

AML2410: Issues in American Literature & Culture

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 MAT 0015

(Re)Writing American History: Historical Fiction and Its Place in the Classroom

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Historical fiction, produced in different historical moments for different ideological purposes, can complicate the transmission and understanding of history. As Sara Schwebel explains in *Child-Sized History: Fictions of the Past in U.S. Classrooms*, while historical fiction is often “understood to capture ‘truth’” (134), works of fiction and textbooks alike “are always products of a particular historical context” (3). The mission to communicate particular understandings of history through fiction is especially explicit in materials for children and adolescents, because questions of ethics and appropriateness can influence which aspects of the past are retold. Thus, the use of historical fiction in educational settings exemplifies how historical fiction, in general, can produce and disseminate fictive histories in American culture. This course will investigate historical fiction for children and adolescents in order to better understand the histories we chose to represent, the production of cultural memories, and the (re)writing of American history.

Throughout the semester, we will read historical fiction, ranging from texts published specifically for children and young adults to those originally “for adults” that have been adopted as children’s literature in classroom curricula. In order to better analyze and compare depictions of historical moments, the course will focus on three case studies of events often taught through historical fiction: the Salem Witch Trials, the American Revolutionary War, and the Civil Rights Movement. These focal points will allow our class to interrogate not only representations of history, but also depictions of gender, race, and class in different historical contexts. We will consider such questions as: how do these texts function both within and outside of the classroom? How do questions of audience and appropriateness, particularly for children, influence the transmission of a complex, often contested American past? How does the approach toward a particular audience impact the *telling* of historical narratives and how, in turn, do these narratives influence broader cultural (mis)understandings of the past? How do these texts resist or reinforce dominant historical narratives? Ultimately, how is the nation’s past (re)written through these depictions?

In addition to developing critical reading skills, we will also write about a variety of texts. Close-readings and class discussions will allow students to communicate their interpretations and responses throughout the semester. Students will also construct essays that engage with the assigned readings in thoughtful, convincing, and effective ways. Ideally, students should emerge from this course with a greater understanding of the individual texts as well as their position within the larger cultural, historical, political, and personal contexts of American literature.

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.requirement.aspx>

GOALS AND OUTCOMES

By the end of AML2410, students will be able to:

- Read, write, and think critically about American literature, children's literature, and educational materials, as well as texts beyond the scope of the course
- Discuss the historical and critical context of texts
- Communicate their ideas and analyses of texts
- Develop well-supported, persuasive, polished academic essays
- Establish and support significant historical, literary, and critical or theoretical claims
- Conduct formal research on literature and use secondary sources to support their arguments

REQUIRED TEXTS

Ann Petry, *Tituba of Salem Village* (1964) ISBN: 006440403X

Lisa Rowe Fraustino, *Dear America: I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance Trembley, Witness to the Salem Witch Trials, Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1961* (2004) ISBN: 0545311659

Esther Forbes, *Johnny Tremain* (1943) ISBN: 0440442508

James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier, *My Brother Sam is Dead* (1974) ISBN: 9780439783606

Laurie Halse Anderson, *Chains* (2008) ISBN: 1416905863

Christopher Paul Curtis, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963* (1997) ISBN: 0440414121

Rita Williams-Garcia, *One Crazy Summer* (2010) ISBN: 0060760907

These are the ISBNs for preferred editions, but you can purchase other versions. We will also read plays, poetry, and excerpts, which will be accessible via Canvas.

Electronic copies on permitted electronic devices (see classroom policies) are allowed, but hard copies are preferred. **Failure to have the required reading, as well as notes and/or discussion questions, will count as an absence.**

ASSIGNMENTS (Total Points Possible: 1000)

In-class Presentation (5 minutes; 50 points)

Each student will contextualize one class period's reading through a brief presentation that covers a specific cultural or historical aspect of the assigned text(s). The presentation *must be* researched and properly cited. Students will offer new information to enrich the class discussion and thus the presentations should be informative, rather than persuasive. Students should also include an explanation of how the presentation topic relates to the day's reading. No written component is required, but students must submit a properly formatted Works Cited on the presentation day. Through this assignment, students will have the opportunity to develop stronger research skills and practice speaking in front of an audience.

Presentations will be scheduled at the beginning of the semester. Please note barring extraordinary circumstances, presentations will not be rescheduled. Students are strongly encouraged to meet with the instructor before their scheduled presentations.

Reading Responses (3 responses, 400-500 words each; 150 points total)

Throughout the semester, students will write three short papers critically responding to the class readings. Each response should focus on one text read in class. In these responses, students can close-read the text(s), situate it in its historical context, and/or offer a new perspective on the work or writer, as long as the argument demonstrates an engagement with the text in a critical fashion. Each response must follow the same academic writing style required of standard essays, including well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, well-supported claims, and effective stylistic elements. The purpose is to facilitate dynamic reading experiences, critical thinking, and an interactive discourse community. Each response should be on a different text, but the ideas explored in these responses can be further developed in longer papers.

Outlines (3 outlines, 300 words each; 75 points total)

For each paper, students will turn in an outline detailing their argument prior to the paper's due date (see reading schedule for due dates). It should be a formal full-sentence outline, with a purpose statement, developed thesis statement, and textual evidence. Outlines can be turned in early, but must be submitted as a hard copy in class.

Close Reading Analysis (900 words; 150 points)

Students will choose one assigned reading and conduct a persuasive close-reading of part of that work. In this assignment, students will analyze the selection (a passage from a novel or short story or a poem) and develop an argument about the way in which the author's composition influences your thematic reading. This assignment is designed to assess analytical and critical skills, so no outside research should be conducted.

Critical Analysis (1200 words; 200 points)

Students will perform an extended critical analysis of one of the texts already studied in class. In this assignment, students will develop a thematic reading and then use that theme to analyze the text. The goal of this assignment is to develop a student's ability to formulate a specific and substantial critical argument that addresses a significant aspect of a text and justifies its claims through a systematic critique of two or three detailed textual examples. Historical secondary research *may* be incorporated, but is not required for this assignment. Topics must be discussed with the instructor before you begin writing.

Final Paper: Researched Critical Analysis (1800 words; 250 points)

In this assignment, students 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 literary texts through a particular theoretical, historical, or critical lens. Students will develop a topic of their own choosing, subject to instructor's approval. This assignment is an opportunity to develop unique, interesting arguments. The paper should incorporate both primary and secondary texts and offer evidence of the student's critical thinking and interpretive abilities.

Class Discussion Prompts (25 points total)

Over the course of the semester, students are required to bring in class discussion prompts for a minimum of five classes. The prompt must include a *typed* insight (2-3 sentences) about the text and a discussion question. It must be brought to the class meeting when we will discuss that text and turned in at the end of the period.

Participation (100 points)

In order to develop an open, engaging community of critical thinkers, we must all actively participate in the learning process. Completing course assignments and attending class fulfills part of your commitment to the class. Students must also participate in class discussions and activities (including peer reviews, group work, and quizzes), as well as complete any out-of-class activities or homework assigned. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Failure to be prepared for or to contribute to in-class activities and discussion will lower your participation grade.

Please note: I am always available to discuss your papers with you during the writing process, if you contact me in a timely manner. When you have any questions or concerns about your work, please feel free to e-mail, visit during office hours, or schedule an appointment with me. You can also visit the Writing Studio in Tigert 302 for concerns regarding grammar, punctuation, or style. Visit their site at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/> for more information.

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 be failed. Do not rely on your instructor for copy-editing, even on drafts. 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.

Assignments that do not meet the minimum word count will receive zero credit.

As the instructor, it is my duty to evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

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

This course can satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. 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>

Please note: a grade of "C-" **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

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

Grade Appeals

For this 2000-level course, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Department of English Program Assistant. Please note that grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

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.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	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.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.

STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	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.
MECHANICS	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.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Assignment Formatting and Submission

All written assignments must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1" margins on all sides. Format, citations, and documentation must follow MLA style. Format the page number in the top right of each page, and title your submissions. Be sure to staple papers before submitting hard copies. Unstapled papers will not be accepted.

All papers must be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to Canvas. Peer-edited rough drafts must be turned in the day the final draft is due. Reading responses are submitted on Canvas *and* as a hard copy in class. Outlines and discussion prompts must be submitted as hard copies (typed), but *not* on Canvas. All assignments are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. Late assignments **will not be accepted** unless you have made specific arrangements with the instructor prior to the submission of the late work.

Attendance

In AML2410, students are required to participate as active members of the learning community. Each student is allowed **three** absences. Each absence beyond the first three absences will lower your overall grade by 20 points (per absence). **If you miss more than seven periods, you will fail the course automatically.** If you enter class after the official start of the period, you are late—which disrupts the entire class. **Three instances of tardiness count as one absence.** Entering the classroom more than 15 minutes after the class begins counts as an absence.

The University exempts from this policy **only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Inform me as early as possible in advance if you will miss class due to a university-approved reason (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.). Similarly, please inform me in advance if you will miss class to observe a religious holiday. If you have a learning disability, hardship, or other special dispensation approved by the Office of Student Affairs, please meet with me to discuss your requirements as early as possible.

Please note: If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that 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 all students demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from their own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Conferences

I encourage you to make an appointment to see me during my office hours, especially when you have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on your work.

Throughout the semester, there are two mandatory conference days. Missing your scheduled conference will count as an absence for that class day.

Electronic Devices

No disruptions from cell phones of any kind will be tolerated. The instructor reserves the right to require those who break this rule to leave the classroom, which will count as a day's absence. In the event of a personal situation that requires your cell phone to be on, please notify the instructor before class.

You can use laptop computers and other portable electronic devices in class for the purposes of taking notes during discussion, referencing electronic texts, or for in-class presentations. Web browsing, emailing, chatting, etc. unrelated to class activities are, however, inappropriate and will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, the instructor reserves the right to prohibit the use of **all** electronic devices in class by individual students and/or the class as a whole.

Harassment

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires much contact, collaboration, and dialogue among students, it is essential that each student work to create an environment of respect and tolerance.

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>

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a

resubmission or a review of graded papers, it is your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Peer Review

On the dates marked for peer review, you must bring a **completed draft** of your work to class, and be prepared to critique that of your peers. Absences on peer review days will affect your participation grade, and neglecting to submit a full draft will reduce your grade on the final work. Missed peer reviews will cost the student ten points and failing to submit a draft will lower the final grade on the paper by ten points/one letter grade, at the instructor's discretion.

Plagiarism

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student.honor.code.aspx>

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

(University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 8 July 2011)

You should never copy and paste something from the Internet (or any work) without providing the exact location from which it came.

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!

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/>

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

This schedule is subject to change. The online syllabus supersedes the paper copy. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus.

* indicates that the text(s) will be available through Canvas

Week	Date	Readings Due	Assignments Due
Week 1	W: 1/6	Course introduction and syllabus	
	F: 1/8	Learning About Historical Fiction in the Classroom Sara L. Schwebel, <i>Child-Sized History: Fictions of the Past in U.S. Classrooms</i> , excerpt: “Introduction” (p. 1-9) and “Historical Fiction in the Classroom” (p. 131-151)*	
Week 2	M: 1/11	Sara L. Schwebel, <i>Child-Sized History</i> , excerpt: “Classroom Entry” (p. 11-34)* Workshop: Building arguments	
UNIT 1: Learning About the Salem Witch Trials			
	W: 1/13	Power, Persecution, and Gender: Teaching the Salem Witch Trials <i>Introduce reading responses, class discussion prompts, and in-class presentations</i>	
	F: 1/15	<i>The Salem Belle</i> (1842) excerpt: “Introduction”* and John R. Musick, <i>The Witch of Salem, or Credulity Run Mad</i> (1893) excerpt: “Preface”* Workshop: Preparing for in-class presentations	
Week 3	M: 1/18	NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	
	W: 1/20	<i>Introduce Paper #1: Close Reading</i> Workshop: How to close read	
	F: 1/22	Arthur Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> (1953)*	
Week 4	M: 1/25	Arthur Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> (1953)*	
	W: 1/27	Arthur Miller, <i>The Crucible</i> (1953)*	Response #1 Due
	F: 1/29	Conferences – schedule with instructor	
Week 5	M: 2/1	Workshop: Library resources	
	W: 2/3	Ann Petry, <i>Tituba of Salem Village</i> (1964)	Outline #1 due
	F: 2/5	Ann Petry, <i>Tituba of Salem Village</i> (1964)	
Week 6	M: 2/8	Lisa Rowe Fraustino, <i>Dear America: I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance Trembley, Witness to the Salem Witch Trials, Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1961</i> (2004)	

	W: 2/10	Lisa Rowe Fraustino, <i>Dear America: I Walk in Dread: The Diary of Deliverance...</i> (2004)	
	F: 2/12	Workshop: Editing for peer review Close Reading Peer Review	Rough draft of Paper #1 due
UNIT 2: Learning About the Revolutionary War			
Week 7	M: 2/15	National Memory and Myth: Teaching the Revolutionary War Workshop: Research techniques	Final draft of Paper #1 due
	W: 2/17	Alice Turner Curtis, <i>A Little Maid of Old Philadelphia</i> (1919), excerpt* Complete Mission #1: For Crown or Colony? http://www.mission-us.org/pages/mission-1	
	F: 2/19	Esther Forbes, <i>Johnny Tremain</i> (1943) <i>Introduce Paper #2: Critical Analysis</i>	
Week 8	M: 2/22	Esther Forbes, <i>Johnny Tremain</i> (1943)	
	W: 2/24	Esther Forbes, <i>Johnny Tremain</i> (1943)	
	F: 2/26	Workshop: Revising and reverse outlining	Response #2 due
Week 9	2/29-3/4	NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK	
Week 10	M: 3/7	James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier, <i>My Brother Sam is Dead</i> (1974)	
	W: 3/9	James Lincoln Collier and Christopher Collier, <i>My Brother Sam is Dead</i> (1974)	
	F: 3/11	Laurie Halse Anderson, <i>Chains</i> (2008)	Outline #2 due
Week 11	M: 3/14	Laurie Halse Anderson, <i>Chains</i> (2008)	
	W: 3/16	Laurie Halse Anderson, <i>Chains</i> (2008)	
	F: 3/18	Laurie Halse Anderson, <i>Chains</i> (2008)	
Week 12	M: 3/21	Critical Analysis Peer Review	Rough draft of Paper #2 due
UNIT 3: Learning About the Civil Rights Movement			
	W: 3/23	Race, Rights, Rhetoric, Revisions: Teaching the Civil Rights Movement In-class reading: picture books about the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955-1956	Final draft of Paper #2 due
	F: 3/25	Sam Dillon, “Students’ Knowledge of Civil Rights History Has Deteriorated, Study Finds” (New York Times, Sept. 28 2011)* Southern Poverty Law Center, “Teaching the Movement: The State Standards We Deserve” (2011) excerpt* <i>Introduce Final Paper: Researched Critical Analysis</i>	

Week 13	M: 3/28	Toni Morrison, <i>Remember: The Journey to School Integration</i> (2004), excerpt*	
	W: 3/30	Christopher Paul Curtis, <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</i> (1997) Workshop: Counterarguments	
	F: 4/1	Christopher Paul Curtis, <i>The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963</i> (1997)	
Week 14	M: 4/4	Carole Boston Weatherford, <i>Birmingham, 1963</i> (2007) excerpt*	
	W: 4/6	Workshop: Coherence and concision	Response #3 Due
	F: 4/8	Rita Williams-Garcia, <i>One Crazy Summer</i> (2010)	
Week 15	M: 4/11	Rita Williams-Garcia, <i>One Crazy Summer</i> (2010)	
	W: 4/13	Rita Williams-Garcia, <i>One Crazy Summer</i> (2010)	Outline #3 due
	F: 4/15	Conferences – schedule with instructor	
Week 16	M: 4/18	Learning About American History: (Re)Considering Historical Fiction in the Classroom	
	W: 4/20	Last day of class Researched Critical Analysis Peer Review	Rough draft of Final Paper due

Final Paper due 4/22 via Canvas