

AML 2070 (0211): Survey of American Literature

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Fall 2016, T8-9, R9
Location: MAT 0102

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The American literature tradition encompasses a broad range of experiences and narratives. Because the scope of the canon is so large that it would be impossible to fit into a semester-long period, we will be examining an assortment of perspectives in order to situate our understanding of the way “American-ness” is expressed in literature, and even how the very notion of it is sometimes rejected. To do this, we will be reading shorter novels, short stories, essays, and poems. For the most part, we will be looking at the twentieth-century, although a few of our texts will come before that. The texts have been selected to provide you with a variety of historical and sociopolitical perspectives that explore “American-ness” in quite different ways, especially in a country that is constantly being re-imagined, revised, and re-translated.

The aims of this course are to expose you to a variety of foundational works, especially marginalized writers, to develop critical thinking and original, sophisticated arguments about the texts, and to be able to discuss the texts in an eloquent and thoughtful manner.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the end of the course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Convey an understanding of the foundations of American literature
- Synthesize textual observations and course themes into essay-length arguments
- Situate the texts in relation to one another and within the context of the canon
- Conduct formal research in an academic manner
- Develop critical reading and thinking skills
- Improve grammar and mechanics, as well as revision skills

REQUIRED TEXTS

(Texts not listed below will be available in electronic form on Canvas.)

- The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B Du Bois. 978-0679428022 (1903)
(Amazon has a free kindle version)
- Eight Tales From the Major Phase, Henry James. 978-0156687423 (1903)
- Ethan Frome, Edith Wharton. 978-1534802506 (1911)
- Winesburg, Ohio, Sherwood Anderson. 978-0486282695 (1919)
- Cane, Jean Toomer. 978-0871401519 (1923)
- The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty, Eudora Welty. 978-0156189217 (1936)
- Sweet Thursday, John Steinbeck. 978-0143039471 (1954)
- Americana, Don DeLillo. 978-0140119480 (1971)

ASSIGNMENTS

- **Weekly Response Papers-** (5 x 400 words = 2000 total) Throughout the semester, you'll be asked to "respond" to the reading in some way. Share your original insights about the text, questions the text poses, how the text relates to others, or anything else that would make for a fruitful discussion.
- **Presentation-** For each of our readings, one of your classmates will give a brief presentation as an introduction to the text as well as a way to guide our discussion. You'll be asked to provide background context, critical ideas, and some questions to initiate the conversation. When it is your time to present, you'll turn in a short write-up of your notes and questions so that the class can follow along.
- **Close Reading-** (1000 words) You'll choose a selected passage or section from one of the texts we have read so far and you'll apply critical reading skills to demonstrate your understanding of the selected passage. We'll discuss strategies in class. The point is to show how effectively you can examine a passage and relate it to the larger theme of the text it belongs to.
- **Midterm Paper-** (1000 words) Think of this as practice for your final paper. In about 4-5 pages, you'll present and defend an argument about one of the texts we have read so far. You should incorporate at least three critical sources which speak to your topic, and consider the ways they either defend or cause you to revise your argument.
- **Final Paper-** (2000 words) As the final assignment, you'll develop (at the very least) an 8-page paper that explores an original argument about the text. You should consult at least five critical sources, and you will develop a thematic analysis of the text that examines and reveals a sophisticated argument.
- **Outlines-** For both of the papers, you'll turn in an outline sometime before the assignment illustrating your intentions and organization of your thought process to your argument. I will provide feedback and suggestions.

Grading Percentages

Assignment	Value
Weekly Response Papers	25% (5x5)
Presentation	10%
Close Reading	10%
Midterm Paper	15%
Final Paper	20%
Outlines	10% (2x5)
Class Preparation/Participation	10%
	100%

GRADING RUBRIC

Letter Grade System

“A” –A paper at this grade was done at an extraordinarily high-quality level. The work demonstrates an in-depth understanding of the concepts covered, and shows a thoughtful amount of creativity. This paper shows all the qualities listed below for a “B”, but goes beyond what was asked in terms of developing content and analysis. Papers at this level are usually free of grammatical errors.

“B” –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment at a high-quality level. The work is complete and may need further revision, but works at an elementary level. The style is straightforward and the organization is logical. It may contain grammatical errors, but it is otherwise readable.

“C” –A paper at this grade has done what was asked of the assignment. The work may need significant revision, but is complete in content and has logical organization. This paper may contain more grammatical errors that render it unreadable at times.

“D” –A paper at this grade has completed the assignment at level of poor quality. The work needs significant revision. It is usually incomplete and the organization doesn’t make sense. Attention to style is nonexistent.

“E” –A paper that does not address the needs of the assignment or shows little effort will result in a failing grade.

Check System

√+ — “Check-plus quality work” is thoughtful, sophisticated work that goes beyond what is asked of the assignment. (The point value is at 10 points.)

√ — “Check quality work” is work that does what the assignment asks, no more and no less. (7.5 points)

√- — “Check-minus quality work” is usually that of a hurried and sloppy quality, or a disregard for the prompt or assignment. (5 points)

Sometimes you might fall between a check and a check plus (or minus) and the points will be averaged.

Grading Scale

A 4.0 93-100%	C 2.0 73-76%
A- 3.67 90-92%	C- 1.67 70-72%
B+ 3.33 87-89%	D+ 1.33 67-69%
B 3.0 83-86%	D 1.0 63-66%
B- 2.67 80-82%	D- 0.67 60-62%
C+ 2.33 77-79%	E 0.00 0-59%

CLASS POLICIES

1. **Attendance-** Attendance is mandatory, though exemptions can be made for religious holidays, medical or family emergencies, and university-sponsored events such as athletics and band. Please provide documentation in advance. Vis-à-vis the University attendance policies, you are allowed up to six absences of a fifty minute class. Because we meet twice a week and our Tuesday class is a double period, a Tuesday absence will count as two absences. If you are expecting to be absent, be sure to email me your work sometime before class AND bring a hardcopy of your work to class the following week. (Or you may put it in my mailbox.)
2. **Late Material-** Late material will be accepted only once during the semester—that means you have one grace period to have a printer malfunction or a brain slip-up. I am happy to provide extensions, but please see me at least 4 days in advance (before the due date). I will go over your reason and decide if an extension is needed.
3. **Tardiness-** Please arrive on time—late arrivals disrupt the entire class, and it is frustrating for your peers to have to re-listen to the instructions again. Tardiness will be defined as being more than 5 minutes late. Two tardies= 1 absence.
4. **Preparation & Participation-** Come prepared. This means printing out all of the reading and/or hard copies of the texts AND coming armed with comments and reactions to the readings. Participation livens up the class and produces more fruitful discussions, and I'd like to hear from everybody in the class. Please try to contribute at least once per class meeting.
5. **Disruptions-** No cell phones or computers, nor talking in class at inappropriate times. I will write you down without warning, and two instances of this = 1 tardy. Also remember that people come from all types of backgrounds and have gone through all types of experiences. It is our job to make this a welcoming environment. Any disruptions will have you dismissed from the class.
6. **Revisions-** I allow one revision from one of your response papers—this leaves room for trial and error. I want to see you break out of your comfort zone and push yourself.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Statement of Composition

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

Student Disability Accommodations

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/>.

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.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>.

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: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>.

Evaluations

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/results>.

UF Grading Policies

For questions about the University's grade policies, please see, <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

COURSE SCHEDULE

(Last names correspond to short stories, titles are longer texts. Four of the response papers are assigned due dates. You will choose one of the other readings to respond to (anytime during the semester) for your last one.)

T (8/23): Syllabus, Introduction to the Course

TR (8/25): Winesburg, Ohio, Lesson on Close-Reading

T (8/30): Winesburg, Ohio

TR (9/1): Winesburg, Ohio

T (9/6): Perkins Gilman, Poems (Dickinson)

TR (9/8): Ethan Frome

T (9/13): Ethan Frome,

TR (9/15): Ethan Frome, **RESPONSE PAPER #1**

T (9/20): James

TR (9/22): James **CLOSE READING DUE**

T (9/27): James

TR (9/29): Benito Cereno

T (10/4): Melville Wrap-up, Du Bois, **RESPONSE PAPER #2**

TR (10/6): Du Bois, Douglass, **OUTLINE DUE VIA EMAIL**

T (10/11): Cane

TR (10/13): Poems (Harlem Renaissance)

T (10/18): Cather, **MIDTERM PAPER DUE**

TR (10/20): Steinbeck intro, Sweet Thursday

T (10/25): Sweet Thursday

TR (10/27): Sweet Thursday

T (11/1): O'Connor, Jackson, **RESPONSE PAPER #3**

TR (11/3): O'Connor

T (11/8): Welty

TR (11/10): Hemmingway

T (11/15): Poems (Plath, Williams, Bishop, Merrill), **RESPONSE PAPER #4**

TR (11/17): Carver, **OUTLINE DUE VIA EMAIL**

T (11/22): Carver

TR (11/24): **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

T (11/29): selections from Americana

TR (12/1): selections from Americana

T (12/6): **LAST DAY OF CLASS**

FINAL PAPER DUE THURSDAY 12/8