

LIT 2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Section: 17CB

Time: MWF period 6

Room: TUR 2333

Instructor: Derrick King

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Office Hours: Monday, periods 4 and 5; by appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the role literature has played in individuals' lives and in society. It is centered on three questions: What is literature? Why do we write literature? And why do we read literature? It introduces students to a range of literary genres, from different countries and historical periods.

Among the primary aims of this course is to help students develop the critical skill of analysis and interpretation. Students will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical contexts shape the meaning and significance of literature. By becoming more skillful readers of literature and its contexts, students become better readers of the worlds that literature addresses, develop their ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand their own relationship to science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In addition to gaining a deeper appreciation of the expressive potential of language and the varieties of literature, students will develop a broader cultural literacy and an understanding of the changing definition and role of literature in society.

Therefore, by the conclusion of the course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works and the structures and conventions of different literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analysis, while identifying and interpreting formal and genre-related elements in the texts.
3. Critically assess the variety of roles that literature has played historically and continues to play in the human experience.
4. Draw connections between literary texts and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and reading.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Note: please purchase the edition listed below to ensure we will all have the same pagination.

- Luigi Pirandello, *Six Characters in Search of an Author*. Trans. Edward Storer (Dover Thrift) ISBN: 0486299929
- José Saramago, *The Tale of the Unknown Island*. Trans. Margaret Jull Costa (Harcourt) ISBN: 0156013037
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*. Trans. Stuart Woolf (Touchstone) ISBN: 0020291922
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage) ISBN: 9781400033416
- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy* (Longman) ISBN: 9780582308459
- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home* (First Mariner Books) ISBN: 0618871713

All other readings listed on the course schedule will be made available to you via a link on the syllabus or through our Canvas site.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (10%)
- 10 Reading Quizzes (10%)
- 10 Brief Responses (20%)
- 1 Close Reading of a literary text or passage (15%)
- 1 Take Home Exam (20%)
- 1 Critical Analysis paper (25%)

1. Attendance & Participation (10%)

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken daily. Late arrivals to class will count as half an absence. Students will lose 1% from their attendance and participation grade for every unexcused absence. Absences will be excused only in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class and for making up all assignments. Students are responsible for all work covered in class, all announcements, and all changes to the syllabus made in class.

Participation: Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class discussions, demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade. Bring texts to class every day—either electronic copies, print-outs, or books.

2. 10 Reading Quizzes (10%)

I will periodically begin class with a short reading quiz to make sure students did the required reading. These quizzes will be randomly distributed throughout the semester, so you should always be prepared!

3. *10 Brief responses (20%)*

Ten times over the semester students are required to write a brief (300 word) response to the day's reading. These responses must be uploaded to Canvas BEFORE class the day on which they are due. We will begin class by discussing your responses, so you might want to bring an electronic or physical copy to class.

These responses raise either *interpretive* or *critical* questions concerned with textual meaning. They comment on themes, figurative language and symbolism within the narrative. They also may make judgments regarding the period, history, politics and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of interpretive and critical responses indicates that there may well be neither simply "right" nor simply "wrong" answers; the success of a response is based on the evidence and reasoning students employ to support their analysis and judgment. Papers will be graded on a 10-point scale, with 10 being the very best, and so on.

Due dates for these responses appear on the course schedule below.

4. *Close Reading Assignment: 750 words (15%)*

This assignment will test student skills in close reading, especially as that skill pertains to works of poetry and short fiction. Students will be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through a close reading. No outside sources may be used for this assignment.

5. *Exam (20%)*

This take-home exam will be distributed on-line (via Canvas). The exam will be comprised of short essay questions based on readings, lectures and discussion. Submitted exams will be assessed for evidence of collusion. This assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale.

6. *Critical Analysis Paper: 1,500 words (25%)*

This assignment asks students to combine close reading skills with critical concepts or historical information introduced in class or supplemental readings. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence. Although students will work within the framework of concepts or ideas introduced in class, this assignment is not a research paper.

**The papers (close reading and critical analysis) and Exam will be graded on a 100-point scale.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Makeup Policy: Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), there will be no make-up option for a missed exam or late assignment. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged by email or in person prior to the expected absence. In case of illness, student should contact instructor on his or her return to classes and produce documentation of their illness or emergency.

Cell phone and laptop policy: Students must turn cell phones to silent before coming to class. Cell phones may never be used in class. Each time a student's cell phone rings or each time that a student texts during class, 1% will be deducted from that student's final grade. Students may use laptops, e-readers, or tablets in class only to view texts under discussion. A student who surfs the internet or uses Facebook, etc. in class will lose 1% from the final grade for each occurrence.

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

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

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

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

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

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://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Statement on 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>

Sexual Assault and Harassment: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/addressing_sexual_misconduct/reporting_sexual_misconduct/

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/interpersonal-violence>

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/group-listings>

<http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/programs/strive>

http://www.police.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/UPD-Safe-Campus-2014_Rev10-15-14.pdf

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Classroom Behavior: I will not tolerate any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity, either in class discussion or in written assignments. In addition, please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Many 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.

A Note on Course Content: At times this semester we will be discussing literary works that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you ever feel the need to step outside

during one of these discussions, you may always do so without academic penalty. (You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually.) If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material, either with the class or with me afterwards, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change; students are responsible for all changes made to the syllabus and all changes announced in class, even if they are absent on the day of the announcement. It is each student's responsibility to keep up with the readings and all assignments.

Note: you will be expected to have read all the texts listed on each day prior to that day's discussion.

I. What is Literature?

Week One

W 1/6 Introduction

F 1/8 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream"; Langston Hughes, "Let America be America Again" (Canvas)

Week Two: Epic

M 1/11 *The Odyssey* Book I (Canvas)

W 1/13 *The Odyssey* Book XIX (Canvas)

F 1/15 Dorothy Parker, "Penelope" (Canvas); Finish *Odyssey* Discussion

Week Three: Drama

M 1/18 NO CLASS

W 1/20 *Six Characters in Search of an Author* Act I **Reading Response Due**

F 1/22 *Six Characters in Search of an Author* Acts II-III

Week Four: Poetry

M 1/25 Emily Dickinson, "Essential Oils are Wrung"; "I Started Early"; "It was not death" (Canvas)

W 1/27 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself" (1881) parts 1-20 (Canvas) **Reading Response Due**

F 1/29 "Song of Myself" parts 21-33

Week Five: Poetry

M 2/1 "Song of Myself," finish

W 2/3 Allen Ginsburg, "A Supermarket in California"; "Footnote to Howl" (Canvas) **Reading Response Due**

F 2/5 Gwendolyn Brooks, "kitchenette building"; "of De Witt Williams on his way to Lincoln Cemetery" (Canvas)

Week Six: Prose

M 2/8 Kafka, "In the Penal Colony" (Canvas)
W 2/10 Flannery O'Conner, "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (Canvas)
F 2/12 Alice Munro, "Moons of Jupiter" (Canvas) **Close Reading Due**

Week Seven: Prose

M 2/15 Marcel Proust, from *Swann's Way*: Overture, 1-14 (Canvas)
W 2/17 Marcel Proust from *Swann's Way*: Overture, finish. **Reading Response Due**
F 2/19 *Tale of the Unknown Island*

II. Why Do We Write?

Week Eight

M 2/22 *Survival in Auschwitz* 9-70
W 2/24 *Survival in Auschwitz* 71-122
F 2/26 *Survival in Auschwitz*, finish; **Exam Due Sunday 2/28**

Spring Break

Week Ten

M 3/7 *Beloved* 3-75
W 3/9 *Beloved* 76-158
F 3/11 *Beloved* 159-195; Forward. **Reading Response Due**

Week Eleven

M 3/14 *Beloved* 199-235
W 3/16 *Beloved* 236-277
F 3/18 *Beloved*, finish. **Reading Response Due**

Week Twelve

M 3/21 Langston Hughes, "October 16: The Raid"; "Christ in Alabama"; "Harlem" (Canvas)
W 3/23 Audre Lorde, "Afterimages" (Canvas) **Reading Response Due**
F 3/25 Derrick Bell, "The Space Traders" (Canvas)

III. Why Do We Read?

Week Thirteen

M 3/28 Marianne Moore, "The Pangolin"; "The Fish" (Canvas)
W 3/30 Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish"; "Pink Dog" (Canvas) **Reading Response Due**
F 4/1 Elizabeth Bishop, "Roosters"; "One Art" (Canvas)

Week Fourteen

M 4/4 *Sister Killjoy* 1-83

W 4/6 *Sister Killjoy* 84-108

F 4/8 *Sister Killjoy*, finish. **Reading Response Due**

Week Fifteen

M 4/11 *Fun Home* 1-54

W 4/13 *Fun Home* 55-120

F 4/15 *Fun Home*, finish. **Reading Response Due**

Week Sixteen

M 4/18 Gregory Currie, "Does Great Literature Make us Better?"

| [\(http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/\)](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/)

W 4/20 Course Wrap up; **Critical Analysis Paper Due Friday 4/22**