

## AML2070 – Survey of American Literature Section #0535 (Class #10460), Spring 2020

**Instructor Name:** Rachal Burton

**Course meeting times & locations:** MWF | Period 8 (3:00 – 3:50 p.m.) LIT 0235

**Office Location and Hours:** TUR 4337 W | Periods 4-5 10:40 a.m. – 12:35 p.m.

**Course website:** CANVAS

**Instructor Email:** rachal.burton@ufl.edu

### Course Description:

“There is really nothing more to say except why. But since why is difficult to handle, one must take refuge in how.” – Toni Morrison from *The Bluest Eye* (1970)

What makes American literature “American”? This question is especially fraught with complexities after the election a little more than a decade ago of Barack Obama, the first Black president of the United States, which signaled claims of a “post-racial” society, and given the current political climate in regard to the highly controversial Donald Trump. Similarly, from the colonial era to the present, many authors have grappled with the question, “What is American literature?” and its implications particularly as it relates to art and society. In an attempt to answer, students in this course will critically survey the American literary canon and its array of authors, genres, and styles, as well as how different social and historical contexts have shaped and influenced American literature over time. Students will also analyze who is included and/or excluded from the term “American” and how this relates to literature in the U.S. context vis-à-vis race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability to name a few. Through various critical and literary theoretical approaches and writing assignments, students will develop and elaborate on their ideas and research findings gathered from their critical engagement with both class and outside materials to determine how, and perhaps why “American literature” is understood as such.

### Course Objectives

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

- Understand how authors in the American context have employed both content and form to create meaning through texts
- Evaluate the effectiveness of literary works and strategies in the American canon on particular audiences
- Present their ideas and research findings to a group of their peers
- Analyze primary texts with evidence from critical, secondary sources

### General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university’s 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student

must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

### **General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### **Required Texts:**

Toni Morrison, *A Mercy* (2008)

All other readings are either available on Canvas, Course Reserves, or free online

### **Recommended Texts:**

Chris Baldick, *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* (Fourth Edition) (2015)

### **Online Resources:**

- Literary terms
  - ❖ <http://ai.stanford.edu/~csewell/culture/litterms.htm>
  - ❖ [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject\\_specific\\_writing/writing\\_in\\_literature/literary\\_terms/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_terms/index.html)
- MLA formatting
  - ❖ [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide/mla\\_formatting\\_and\\_style\\_guide.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html)

### **Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):**

#### **1. Attendance/Participation (100 points)**

Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade. You should come to class each day with one written question or observation to raise during class discussion.

#### **2. Critical Reading Responses (700 words total) (100 points)**

Students are required to write two (2) brief 350-word responses to the day's reading. These responses must be uploaded to Canvas BEFORE class the day on which they are due. Students are also expected to comment, as part of the broader online class discussion, on at least two (2) of their peers' responses each time a response is due. Students' comments on responses will refrain from stating whether they think the response itself was written 'well' or 'poorly'. Instead, they will focus on the ways it may have expanded, challenged, or changed their way of thinking about the initial text/work.

The responses will demonstrate students' understanding of textual meaning and critically assess how the respective authors convey meaning. Each response will discuss the various themes and literary devices/narrative strategies found within the text(s), and how that information relates to the historical period, sociopolitical context, and ethical questions that are relevant to the narrative. Well-written responses will provide textual evidence and reasoning to support students' claims.

**3. Close Reading (1000 words) (150 points)**

Students are expected to carefully analyze and develop an argument based on the close reading of a chosen text. No outside sources allowed.

**4. Class Presentation (600 words) (150 points)**

Students will prepare and give a five-minute PowerPoint presentation (5-7 slides) on their topic of choice as it relates to American literature. The presentation should include a thematic focus, research question(s), what scholars their work is in conversation with, a brief analysis of a particular text, and topics/areas of further research. Students will turn in a two-page summary of their presentation to CANVAS, which will include one to two critical, secondary sources.

**5. Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review (1600 words) (200 points)**

This assignment comprises the initial part of the research you will conduct for the Critical Analysis paper. For the Annotated Bibliography, students must alphabetically list three to four critical, secondary sources (e.g. scholarly articles, book chapters, etc.) in MLA format and a paragraph summarizing the author's claims and analyses. For the Literature Review, students will synthesize the sources to find continuities and gaps in the research.

**6. Critical Analysis Paper (2100 words) (300 points)**

This assignment asks students to combine close reading skills with critical concepts and historical information from the research conducted for the Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence based on the literary work of their choice.

**Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance* is required.
  - 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>.
    - You are allowed **three** absences. Missing a double-period class counts as **two** absences.  
**Each absence after three will lower your final grade by a third letter grade.**
  - If a student misses **six** periods during a semester, they will fail the entire course. **Only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays are exempt from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.
  - When you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed *and* come to the next class prepared; contact a classmate or the instructor to find out what work you've missed. It is also your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. You should check Canvas daily for new announcements or assignment details/rubrics.
3. *Tardiness*: If students enter class after roll has been taken they are late, which disrupts the entire class. **Three** instances of tardiness count as **one** absence.

4. *Classroom behavior and netiquette*: 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. You are expected to be courteous in email messages and threaded discussions.
5. *UF's policy on Sexual Harassment*: The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/policy-statement/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission*: Papers will be submitted in an accepted electronic file format (.doc, .docx, .rtf) on Canvas; no other formats are permitted. Your papers must be formatted according to MLA style and should be in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and the appropriate heading and pages numbered.
7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Papers received late will be docked by a third letter grade. No late papers will be accepted after **two** days, unless there are extenuating circumstances. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
8. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'" The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.
  - A Student must 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. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
    - b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
    - c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
    - d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.
9. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor early in the semester.
10. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
11. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
12. *Grade Appeals*. In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
13. *Course Evaluations*. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

14. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
15. *Writing Studio*: The University Writing Studio (formerly the Writing Center) is located in 2215 Turlington Hall and is available to all UF students. Students have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a consultant on issues specific to their own particular development. Because the Writing Studio's aim is to help students become more effective writers, they do not simply proofread or edit documents. They can, however, assist students to become better proofreaders and editors of their own work.
16. *Policy on environmental sustainability*. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

### Tentative Schedule

\*The calendar contains the reading and writing assignments for the semester. Readings will be discussed on the day they appear, and assignments will be due on the date they appear. Students should note that the schedule is a guideline & may change.

Wk	Date	Assigned Readings	DUE
1	M 1/6	Class Introductions	
	W 1/8	"The Iroquois Creation Story [Part 1]" from <i>David Cusick's Sketches...</i> (via Project Gutenberg)	
	F 1/10	"Trickster and the Talking Bulb"	
2	M 1/13	Anne Bradstreet, "The Prologue," "Contemplations," and "The Author to Her Book"	<b>Critical Reading Response #1</b>
	W 1/15	Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To the Right Honourable William," and "To S.M., a Young African Painter"	
	F 1/17	Thomas Jefferson, <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> (excerpts from Query 6 and 14)	
<b>3</b>	<b>M 1/20</b>	<b>NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday</b>	
	W 1/22	Olaudah Equiano, <i>The Interesting Narrative</i> (Chs. 1-7) [via Course Reserves]	
	F 1/24	Canassatego, "Speech at Lancaster"; Pontiac, "Speech at Detroit";	
4	M 1/27	Cherokee Women, "To Governor Benjamin Franklin"; Tecumseh, "Speech to the Osages"	<b>Critical Reading Response #2</b>
	W 1/29	Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven"	
	F 1/31	Henry David Thoreau "A Plea for Captain John Brown"; Sojourner Truth, "Speech to the Women's Rights Convention"	
5	M 2/3	Film Screening: McQueen, <i>12 Years a Slave</i> (2013)	
	W 2/5	Continue <i>12 Years a Slave</i>	
	F 2/7	Finish <i>Twelve Years a Slave</i>	
6	M 2/10	Discuss <i>12 Years a Slave</i>	<b>Close Reading Draft Due by 3 p.m.</b>
	W 2/12	<b>Close Reading Draft Workshop &amp; Peer Review</b>	
	F 2/14	Introduce Class Presentation Assignment; W.E. B. Du Bois, <i>The Souls of</i>	<b>Close Reading</b>

		<i>Black Folk</i> (“The Forethought” and “Of Our Spiritual Strivings) [via Project Gutenberg]	
7	M 2/17	Du Bois, <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> (“Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others) [via Project Gutenberg]	
	W 2/19	<b>Research Day – Meet @ Library West</b>	
	F 2/21	Gertrude Stein, “Susie Asado” and <i>Tender Buttons</i> (“Food”) [via Project Gutenberg]; Stein, “If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso”	
8	M 2/24	William Carlos Williams, <i>Spring and All</i> [excerpts]; T.S. Eliot, <i>The Waste Land</i>	
	W 2/26	Claude McKay, “The Lynching,” “If We Must Die,” and “America”	
	F 2/28	Langston Hughes, “I, Too,” “Mulatto,” and “Song for a Dark Girl”	
9	M 3/2 – F 3/6	<b>NO CLASS – Spring Break</b>	
10	M 3/9	<b>Class Presentations</b>	
	W 3/11	Introduce Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Assignment; Ralph Ellison, <i>Invisible Man</i> [excerpt] (Ch. 1: “Battle Royal”)	
	F 3/13	Arthur Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	
11	M 3/16	Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	
	W 3/18	Miller, <i>Death of a Salesman</i>	
	F 3/20	Audre Lorde, “Coal,” “The Woman Thing,” and “Black Mother Woman”	
12	M 3/23	Film Screening: <i>Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am</i> (2019)	
	W 3/25	Continue <i>Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am</i>	
	F 3/27	Finish and discuss <i>Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am</i>	<b>Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Draft Due by 3 p.m.</b>
13	M 3/30	<b>Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review Draft Workshop and Peer Review</b>	
	W 4/1	Introduce Critical Analysis Paper; Gloria Anzaldúa, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”; Barry Lopez, “The Raven”	<b>Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review</b>
	F 4/3	Leslie Marmon Silko, “Lullaby”; Sherman Alexie, “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel”	
14	M 4/6	Li-Young Lee, “Persimmons,” “Eating Alone,” and “Eating Together”	
	W 4/8	Jamaica Kincaid, “Girl”	
	F 4/10	Toni Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i>	
15	M 4/13	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i>	
	W 4/15	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i>	
	F 4/17	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i>	<b>Critical Analysis Paper Draft Due by 3 p.m.</b>
16	M 4/20	<b>Critical Analysis Draft Workshop and Peer Review</b>	
	W 4/22	Course wrap-up: Evaluations/Debrief class; <b>Critical Analysis Paper Due Fri (4/24)</b>	

## Grading/Assessment Rubric

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

## General Paper Rubric

Papers are generally graded based on how well they meet the following criteria:

- A clear and concise thesis statement
- Paragraphs that focus on one main idea but include several examples to illustrate point(s)
- Clear transitions between sentences and paragraphs
- Seamless use of direct, partial, and/or paraphrased quotes from primary and/or secondary sources
- Clearly written with precise language and word choice
- Acceptable use of spelling, syntax, capitalization, and grammar
- Proper use of MLA formatting