

AML 2070: Survey of American Literature: The Short Story and the American Experience

Course Section: 03A5

Course Time: MWF Period 7 (1:55pm-2:45pm)

Location: MAT 14 (Matherly Hall)

Instructor: Maurice A. Evers

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Office: TUR

Office Hours: TBA, and by appointment.

Course Description

This survey will introduce students to major writers and issues found in the history of American literature through a cross-genre examination of the literary form of the short story. It will look at key texts and their relationships with gender, sexuality, race, and class. The course will also follow various time period, diversity of authors, and styles within American literature, social, historical and cultural politics over the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. We will attend to the following questions throughout the course of the semester: How do we classify writers' works as contributions to the debate of art or entertainment? What might short stories reveal about the American experience? Because short stories were—and in some cases, still are—published in more popular culture mediums of publication like magazines and newspapers (*The Saturday Evening Post*, *The New Yorker*, *Playboy*, *Esquire*), is the mode of dissemination an important consideration? Is the short story—as a form—now extinct?

Course Objectives

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

- demonstrate critical thinking, reading, and writing skills by analyzing a variety of literary and artistic themes.
- situate texts within their American and global historical contexts.
- identify an author's overall argument, analyze content, and synthesize critical sources.
- write clearly, coherently, and concisely.
- use evidence to support theses.

Required Course Texts

The Oxford Book of American Short Stories (978-0199744398)

Plath, Sylvia. *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams: Short Stories, Prose, and Diary Excerpts* (978-0061549472)

Senna, Danzy. *You Are Free: Stories* (978-1594485077)

Assignment Descriptions (Total Points Possible: 1000)

Reading Quizzes and In-Class Participation 75 pts

Quizzes: To encourage detailed reading, there will be weekly quizzes in order to ensure and supplement out-of-class assignments. Quizzes will take place during the first ten minutes of class, and will be on the reading assigned for that day. They can be either multiple choice or short essay, both open and closed book, both announced and unannounced. There are no make-ups on quizzes for any reason.

In-Class Participation: Students should read each of the texts for its central ideas, the elements of the text, and themes the works deal with. Students are encouraged to find up to three critical resources (critical summaries, scholarly journal articles, etc.) to supplement their reading and contribute to their overall understanding of the text. Additionally, students are expected to bring their notes to class and be prepared to engage in class discussions.

Reading Responses (500 words, 5 entries) 125 pts

Reading responses should be thoughtful, focused and organized, showing critical thinking and an attempt to relate the content to ideas and themes discussed in class. Each reading response should do three things: 1) identify the author's central idea; 2) analyze elements of the text in connection to larger themes; 3) critique the text. Do not summarize the text; rather, take an analytical approach to the text. Each student is responsible for writing a response to five total readings, and can choose to which texts he/she responds; however, responses are due approximately every two weeks (excepting Holidays and essay submissions days) on the day of the reading to which you respond. Reading responses will be due at the beginning of class. No late responses will be accepted. Further instructions and sample reading responses will be provided in class.

Essay One: Close Reading (750 words) 100 pts

Choose one short story we have read in class to (re)read closely. Students will analyze the passage by paying close attention to its composition (diction, syntax, rhythm, theme, symbols, characters, plot devices, etc.) and will make an argument about the way in which the author's composition influences your thematic reading. Students might find it helpful to contact me with a selected passage before beginning the writing process to help facilitate a successful close reading.

Essay Two: Thematic Analysis Paper (1200 words) 200 pts

This paper will consist of a thematic analysis of one of the short stories we are reading for class. The essay will incorporate *at least* two critical sources that speak to similar issues and themes you are exploring in your texts. Consider the ways in which scholarly criticism can help you to build your own original arguments on the text. As always, I encourage you to consult with me before you begin the writing process.

Essay Three: Literary Research Paper (1550-2200 words) 300 pts

In this essay, you will use the skills we have built throughout the course and in our previous essays. Your paper should have a strong, clear, and creative argument about one or two related texts of your choosing, and should consult at least *five* critical, scholarly sources. You should focus your topic on the theme(s), symbol(s), plot devices, character types and link the works and authors. Provide a historical and literary context for your texts and your thesis. Then, analyze, argue and develop your thesis. This research paper should not be a regurgitation of the issues, ideas, and themes we have discussed in class, but should instead be a result of your own critical thinking and understanding of the text.

Two Revisions 100 pts each

Students will revise two earlier papers based on comments from the instructor and knowledge gained from in-class discussion. Revisions must include a one-page memo clearly and effectively outlining the changes you have made to strengthen your new draft. Additionally, students must include their original essay with instructor’s comments and should highlight each change made. Where students disagree with comments, please circle the original comment and explain why you are not following it. Revisions should be significantly improved from the original essay, and all changes should be made critically and with clear explanation. Due dates TBD.

Total points for this course = 1,000 points

Total word count for this course = 6,000 words

Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage (Point %)
A	4.0	93–100
A-	3.67	90–92
B+	3.33	87–89
B	3.0	83–86
B-	2.67	80–82
C+	2.33	77–79
C	2.0	73–76
C-	1.67	70–72
D+	1.33	67–69

D	1.0	63–66
D-	0.67	60–62
E	0.00	0–59

Grade Meanings

A—Student did what the assignment asked at a high quality level, meeting all of the composition objectives required of the assignment. Additionally, his or her work shows originality, creativity, and demonstrates that the student took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. 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—Student did what the assignment asked at a quality level, meeting most of the composition objectives required of the assignment. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

C—Student did what the assignment asked, but overlooked some of the composition objectives. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.

D—Student neglected some basic requirements of the assignment, and completed it at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.

E—An E is usually reserved for students who do not do the work or do not come to class. However, if work is shoddy, shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, and/or an inability to meet the composition objectives, he or she will receive a failing grade.

Note: You must pass this course with a “C” or better to satisfy the CLAS requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). You must turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive credit for writing 6,000 words. **NOTE ALSO:** a grade of “C-” **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

GRADE APPEALS: Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available in the English Department Offices. You will need to contact Carla Blount, Program Assistant to the Director of Writing Programs, for details if you wish to file an appeal.

Course Schedule (Tentative)

Week 1

8.22 Class Introduction: Syllabus Review, Course Requirements, Paper Assignments & Due Dates

8.24 History of the American short story; Introduction to Literary Studies

8.26 Washington Irving, "Rip Van Winkle"

Week 2

8.29 Nathaniel Hawthorne, "The Wives of the Dead"

8.31 Edgar Allan Poe, "The Tell-Tale Heart"

9.2 Harriet Beecher Stowe, "The Ghost in the Mill"

Week 3

9.5 **No Class – Holiday (Labor Day)**

9.7 Samuel Clemens, "Cannibalism in the Cars"

9.9 Henry James, "The Middle Years" & **Reading Response 1 Due**

Week 4

9.12 Kate Chopin, "The Storm"

9.14 Willa Cather, "A Death in the Desert"

9.16 Richard Bruce Nugent, "Smoke, Lilies, Jade"

Week 5

9.19 H. P. Lovecraft, "The Rats in the Walls"

9.21 F. Scott Fitzgerald, "An Alcoholic Case"

9.23 William Faulkner, "That Evening Sun" & **Reading Response 2 Due**

Week 6

9.26 **Workshop Essay 1**

9.28 **Essay 1 Draft DUE**; Peer Review

9.30 Zora Neale Hurston, "Spunk" & **Essay 1 DUE**

Week 7

10.3 Ernest Hemingway, "Hills Like White Elephants"

10.5 Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man"

10.7 **No Class – Holiday (Homecoming)**

Week 8

10.10 Eudora Welty, "Where Is the Voice Coming From?"

10.12 John Cheever, "The Country Husband"

10.14 Ralph Ellison, "Battle Royal" & **Reading Response 3 Due**

Week 9

10.17 Shirley Jackson, "The Lottery"

10.19 Ray Bradbury, "There Will Come Soft Rains"

10.21 James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"

Week 10

10.24 **Workshop Essay 2**

10.26 **Essay 2 Draft DUE**; Peer Review

10.28 Flannery O'Connor, "A Late Encounter with the Enemy" & **Essay 2 DUE**

Week 11

10.31 Joyce Carol Oates, "Heat"

11.2 Cynthia Ozick, "The Shawl"

11.4 Sylvia Plath, Selections from *Johnny Panic and the Bible of Dreams*

Week 12

11.7 Amy Hempel, "Today Will Be a Quiet Day"

11.9 David Foster Wallace, "Good People" & **Reading Response 4 Due**

11.11 **No Class – Holiday (Veteran's Day)**

Week 13

11.14 Sherman Alexie, "What You Pawn I Will Redeem"

11.16 Junot Diaz, "Edison, New Jersey"

11.18 Edward P. Jones, "Old Boys, Old Girls"

Week 14

11.21 Edwidge Danticat, "Water Child"

11.23 **No Class – Holiday (Thanksgiving)**

11.25 **No Class – Holiday (Thanksgiving)**

Week 15

11.28 Percival Everett, "The Appropriation of Cultures"

11.30 Danzy Senna, Selections from *You Are Free* & **Reading Response 5 Due**

12.2 **Workshop Final Paper**

Week 16

12.5 **Final Paper Draft DUE**; Peer Review

12.7 **Final Paper DUE**

Course Policies

Attendance

Attendance is required and will be taken every day. You are allowed three (3) absences. For every absence exceeding this, your final grade will drop by one letter grade. If you miss more than six (6) classes, you will automatically fail the course. The University of Florida exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and

band, religious holidays, military duty, and court-mandated responsibilities (e.g., jury duty or subpoena).

Students who participate in athletic or extracurricular activities are permitted to be absent twelve (12) scholastic days per semester without penalty. A scholastic day is defined as any day on which regular class work is scheduled. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed.

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

A note on tardiness: Students who enter class after roll has been taken are late, which disrupts the entire class. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at

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

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

Students 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 of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. ***All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered and correct MLA formatting. All papers will be submitted as an MS Word (.doc) to Canvas by noon.***

Technology Policy

All electronic devices (with the exception of laptop computers or tablets for note taking purposes ONLY) must be silenced or set to vibrate during class. **Any unsilenced electronic device will result in a recorded absence for that day.**

Printing Policy

Students are required to print out and bring hard copies of all supplemental course readings to class during the designated class meeting. Currently enrolled students have access to the Printing Lab, located on the ground floor of the Reitz Union next to the Reitz Union Hotel Desk. Lab services are provided by Student Government, and each student may print 250 pages of free printing per semester. The Lab hours for the Fall and Spring Semesters are as follows:

Monday - Thursday:	8:30AM - 10:00PM
Friday:	8:30AM - 5:00PM
Saturday:	12:00PM - 5:00PM*

Sunday: 1:00PM - 8:00PM

* *Closed Saturdays during home football games.*

The Lab is closed on all UF holidays and breaks. You can reach the lab at 352-273-4431.

UF's Statement on Academic Honesty

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism 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):

- a) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b) 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, 15 Aug. 2007)

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire [Student Honor Code](#).

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

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>

UF's 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 information about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexualharassment.htm>

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 you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://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>.

Writing Center

The University Writing Center is located in Tigert 302 and is available to all UF students.

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

Statement of Writing requirement (WR)—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>

Students with Disabilities

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/>