

# AML 2070.1623 Survey of American Literature: The Gothic

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MWF Period 7, RNK 0215

**Instructor:** Olubunmi M. Oguntolu

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**Office Hours:** MW Period 8, or by appointment

## Course Description

This Survey of American Literature course will explore an array of authors and forms representing the American gothic tradition. As counter-narratives challenging the normalcy of the U.S.'s official national story, the Gothic opens a space for questioning and investigating unutterable anxieties and desires of public and private spheres. In its conventions, the Gothic figures a series of unstable dialectics: between civility and barbarism, between secularism and spirituality, between dominance and marginality between progress and decadence, between present and past, and between sanity and lunacy. In the works of authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Charles W. Chestnut, Kate Chopin, Nella Larsen, Chester Himes, and Octavia Butler, we will investigate how Gothic fiction responds historically and transhistorically to events and trends of the human condition. We will draw upon the critical and theoretical approaches of Marxism, psychoanalysis, feminism, critical race theory, and post/structuralism to craft lenses to help us define the Gothic as we delve into the genre's ambiguous boundaries.

## Course Materials

Butler, Octavia E. *Dawn*. New York: Aspect, 1997. Print. ISBN: 9780446603775

Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2004. Print. ISBN: 9780807083697

Claremont, Chris, and Brent Anderson. *X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills*. New York: Marvel Comics, 2011. Print. ISBN: 9780785157267

Crow, Charles L., ed. *American Gothic: An Anthology from Salem Witchcraft to H. P. Lovecraft*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. Print. ISBN: 9780470659793

Gardner, Janet E. *Reading and Writing about Literature: A Portable Guide*. 3rd ed. Boston, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Print. ISBN: 9781457606496

Himes, Chester. *Cotton Comes to Harlem*. New York: Vintage, 1988. Print. ISBN: 9780394759999

Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. Ed. Thadious M. Davis. New York: Penguin Classics, 2003. Print. ISBN: 9780142437278

Loeb, Jeph, and Tim Sale. *Batman: The Long Halloween*. Burbank, CA: DC Comics, 2011. Print. ISBN: 9781401232597

**Please Note:** Additional assigned reading materials are located in the course E-learning/Canvas site. You are required to bring all readings to class on the day indicated on the syllabus schedule.

## Course Outcomes

Upon completing Survey of American Literature, you will be able to:

1. Illustrate critical evaluation and understanding of culturally diverse authors and texts;
2. Develop and demonstrate academic inquiry and research methods of literary and cultural issues relevant to the course texts;

3. Cultivate critical and analytical thinking and evaluation informed by literary theory and criticism;
4. Identify and construct effective clear, concise, and persuasive academic writing through multiple genres;
5. Formulate, draft, edit, and revise critical research study that incorporates scholarly analysis.

### Course Assignments and Evaluation

Complete assignment prompts with their corresponding rubrics are located within the E-learning/Canvas course site.

<b>Analytical Reading Responses</b>	20%
Responses help students develop close reading skills. In each analytical response, students will propose arguments to specified prompts. Your responses will provide concise, developed analyses establishing dialectics with class discussions and readings. After initial postings, students are required to provide meaningful comments to at least two of their classmates' posts.	
<b>Close Reading Assessments</b>	30%
A midterm and a final assessment will evaluate how well students closely read and analyze the course texts. Through identifications and critiques, students will demonstrate knowledge of the texts and understanding of literary terminology.	
<b>Discussion Leader Presentation</b>	5%
Each student will conduct one presentation on a critical article relating to topics from the course readings. The presentation will demonstrate analytical assessments and responses that lead to critical discussion questions to build methodologies for probing specific themes and tropes.	
<b>Critical Analysis Essay</b>	25%
Selecting among literary texts in the course, students will demonstrate critical reading, information synthesis, and comparative analysis. Students will provide a brief proposal to generate ideas for their prospective research to prepare for their critical analysis.	
<b>Participation</b>	20%
Participation includes attendance, assigned readings, progress conferences, homework, in-class writing and oral activities, and class discussions. In this discussion-based course, students are expected to regularly make significant and thoughtful contributions.	
<b>TOTAL</b>	100%

Grading Scale							
A	93-100%	B	83-86.9%	C	73-76.9%	D	63-66.9%
A-	90-92.9%	B-	80-82.9%	C-	70-72.9%	D-	60-62.9%
B+	87-89.9%	C+	77-79.9%	D+	67-69.9%	E	0-59.9%

### General Assessment Rubric

A	Insightful: You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, with care and precision, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a “B,” but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Work in the “A” range is not only correct and intriguing, but also illuminating. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
B	Proficient: You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range is competent, thoughtful, and considered, but it needs revision. To be in the “B” range, an essay must be complete in content, be well organized, and show special attention to style.
C	Satisfactory: You did what the assignment asked of you and demonstrated that you have a generalized comprehension of the ideas/films/essays you’re working with. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. Diction may be imprecise or unclear. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
D	Poor: You did what the assignment asked of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and/or the organization is hard to discern. Support is irrelevant, overgeneralized, lacks validity, and/or is absent. Ideas/texts are oversimplified. Work in this range may have no thesis statement, or may stray significantly from the thesis throughout the essay. Attention to style is often nonexistent or uneven.
E	An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work, or don't come to class, or those who have plagiarized. However, if your work shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment or demonstrates that you put little effort in completing it, you will receive a failing grade.

## Course Policies

### Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are **crucial and required**. Class participation includes contributing to class discussions; coming to class on time, prepared with books, articles, handouts, and homework; preparing for in-class activities; providing adequate drafts for group work; collaborating and participating in group activities; and overall working and paying close attention to the lectures and activities of the classroom. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively in each class session.

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy. **You will lose 10% of course participation points for each absence beyond three periods. If you miss more than six periods during the term, you will fail the entire course.** Missing double-period class meetings constitutes two absences. The university exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, you can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades. For more information on

UF's attendance policies, see:

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

**Please Note:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and required work. You will not earn credit for any in-class activity you miss due to absence. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Tardiness creates a problem for the entire class since it can disrupt work in progress. Tardiness will be reflected in lost participation points.

### **Classroom Conduct**

Please treat your classmates and myself with respect. Keep in mind that UF students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning: phones, personal data assistants, iPods, etc. are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please put them on silent and keep them out of sight.

### **Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities**

You are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### **Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission**

**I do not accept late work.** All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) documents to E-learning/Canvas by **11:00pm on the designated due date**. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All assignments and postings should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, single-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

### **Final Grade Appeals**

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

### **University Policies**

#### **General Education**

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-program.aspx>.

### Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit

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

### Statement of Writing Requirement

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-requirement.aspx>.

### Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. 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/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### Statement of 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.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>.

### Statement on 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: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code>.

### Course Schedule

24 August – 28 August
<p><b>Subject:</b> Introduction to Survey of American Literature: The Gothic</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> <i>Reading and Writing about Literature</i> Chapters 1-2 (26 Aug)</p> <p>    “Introduction” (26 Aug)</p> <p>    “The ‘Uncanny’” (26 Aug)</p> <p>    “Romancing the Shadow” (28 Aug)</p> <p>    <i>Reading and Writing about Literature</i> Chapters 4-5 (28 Aug)</p>
31 August – 4 September
<p><b>Subject:</b> Psyche: Tension between Sanity and Lunacy</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> <i>Dawn</i> Part 1 Chapter 1 – Part 2 Chapter 1 (31 Aug)</p> <p>    <i>Dawn</i> Part 2 Chapter 2 – Part 2 Chapter 9 (2 Sept)</p> <p>    <i>Dawn</i> Part 2 Chapter 10 – Part 3 Chapter 5 (4 Sept)</p> <p><b>Posts:</b> Presentation Sign-Up (4 Sept)</p>
8 September – 11 September (Labor Day 7 September)
<p><b>Subject:</b> Psyche: Tension between Sanity and Lunacy</p> <p><b>Readings:</b> <i>Dawn</i> Part 3 Chapter 6 – Part 3 Chapter 14 (9 Sept)</p> <p>    <i>Dawn</i> Part 4 (11 Sept)</p>

**14 September – 18 September****Subject:** Psyche: Tension between Sanity and Lunacy**Readings:** “Somnambulism” (14 Sept)

“Idiosyncrasies” (16 Sept)

“Circumstance” (18 Sept)

**Posts:** Reading Response – Psyche (18 Sept, 20 Sept)**21 September – 25 September****Subject:** Identity: Tension between Dominance and Marginality**Readings:** *Passing* Introduction; Part 1 (21 Sept)*Passing* Parts 2-3 (2 Sept) (23 Sept)

“The Sheriff’s Children” (25 Sept)

**28 September – 2 October****Subject:** Identity: Tension between Dominance and Marginality**Readings:** “Désiree’s Baby” (28 Sept)

“Dumb Witness” (30 Sept)

“Graphic Fiction” (2 Oct)

*Batman: The Long Halloween* Chapters 1-4 (2 Oct)**Posts:** Reading Response – Identity (2 Oct, 4 Oct)**5 October – 9 October****Subject:** Space: Tension between Progress and Decadence**Readings:** *Batman: The Long Halloween* Chapters 5-9 (5 Oct)*Batman: The Long Halloween* Chapters 10-13 (7 Oct)

“The Cask of Amontillado” (9 Oct)

**12 October – 16 October****Subject:** Space: Tension between Progress and Decadence**Readings:** “The Yellow Wallpaper” (12 Oct)

“The House That Was Not” (14 Oct)

*Cotton Comes to Harlem* Chapters 1-7 (16 Oct)**Posts:** Reading Response – Space (16 Oct, 18 Oct)**19 October – 23 October****Subject:** Order: Tension between Civility and Barbarism**Readings:** *Cotton Comes to Harlem* Chapters 8-15 (19 Oct)*Cotton Comes to Harlem* Chapters 16-22 (21 Oct)

“Young Goodman Brown” (23 Oct)

**Assignment Due: Close Reading Assessment Midterm (19 Oct)****26 October – 30 October****Subject:** Order: Tension between Civility and Barbarism**Readings:** “Hop Frog” (26 Oct)

“The Lynching of Jube Benson” (28 Oct)

*Kindred* p1-51 (30 Oct)**Posts:** Reading Response – Order (30 Oct, 1 Nov)**2 November – 5 November (Homecoming 6 November)****Subject:** Time: Tension between Present and Past**Readings:** *Kindred* p52-107 (2 Nov)*Kindred* p108-160 (4 Nov)**9 November – 13 November (Veteran’s Day 11 November)**

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**Subject:** Time: Tension between Present and Past

**Readings:** *Kindred* p160-213 (9 Nov)  
*Kindred* p213-264 (13 Nov)

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**16 November – 20 November**

**Subject:** Time: Tension between Present and Past

**Readings:** “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” (16 Nov)  
 “The Bell in the Fog” (18 Nov)  
 “The Outsider” (20 Nov)

**Posts:** Reading Response – Time (20 Nov, 22 Nov)

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**23 November – 24 November (Thanksgiving 25-27 November)**

**Subject:** Existence: Tension between Secularism and Spirituality

**Readings:** *X-Men: God Loves, Man Kills* (23 Nov)  
*Reading and Writing about Literature* Chapters 3, 8 (23 Nov)

**Posts:** Critical Analysis Topics and Questions (23 Nov, 30 Nov)

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**30 November – 4 December**

**Subject:** Existence: Tension between Secularism and Spirituality

**Readings:** “Chinnubie and the Owl” (30 Nov)  
 “The Foreigner” (2 Dec)  
 “The Eyes” (4 Dec)

**Posts:** Critical Analysis Scholarly Research (30 Nov)  
 Critical Analysis Detailed Outline (2 Dec, 6 Dec)  
 Reading Response – Existence (4 Dec, 6 Dec)

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**7 December – 9 December**

**Subject:** What Makes Literature Gothic?

**Assignment Due:** Close Reading Assessment Final (7 Dec)

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**14 December – 18 December Finals Week**

**Assignment Due:** Critical Analysis Essay (16 Dec)

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### **\*Progress Conferences**

You are required to set up at least two (2) progress conferences with me – the first by 14 October and the second by 7 December – to discuss the presentation and writing assignments you are working on. The conferences will take place in my office preferably during my office hours. It is up to you to schedule your progress conferences by emailing me in advance.