

AML2070—Survey of American Literature (sect. 9788), Fall 2017

Instructor Name: Prof. Karina A. Vado

Course Meeting Times & Location: T 8-9, R 9 MAT 0013

Office Location and Hours: TUR 4335, R 1:30 p.m.-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

Course Website: <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>

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Hyphenated Americans: Race and Nation in U.S. Multi-Ethnic Literature and Popular Culture



Course Description

This survey course acquaints students with the historical development of U.S. literature from the early sixteenth century into the twenty-first. Because the period covered is so vast, and the American literary canon so expansive, we'll be primarily focusing our course readings on the literary and popular culture productions of African-American, Asian-American, Chican@/x, (Afro)Latino@/x, and indigenous artists and writers. By supplementing our primary texts—autobiography, (graphic) novels, novellas, poetry, short stories, visual art, and performance—with critical and historical readings, we will consider the colonialist, gendered, and racialized origins of, and the continuing presence of these in, American literature and popular culture. We will, moreover, examine how “whiteness” (and its myriad significations), figures in American nationalism, culture, history, and literary discourse.

To guide our discussions and readings throughout the semester, we will grapple with the following questions: (1) Given the fraught origins of U.S. literature, how, and to what degree, do the contributions of artists and writers of color work at decolonizing, revising, and expanding the U.S. literary canon and U.S. “high” culture? How do their literary and cultural contributions contest romanticized representations of the perpetually elusive “American Dream”? (2) What is the utility of incorporating “critical whiteness studies” into a course on multi-ethnic literatures and popular culture? (3) How do U.S. multi-ethnic texts problematize and reconceptualize normative notions of family/kinship, class, gender, race, nation/nationality, sexuality, and hierarchy/power? Lastly, what new approaches do U.S.

multi-ethnic literary and cultural productions offer to the dilemma of “difference,” “Otherness,” and exclusion?

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.

Course-Specific Objectives and Learning Outcomes:

- Trace the historical development of American multi-ethnic literature
- Familiarity with critical race theory and feminist theory
- Ability to analyze texts by situating these within differing cultural, economic, historical, and socio-political milieus
- Expose and deconstruct texts’ cultural and ideological assumptions
- Use interdisciplinary approaches to the reading of art, literature, and media

Required Texts:

Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1993)—ISBN: 978-0679745426

Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (1899)—ISBN: 978-0486277868 (Dover Thrift Editions)

Octavia E. Butler, *Bloodchild and Other Stories* (1996)—ISBN: 978-1583226988

G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel Vol. 1* (2014)—Kindle edition

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2008)—ISBN: 978-1594483295

Sandra Cisneros, *Loose Woman: Poems* (1995)—ISBN: 9780679755272

Sherman Alexie, *Flight* (2007)—ISBN: 9780802170378

Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: An American Musical*, soundtrack (2015)—available for streaming on Spotify

*Readings marked with asterisk are available in Canvas.

Recommended Texts:

Style: The Basics of Clarity and Grace (5th edition), Joseph Williams and Gregory G. Colomb
MLA Handbook (8th edition), The Modern Language Association of America

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric and Grading Scale):

Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Participation (*including attendance, discussion leading, pop quizzes, writing conferences, and other in-class activities)	20% of final grade (200 points)	N/A
Critical Response Papers (Two, 1000 words each, 2000-word total)	20% of final grade (100 points each, 200-point total)	Throughout the semester. Check for due dates in the course schedule.
Midterm Critical Analysis Paper (1500-word minimum)	20% of final grade (200 points)	October 22
Final Paper Prospectus (500-word minimum) & Annotated Bibliography	10% of final grade (100 points)	November 21
Creative Assignment: Hamilton - inspired rap	5% of final grade (50 points)	December 8
Final Research Paper (2000-word minimum)	25% of final grade (250 points)	December 13

*All assignment instructions are available in Canvas.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

2. Attendance and Punctuality Policies:

- You must handle gathering any notes, handouts, or assignments that you miss due to an absence. I only grant excused absences for university-approved reasons (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.) and religious holidays. If you will be missing class for either of these reasons, you must notify me at least 48 hours in advance. Moreover, if you're missing class for university-approved reasons, you must submit a formal excuse letter for your absence(s) within a week of your absence.
- As for any other missed classes, I do not make distinctions between excused and unexcused absences (this includes absences due to emergency and/or illness). That being said, you may miss four class sessions over the course of the semester without negatively impacting your final grade. Because this course meets for two blocks on Tuesdays and one block on Thursday, Tuesday absences will be counted as two. ***Special note:** Accumulating more than six absences results in automatic failure of the course.

- You are expected to arrive to class on time. Every two tardies will count as one unexcused absence. Moreover, you must come speak to me after class so that I may mark you as tardy.

3. Paper Format & Submission: All written assignments should follow MLA conventions, and are to be submitted in .doc or .docx format via Canvas.

4. Late Papers/Assignments: All assignments are due on the assigned time/due date. However, if an emergency situation arises that impedes or affects your ability to complete and submit your work on time, please communicate this to me as early as possible (preferably before the due date). If you fail to notify me of your emergency situation/special circumstances, submit late work without making prior arrangements, or simply fail to submit your assignment, you will receive a score of zero for your work (or lack thereof). *Important note: Please keep in mind that I'll be making a 10% deduction to your overall assignment grade for each day that it is late.

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 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/>. If I find that any of your written assignments are plagiarized, you will receive an automatic zero for the given assignment. If you plagiarize on more than one occasion, you will automatically fail the course.

7. 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.

8. For information on UF Grading policies, see:

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

9. 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.**

10. 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>

11. 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>

12. Classroom Behavior and Technology Policies:

- Meaningful, constructive, and “difficult” dialogue is encouraged in this course and requires a degree of shared respect, willingness to listen, and acceptance of differing points of view. Because discussion in this course will oft-times center on and explore issues of personal and social identity (i.e. race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexuality) respect for individual and alternative ideological stances and viewpoints will be maintained at all times in this class. One’s

words and use of language should thus be reasonable and within acceptable bounds of civility and decorum. Failure to maintain a respectful, safe, and welcoming classroom environment will result in immediate dismissal from class. This will then result in one unexcused absence.

- With the exception of laptops and tablets used for notetaking purposes, all cell phones, Smartphones, and other electronic devices that generate or record sound and/or images/pictures must be turned off during class. If I discover that you're utilizing notetaking devices for other purposes not related to our class/coursework, you will be asked to leave class for the day. This will thus result in one unexcused absence.

13. Participation: Because 20% of your final grade rests on the level and quality of your in-class participation, I expect you to not only to have read all the assigned readings for each class period, but also be prepared to discuss them in depth, and at length. To this end, you must bring a "discussion question" (and your critical response to said question) to each class session based on the reading for that day. For the sake of efficiency and orderliness, **you must write and submit your Q&A on a 3 x 5 index card.**

You will then turn these in at the beginning of each class period as I will use these to take attendance. Through random selection, I will pick two discussion questions. If selected, it is your responsibility to lead class discussion based on your Q&A for fifteen minutes. ***** Please note that you are only responsible for leading discussion two times throughout the semester. *****

***About discussion questions:** A discussion question calls for critical and interpretive analysis and thus cannot be simply answered with a matter-of-fact response. For instance, after reading Octavia Butler's "The Evening and the Morning and Night," you may pose the following question: "What is the symbolic meaning or significance of genetic disorder(s) in the story?"

14. 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/>

Course Schedule

**Please note: The instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the course schedule and the assigned readings as needed.*

**All assignments and readings are due on the date listed.*

**Readings marked with an asterisk (*) are available in Canvas.*

Week 1: Race, Slavery, and Nation in the "New World"

Aug. 22: First day of class—Introduction

*Preamble to U.S. Declaration of Independence (1776)

*Langston Hughes, "Let America Be America Again" (1935)

*Cultural Identity Exercise: Social Identity Wheel

***Extra credit opportunity (ten-point maximum): Write 500-word cultural identity reflection**

Aug. 24: *Christopher Columbus, *"The Discovery of Prosperous Lands" (1493)

*Benjamin Franklin, *"Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America" (1782)

Week 2:

Aug. 29: *Thomas Jefferson, Excerpt from *Notes on the State of Virginia* (1782)

*Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1768)

*Olaudah Equiano, Excerpt from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano The African, Written by Himself* (1789)

Aug. 31: *Frederick Douglass, "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" (1852)

*Harriet Jacobs, Excerpt from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)

Week 3: "Making Whiteness Strange"—Critical Whiteness Studies

Sep. 5: *Richard Dyer, "The Matter of Whiteness"

*George Lipsitz, *Excerpt from *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*

Sep. 7: Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (part 1)

Week 4:

Sep. 12: NO CLASS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

Sep. 14: NO CLASS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER CONDITIONS

Week 5:

Sep. 19: Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (parts 2 and 3)

Sep. 21: *Edgar Allan Poe, "The Gold-Bug" (1843)

Sep. 24: CRP 1 due

Week 6:

Sep. 26: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (chps. 1-15)

Sep. 28: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (chps.16-25)

Week 7:

Oct. 3: Kate Chopin, *The Awakening* (chps. 26-39)

*Joyce Dyer, "Reading *The Awakening* with Toni Morrison"

Oct. 5: Gwendolyn Brooks, *"*A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon*"; "*The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till*" (1960)

Extra credit opportunity (ten-point maximum): Watch the entirety of Ava DuVernay's *13th* (available on Netflix) and write a 500-word critical response paper on the documentary film.

Week 8: Speculative Blackness

Oct. 10: Octavia Butler, "Speech Sounds"; "The Evening and the Morning and the Night"

Oct. 12: Octavia Butler, "Blood Child"

*Mark Bould, "The Ships Landed Long Ago: Afrofuturism and Black SF"

Week 9: Asian-Americanness and Islam in Pop Culture: Racialization and Representation in the Post-9/11 Era

Oct. 17: G. Willow Wilson, *Ms. Marvel, Vol. 1*

*Moustafa Bayoumi, "Racing Religion"

Oct. 19: Finish your midterm papers!

Oct. 22: Midterm Critical Analysis Paper due

Week 10:

Oct 24: *Finish *Ms. Marvel* discussion

Aziz Ansari, *Master of None* (Season 1, episodes 2 and 4; Season 2, episode 3)

Oct. 26: Contemporary Literary Explorations of Afro-Latinidades, Colorism, and Masculinity

Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (pgs. 1-75)

Week 11:

Oct 31: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (76-165)

*Ginetta Candelario, Excerpt from *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops*

Nov. 2: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (166-210)

Week 12:

Nov. 7: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (211-300)

*Melissa M. Gonzalez: “The Only Way Out Is In”: Power, Race, and Sexuality Under Capitalism in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*”

Nov. 9: Junot Díaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (301-end)

Nov. 12: CRP 2 due

Week 13: Chingona Feminisms and “Inappropriate” Femininities in Chicana Poetry

Nov. 14: Sandra Cisneros, *Loose Woman: Poems*

* Gloria E. Anzaldúa, Excerpt from *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

***Extra credit opportunity (ten-point maximum):** Watch the film adaptation of Patricia Cardoso’s play, *Real Women Have Curves*, and write a 500-word intertextual connection

Nov. 16: NO CLASS—Instructor away at NWSA conference

Nov. 21: *Submit final paper prospectus and annotated bibliography

Week 14: Double-Consciousness and Hybridity in Native American Literature, Past and Present

Nov. 21: *Andrew Jackson, “Indian Removal Act” (1830)

*John Rollin Ridge, Excerpt from *The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit* (1854)

Nov. 23: NO CLASS (Fall break)

Week 15:

Nov. 28: Sherman Alexie, *Flight* (chps.1-12)

*W.E.B. DuBois, Excerpt from *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Nov. 30: Sherman Alexie, *Flight* (chp.13-end)

Week 16: Democracy Remixed—Remaking the “Great” American Experiment in Lin-Manuel Miranda’s Hamilton

Dec. 5— Lin-Manuel Miranda, *Hamilton: An American Musical*

*Ibram X. Kendi, Excerpt from *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*

***Extra credit opportunity (ten-point maximum):** In-class performance of Hamilton-inspired rap

Dec. 8—Hamilton-inspired rap due

Dec. 13: Final research papers due

Grading Criteria

Generally, the grading guidelines for your papers are based on analytical content (70% of your assignment grade), organization (10% of your assignment grade), style/expression and grammar/mechanics (20% of your assignment grade)

An “A-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets all the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- The thesis (or argument) is clearly articulated, *original*, and well-supported; the argument is analytical rather than descriptive. ****Important note: An “A” paper goes beyond analyses and ideas shared in class.***
- Subsequent paragraphs build on and support the paper’s central thesis or argument
- Examples and evidence from the texts back up (but do not subsume) your own critical analysis
- The writing is clear and dynamic with varied sentence length and structure.
- The paper is free of most grammatical and spelling errors.
- MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout.
- Should have a distinct and strong conclusion that does not simply rehash the paper’s original thesis

A “B-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets most of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Has a good thesis, but the wording might be less clear and/or fluid or weaker in its argumentation
- Still builds up and supports the paper’s main argument but does not create compelling nor strong connections between the ideas presented in each paragraph
- Does not analyze textual evidence as critically or as in depth as the “A” paper
- Puts forth a solid argument but may have unclear language, spelling, or grammatical errors and superficial or vague analysis in a few places
- MLA formatting is uniformly (and correctly) followed throughout
- Conclusion is strong

A “C-level” Paper-

- Follows and meets some of the requirements in the assignment guidelines
- Does not clearly articulate or fully develop thesis; it is more descriptive rather than analytical
- Does not wholly engage with or defend the paper’s key argument throughout
- The writing is largely incoherent and disorganized but may have instances of proper analysis and clear argumentation
- Does not incorporate sufficient textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- MLA formatting is not uniformly (nor correctly) followed throughout
- Lacks a clear conclusion

A “D-level” Paper and below-

- Does not meet any of the requirements in the assignment guidelines

- Lacks a clearly articulated and well-developed thesis
- Does not engage with or defend the paper's key argument throughout
- Does not successfully incorporate any textual evidence to support the main argument and claims
- Shows blatant disregard of proper grammar and punctuation
- The writing is vague and has several errors in analysis and argumentation
- Does not follow MLA formatting guidelines
- Lacks a conclusion

Grading Scale

A, 4.0, 93-100 (930-1000)	C, 2.0, 73-76 (730-769)
A-, 3.67, 90-92 (900-929)	C-, 1.67, 70-72 (700-729)
B+, 3.33, 87-89 (870-899)	D+, 1.33, 67-69 (670-699)
B, 3.0, 83-86 (830-869)	D, 1.0, 63-66 (630-669)
B-, 2.67, 80-82 (800-829)	D-, 0.67, 60-62 (600-629)
C+, 2.33, 77-79 (770-799)	E, 0.00, 0-59 (0-599)