

# The “American Century”

AML 2070: Survey of American Literature (Sect. 1625) Course Syllabus



Instructor: Emily A. Murphy  
E-mail: [oyama@ufl.edu](mailto:oyama@ufl.edu)  
Office: TUR 4321  
Office Hours: M (Pd. 4) and by appointment

Fall 2013  
Phone: 352-392-6650  
Time: M, W, F (Pd. 3)  
Place: RNK 230

## Course Description

In 1941, Henry Luce declared that the 20<sup>th</sup> century was the “American Century.” His claim was a classic example of American exceptionalism, which was common after the Second World War. We will take Luce’s claim seriously and consider why the 20<sup>th</sup> century was both a time of economic and literary prosperity. Our studies will encompass a review of popular literary movements, including modernism, postmodernism, and the Beat movement. We will also explore diverse literary genres, such as fiction, poetry, and drama. Along the way, we will consider the major concerns of the century and how they in turn helped shape the literature of the period. Students in this class will therefore get a general overview of American literature from the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Course Goals

You will develop several content, critical thinking, and communication skills during the course of this semester. Some of the specific goals of this course are: demonstrate forms of effective writing, organize complex arguments, employ logic in arguments, etc. For a full description of course goals, please review the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements>.

## Required Texts

*The Call of the Wild* by Jack London (ISBN: 1442434112)

*A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams (ISBN: 0811216020)

*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison (ISBN: 0307278441)

*Solar Storms* by Linda Hogan (ISBN: 0684825392)

**Note: All books will be available at the UF Bookstore. If you choose to purchase your books elsewhere (e.g., through online vendors like Amazon), then you should make sure you get the correct edition.**

Assignments will include a research paper, a drama presentation, a community service project, and several reading responses.

## Grades

A: 94-100 (4.0)

C: 74-76 (2.0)

A-: 90-93 (3.67)

C-: 70-73 (1.67)

B+: 87-89 (3.33)

D+: 67-69 (1.33)

B: 84-86 (3.0)

D: 64-66 (1.0)

B-: 80-83 (2.67)

D-: 60-63 (.67)

C+: 77-79 (2.33)

E: 0-59 (0)

Reading Responses: 15%

Drama Presentation-10%

Quizzes-10%

Participation-10%

Midterm Paper-25%

Final Project-30%

## Assignments

Reading Responses (2 pages double spaced): Throughout the semester you will be required to write five reading responses as a way of developing your skills using a set of analytical methods: character analysis, close reading, and comparative analysis.

### *Character Analysis*

Pick a character and track their presentation throughout your chosen text. Why do you think this character is important? What is their role within the story? How does this character aid in the development of the larger message of the text? This type of analysis works best for novels, although it can be used for short stories as well.

### *Close Reading*

Pick a short passage from a novel/short story or a stanza of poetry to analyze closely. You should pay particular attention to diction and syntax when conducting a close reading and note any repetitions that seem important. This type of analysis works well for any type of text, but it is especially useful for analyzing poetry.

### *Comparative Analysis*

There are several ways of conducting a comparative analysis. For this course, I would like you to compare the text we are reading for that week to a previous text. How are some of the author's ideas similar to the previous text you are comparing it to? What themes do they share? How is it different (and what might be the cause of this difference)? This type of analysis works best when comparing texts that share similar themes or have some other type of similarity (e.g., form or time period).

**Drama Presentation:** Each person will sign-up for a group presentation where you will be required to act out a scene from *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Because drama is a form where much of the meaning is conveyed through tone and body language, it will be up to your group to come up with your own interpretation of your assigned scene. Groups will also be required to submit a short 1-page response that explains how they adapted their scene and why they chose to adapt it in this way.

**Midterm Paper (5-6 pages):** You will write a research paper that works with some of the major issues and themes discussed in this course. This paper requires a minimum of two outside sources (not including primary texts). We will discuss possible ways of approaching this paper in class. You should also keep in mind that you can (and should) think of your reading responses as possible topics for this longer research paper.

**Final Project:** The final project will consist of several parts: a community service project, a presentation, and a final reflective paper. The first two portions will be done in pairs, so you will need to find someone you feel comfortable working with (e.g., your drama presentation partner). The reflective paper will be a short 3-page paper documenting your experience and how it helped you understand Linda Hogan's *Solar Storms*. The reflective piece will be an individual assignment.

## Reading Schedule (Subject to Change)

### Unit 1: Naturalism and the Alaskan Frontier

#### Week 1 (Aug. 19-23)-Course Intro

Aug. 21-Course Intro and Syllabus Review (**drop/add**)

Aug. 23-Writing about Literature/Intro to American Literature (**drop/add**)

#### Week 2 (Aug. 26-30)-“Big Men” and the American Market

Aug. 26-*The Call of the Wild* (Chapters 1-3) (**drop/add**)

Aug. 28-*The Call of the Wild* (Chapters 4-5)

Aug. 30-*The Call of the Wild* (Chapters 6-7)

### Unit 2: American Modernism

#### Week 3 (Sept. 2-6)-The Jazz Age

Sept. 2-NO CLASS

Sept. 4-Watch Fitzgerald Biography (available on YouTube); Read “Winter Dreams”

Sept. 6-Read “Babylon Revisited”/**Comparative Analysis 1 Due**

#### Week 4 (Sept. 9-13)-The “Lost Generation”

Sept. 9-“The Snows of Kilimanjaro”

Sept. 11-Cont. “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”

Sept. 13-“Big Two-Hearted River”

### Unit 3: The Southern Renaissance

#### Week 5 (Sept. 16-20)-The Southern Renaissance

Sept. 16-“A Rose for Emily”

Sept. 18-*A Streetcar Named Desire* (Scenes 1-5)

Sept. 20-*A Streetcar Named Desire* (Scenes 6-11)/**Character Analysis 1 Due**

## **Week 6 (Sept. 23-27)-The Southern Belle**

**Sept. 23-**Cont. *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Sept. 25-**Cont. *A Streetcar Named Desire*

**Sept. 27-**Cont. *A Streetcar Named Desire*

## **Unit 3: Beat Poetry and the Art of Protest**

### **Week 7 (Sept. 30-Oct. 4)-The Beat Generation**

**Sept. 30-**Read “Howl”/Close Reading 1 Due

**Oct. 2-**Read “America”

**Oct. 4-**Peer Review (Bring Full Draft of Midterm Essay)

### **Week 8 (Oct. 7-11)-“Boys Will Be Boys”**

**Oct. 7-**Watch *The Beat Generation*

**Oct. 9-**Cont. *The Beat Generation*

**Oct. 11-**Post-Screening Discussion of *The Beat Generation*/Midterm Due

## **Unit 4: Postmodernism and the Female Author**

### **Week 9 (Oct. 14-18)- Postmodern Novel?**

**Oct. 14-***The Bluest Eye* (Stop at “Winter” section/page 58)

**Oct. 16-**Visit the Baldwin Library of Historical Children’s Literature

**Oct. 18-***The Bluest Eye* (Read “Winter” section/page 93)

### **Week 10 (Oct. 21-25)-The Black is Beautiful Movement**

**Oct. 21-***The Bluest Eye* (Stop at “Seefatherheisbigandstrong.../page 132)

**Oct. 23-***The Bluest Eye* (Stop at “Seethedogbowwowgoesthedog....”/page 164)

**Oct. 25-** *The Bluest Eye* (Finish novel)/Character Analysis 2 Due

## **Unit 5: The Power of Community**

## **Week 11 (Oct. 28-Nov. 1)-Tribal Traditions**

**Oct. 28**-Read *Solar Storms* (Prologue and Chapter 1)

**Oct. 30**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapters 2-4)

**Nov. 1**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapters 5-7)

## **Week 12 (Nov. 4-8)-Difference and the Racial Other**

**Nov. 4**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapters 8-10)/Close Reading 2 Due

**Nov. 6**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapter 11-12)

**Nov. 8**-NO CLASS

## **Week 13 (Nov. 11-15)-Representing Native Culture**

**Nov. 11**-NO CLASS

**Nov. 13**-Visit the Museum of Natural History

**Nov. 15**-Continue Discussing *Solar Storms*

## **Week 14 (Nov. 18-22)-Saving Land, Saving Culture**

**Nov. 18**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapters 13-16)

**Nov. 20**-Read *Solar Storms* (Chapters 17-18)

**Nov. 22**-Read *Solar Storms* (Finish novel)

## **Week 15 (Nov. 25-29)-What is American Literature?**

**Nov. 25**-Class Wrap-Up

**Nov. 27**-NO CLASS

**Nov. 29**-NO CLASS

## **Week 16 (Dec. 2-6)-Freedom!**

**Dec. 2**-*Solar Storms* Presentations

**Dec. 4**-*Solar Storms* Presentations

## Course Policies

### *Text and Workshop Requirements*

- All assignments should be computer generated and professional in appearance.
- Bring two copies of drafts on all peer review days.
- Drafts should be complete and polished, not "rough."
- Submit all assignments at the beginning of class on the due date. Because deadlines are part of workplace writing, we will stick to them: *no late assignments*.

### *Attendance*

- Be present, on time, and prepared. If you are five or more minutes late, I will count you as tardy. Every three tardies you receive will count as an absence.
- If you have four unexcused absences, I will deduct 25 points from your participation grade; if you have five unexcused absences, I will deduct a full letter grade from your final grade. If you have six unexcused absences, I will deduct another full letter grade from your final grade. You **cannot** miss more than six classes and pass this course. This goes for excused and unexcused absences.
- When you miss class, you are responsible for getting any assignments in on time (i.e., by the beginning of class) and making up any work. You may turn assignments in electronically on days that you are absent (if electronic submission isn't already required).
- If you ever have an emergency (e.g. family issue or extended illness), please contact me and let me know what's going on. Ninety percent of the time it is possible to work out some kind of arrangement to complete an assignment or the course in a way that is satisfactory to both you and me.

### *Grade Appeals*

If you have questions regarding your final grade, see me first. After we meet, if you want to appeal your final grade, see or call Terry Harpold in the Department of English. The English Department will consider appeals for final semester grades, not individual assignment grades.

### *Grade Point Equivalences*

Visit <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html> in order to review the new UF policy (i.e., addition of minus grades).

## University Policies

### *Disability Services*

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

### *Academic Honesty*

All students are required to 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/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

### *Harassment*

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

## General Education Requirements

### *Composition*

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>

### *Writing Requirement (formerly Gordon Rule)*

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>