miss more than **four** classes during the semester, your grade will drop by a half-letter grade. That is to say, each absence beyond **four** will lower your overall course points by 50. **If you miss six classes, you will fail the course.** Exempt from this policy are those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, for which you must provide appropriate documentation in advance of the absence. Absences for illness or family emergencies will count toward your four allowed absences. So please save your absences for serious medical conditions and other extenuating circumstances.

If you are absent, it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all class discussions and activities as well as any new developments, such as assignments and due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. However, you will not be able to make up any in-class assignments or quizzes. Students are responsible for keeping track of their absences and missed classwork. Please establish contact with a classmate in order to update yourself on the course happenings in the event that you miss class. If you anticipate having a prolonged absence for any reason, please speak with me in advance to make appropriate arrangements.

The University of Florida's attendance policy can be found here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Late Arrival: Our class is discussion-based, and as such late arrival is both unprofessional and disruptive. If you are not in the room when the class starts, you are late. If you are late twice, you will be penalized one absence.

3. *Paper Format & Submission:* All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.docx) documents to Canvas and as hard copies. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman or Cambria font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Be sure to staple papers before submitting hard copies.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Unless an extension is granted before the due date, late assignments will be accepted with a 10% deduction for every day the paper is late. No late assignments will be accepted more than 2 days beyond the due date. In-class quizzes cannot be made up.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism:* Plagiarism includes copying the ideas or writings of someone else and claiming it as your own work, collaborating with someone else on an assignment, and/or resubmitting work that you have done for another class. DON'T DO IT. Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code:
<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
Pro Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the internet without providing the exact location from which it came.
7. **All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course.** Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if you fail to understand and employ proper documentation techniques. When in doubt, ask for help!
8. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

9. For information on UF Grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
10. *Grade Appeals*. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, 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.
11. *Course Evaluations*. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course:
<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
12. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
13. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty:
<http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

Week	Day	Reading/Viewing Material	Assignments Due
1	M 8/21	Introduction; J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, "What is an American"	
	W 8/23	Red Jacket, "Reply to the Missionary Jacob Cram"	
	F 8/25	Excerpt from Olaudah Equiano's <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> and Phillis Wheatley's "On Being Brought from Africa to America"	
2	M 8/28	Walt Whitman "Song of Myself" Reading: "Essentials of Poetry"	
	W 8/30	Whitman "Song of Myself," cont'd	
	F 9/1	Herman Melville "Bartleby the Scriver" Reading: "How to Read Stories"	
3	M 9/4	HOLIDAY	

	W 9/6	Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wall-Paper" Reading: "On Realism and Naturalism"	Short Poetry Analysis
	F 9/8	Charlotte Perkins Gilman "The Yellow Wall-Paper" In class: Closed-form prose/formulating theses First Short Paper introduced	
4	M 9/11	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book I (chpts 1-10)	
	W 9/13	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book II (chpts 11-15)	
	F 9/15	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book II (chpts 16-20)	
5	M 9/18	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book III (chpts 21-31)	
	W 9/20	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book IV-V (chpts 32-40)	
	F 9/22	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> , Book V (chpts 41-46) Second Short Paper introduced	Short Paper 1
6	M 9/25	Reading: Elements of the Paragraph	
	W 9/27	<i>Quicksand</i> (chpts 1-10)	
	F 9/29	<i>Quicksand</i> (chpts 10-16)	
7	M 10/2	<i>Quicksand</i> (chpts 16-23)	
	W 10/4	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Scenes I–V)	
	F 10/6	HOMECOMING	
8	M 10/9	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Scenes VI–IX) Reading: "Sentence Grammar" Third Short Paper introduced	Short Paper 2
	W 10/11	<i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> (Scenes VIII–IX)	
	F 10/13	In class activity: Editing tools — writing and editing	
9	M 10/16	John Cheever "The Swimmer" Reading: "Modernism to Postmodernism"	
	W 10/18	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> (White Tigers)	

	F 10/20	<i>The Woman Warrior (At the Western Place)</i>	
10	M 10/23	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woa (Act I)</i> Introduction to Prospectus, Anno Bib and Final Paper	Short Paper 3
	W 10/25	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woa (Act I contd)</i>	
	F 10/27	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woa (Act II)</i>	
11	M 10/30	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woa (Act II-III)</i>	
	W 11/1	<i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Woa (Act III, contd)</i>	
	F 11/3	In class: Incorporating sources	Prospectus
12	M 11/6	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 1-6)	
	W 11/8	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 7-12) Annotated Bibliography overview	
	F 11/10	HOLIDAY	
13	M 11/13	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 13-24)	Revised Prospectus
	W 11/15	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 25-30)	
	F 11/17	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 31-35) Final Paper overview	
14	M 11/20	<i>Americanah</i> (chpts 36-42)	Anno Bib
	W 11/22	THANKSGIVING	
	F 11/24	THANKSGIVING	
15	M 11/27	In class: Transitioning and structuring	
	W 11/29	Peer Review	
	F 12/1	Peer Review	
16	M 12/4	Class Activity: Workshop	
	W 12/6	Screening	Final Paper Due

Grading

Grading for this course will be rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citation guidelines, or a general carelessness in the writing, the assignment will not receive a passing grade. The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled.

As your instructor, I will evaluate and provide feedback on your written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics.

Grade Issues

University policy prohibits discussions of grades via email. If you have a question about a grade, you may schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss it.

Grade Scale

A:	93-100	C:	73-76
A-:	90-92	C-:	70-72
B+:	87-89	D+:	67-69
B:	83-86	D:	63-66
B-:	80-82	D-:	60-62
C+:	77-79	E:	0-59

ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.

<p>ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT</p>	<p>Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.</p>	<p>Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.</p>
<p>STYLE</p>	<p>Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.</p>	<p>Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.</p>
<p>MECHANICS</p>	<p>Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.</p>	<p>Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.</p>