

AML 2070: AMERICAN LITERATURE AS SPECULATIVE FICTIONS FALL 2018

AML 2070: American Literature as Speculative

Fictions (Class #10483)

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MWF Period 8

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This American lit survey will analyze the *speculative* throughout American history. *Speculative fiction* is a literary mode encompassing works that fall outside the bounds of realistic fiction or “speculate” about alternative possibilities for existence. Drawing on this genre, course will encompass a broad range of genres, including science fiction, horror, gothic fiction, and dystopian/utopian narratives as well as a variety of historical essays and documents.

Through this broad swarth of texts, students will come to appreciate the ways American literature serves as a lens for examining and better understanding American history and society. Works by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Toni Morrison demonstrate the specter race and the legacy of slavery casts over American fiction, while Octavia Butler’s work showcases the possibilities of speculative fiction to revisit and reassess this atrocity of the American past (whose shadow continues to loom into the present). Through an examination of early American historical accounts and legal documents, students will come to understand the continued shadow of “First Contact,” colonialist rhetoric, and Manifest Destiny in contemporary American genres such as science fiction, demonstrating the impact the American past continues to have on our present.

This course will also utilize the speculative to explore a range of American anxieties and aspirations. For example, the gothic/horror fiction of writers such as William Faulkner, Shirley Jackson, and Stephen King showcases a myriad of anxieties and fears across the American landscape, ranging from the rural fields of the South to the white picket fences of the suburbs. Many of the works throughout this course encompass both science and/or the supernatural, presenting the tensions between the Puritanical past and rapid modernization throughout American history. Alternatively, the works of Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Ursula K. Le Guin demonstrate the capacity of the mode to imagine better futures, critiquing the limitations of contemporary American society in the process. In addition, students will discover the presence of the speculative and often utopic in American historical writing ranging from the Declaration of Independence to civil rights and women’s liberation speeches, as many of these documents posit potential visions for American society.

By the end of this course, students will have a better appreciation of the role of the speculative as a significant literary mode in fiction throughout American history. In addition, students will learn to engage works through a variety of critical lenses, including historicism, feminist readings, queer theory, postcolonialism, and critical race theory.

COURSE 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).
- This course 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 will include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students will 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

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.

COURSE MATERIALS

Required Texts

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. Grand Central Publishing. ISBN-10: 0807083690.

Jackson, Shirley. *The Haunting of Hill House*. Penguin Classics. ISBN-10: 0143039989.

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*. Dover Thrift Editions. ISBN-10: 0486266842.

Le Guin, Ursula K. *The Left Hand of Darkness*. Ace Books. ISBN-10: 0441478123.

Miller, Arthur. *The Crucible*. Penguin Classics. ISBN-10: 0142437336.

Morrison, Toni. *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*. Vintage. ISBN-10: 0679745424.

*All additional readings will be available through Canvas and/or Project Gutenberg. All viewings are available to stream through Netflix, Amazon Video, Hulu and/or iTunes.

ASSIGNMENTS

Analytical Response Papers (200 points; 20% of grade; 2000+ words total)

Analytical responses to class materials. Students will write **10** posts of their choosing of **200+ words each** to be uploaded to Canvas. Response should thoroughly analyze the reading materials and make an argumentative claim with supporting evidence. Though short, these assignments should show the same detail of thought and professional tone demonstrated throughout the course. Responses will be due before class on the day the materials are being discussed; students should come prepared to share their short responses in class.

Summary & Analysis Essay (150 points; 15% of grade; 800+ words)

In this assignment, students will summarize and analyze one of the texts discussed in the course. Essays will thoroughly but concisely summarize the entirety of their chosen text. Papers will then engage in an analytical close reading of the text to support the paper's central argumentative claim. The final summary & analysis essay must be **1000+ words**.

Comparative Analysis Essay (200 points; 20% of grade; 1200+ words)

To practice their synthesizing skills, students will analyze and compare two or more of the texts examined in class, bringing them into conversation with each other. Essays should include an innovative thesis which makes unique connections between the given texts. Papers should

include close readings and textual evidence to support the student's claims. The final comparative essay must be **1000+ words**.

Research Paper (300 points; 30% of grade; 2000+ words)

For this final assignment, students will write a critical essay engaging with one or more of the central themes/texts that have been discussed throughout the course. This paper should have a clear thesis making an innovative claim about the student's chosen topic. This claim must be supported by evidence in the form of sound academic/critical research [**at least 3 sources**]. The final research paper must be **2000+ words**.

Participation (150 points; 15% of grade)

This will include attendance, class discussion, in class activities, peer reviews/beta responses, etc.

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Missing six classes will result in automatic failure of the course. Exemptions from this policy include:
 - University-sponsored events, such as athletics and band
 - Religious holidays
 - Medical or family emergenciesIn each of these instances, students must provide appropriate documentation. In addition, three tardies (of five or more minutes late) will result in one absence.
3. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments must be MLA style and will be submitted to Canvas (or otherwise specified platform) by 11:59 pm on the due date.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Late papers and assignments will not be accepted for credit. If a student finds that they will not be able to complete an assignment on time, they should consult with the instructor BEFORE that assignment is due.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*: Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. No late work will be accepted.
6. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*: Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

9. *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.
10. *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>
11. 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>
12. *Classroom Conduct*: Students come from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. All class participants will be required to treat differing ideas with respect. Disrespectful behavior toward the instructor or peers may result in dismissal from class and an absence for the day.
13. *Tech Policy*: Recreational use of cell phones, computers, and other devices (including texting, posting to social media, or web surfing) will not be permitted. Use of technology will be permitted for classroom activities only. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from class and a subsequent absence for the day.
14. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. Please be sure to regularly consult the syllabus posted on Canvas.

Date	Reading/Viewing Material	Activities/Lectures	Due
<u>Week 1-Setting the Scene</u>			
W 8/22	Introduction to Course		
F 8/24	Native American folk tales	Select <i>Looney Tunes</i> clips	
<u>Week 2-American Mythologies</u>			
M 8/27	Cherokee trickster tales; Joel Chandler Harris's " The Wonderful Tar Baby Story "	Disney's <i>Song of the South</i> clips	
W 8/29	Christopher Columbus's "The		

	Discovery of Prosperous Lands”; Preamble to the U.S. Declaration of Independence		
F 8/31	Cotton Mather’s “The Wonders of the Invisible World”		
<u>Week 3-Playing in the Dark: The Specter of Race in American Fiction</u>			
M 9/3	NO CLASS-LABOR DAY		
W 9/5	Mark Twain’s “The Californian’s Tale”; Jack London’s “In a Far Country”		
F 9/7	Toni Morrison’s <i>Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination</i>	Summarizing Arguments Activity	
<u>Week 4-Playing in the Dark: The Specter of Race in American Literature</u>			
M 9/10	Edgar Allan Poe’s “ The Black Cat ” and Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “ Young Goodman Brown ”; Lesley Ginsberg’s “Slavery and the Gothic Horror of Poe’s ‘The Black Cat’”	Close Analysis Activity	
W 9/12	Excerpts from Harriet Beecher Stowe’s Uncle Tom’s Cabin and from Harriet Jacobs’s <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>		
F 9/14	Summary & Analysis Peer Review		
<u>Week 5-Women in White: Horror, Hauntings, and Female Hysteria</u>			
M 9/17	Edgar Allan Poe’s “ Ligeia ” and “ Morella ”; Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “The Birth-Mark”		Summary & Analysis Essay
W 9/19	Henry James’s <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> Ch. I-XI		

F 9/21	Henry James's <i>The Turn of the Screw</i> Ch. XII-XXIV		
<u>Week 6-The Female Man: Flawed Feminist Utopias</u>			
M 9/24	Robert Frost's "The Witches of Coos"; Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper"		
W 9/26	Judith Sargent Murray's "On the Equality of the Sexes"; Elizabeth Cady Stanton's " The Declaration of Sentiments "; Margaret Sanger's "Family Limitation"	Lecture on the history of first wave feminism in the U.S.	
F 9/28	Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland Ch. 1-6		
<u>Week 7-The Space Race: Race in the Final Frontier</u>			
M 10/1	Charlotte Perkins Gilman's Herland Ch. 7-12		
W 10/3	W. E.B. DuBois's "The Hands of Ethopia," "The Princess of the Hither Isles," and "The Comet" from Darkwater: Voices from within the Veil ; EC Comics's "Judgment Day"		
F 10/5	H.P. Lovecraft's " The Dunwich Horror " and " The Rats in the Walls "	Clips from Universal horror films	
<u>Week 8-He Who Walks Between the Rows: Anxieties in Rural America</u>			
M 10/8	William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"; Shirley Jackson's "Charles"		
W 10/10	Ray Bradbury's "The Veldt"; Stephen King's "Children of the Corn"	Comparative Analysis Activity	
F 10/12	NO CLASS-HOMECOMING		

<u>Week 9-Joseph McCarthy's Witch Hunt: 1950s Paranoia and the Red Scare</u>			
M 10/15	Arthur Miller's <i>The Crucible</i> Act I-II		
W 10/17	Arthur Miller's <i>The Crucible</i> Act III-IV		
F 10/19	Don Siegel's <i>Invasion of the Body Snatchers</i> (1956)		
<u>Week 10-Feminist Specters, Queer Ghosts</u>			
M 10/22	Comparative Analysis Peer Review		
W 10/24	Shirley Jackson's <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> Ch. 1-3		Comparative Analysis Essay
F 10/26	Shirley Jackson's <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> Ch. 4-6		
<u>Week 11-Gender at the Edge of the Universe</u>			
M 10/29	Shirley Jackson's <i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> Ch. 7-9		
W 10/31	Martha Shelley "Gay is Good"; Theodore Sturgeon's "The World Well Lost"; Samuel R. Delany's "Aye and Gomorrah"		
F 11/2	Ursula K. Le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> Ch. 1-4		
<u>Week 12- Gender at the Edge of the Universe</u>			
M 11/5	Ursula K. Le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> Ch. 5-10		
W 11/7	Ursula K. Le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of Darkness</i> Ch. 10-15		
F 11/9	Ursula K. Le Guin's <i>The Left Hand of</i>		

	<i>Darkness</i> Ch. 15-end		
<u>Week 13-No More “White” Zombie: Representations of Race and the Undead</u>			
M 11/12	NO CLASS: VETERAN’S DAY		
W 11/14	George A. Romero’s <i>Night of the Living Dead</i> (1968)	Select clips from <i>Nightmares in Red, White, and Blue</i>	Topic for Final Paper
F 11/16	Chesya Burke’s <i>CUE: Change</i>	Finding Reliable Sources	
<u>Week 14- Revisiting Ghosts from the Past: The Continued Haunting of American Slavery</u>			
M 11/19	Octavia Butler’s <i>Kindred</i> Prologue-The River		
W 11/21- F 11/23	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK		
<u>Week 15-Revisiting Ghosts from the Past: The Continued Haunting of American Slavery</u>			
M 11/26	Octavia Butler’s <i>Kindred</i> The Fire-The Fall		
W 11/28	Octavia Butler’s <i>Kindred</i> The Fight-The Storm		
F 11/30	Octavia Butler’s <i>Kindred</i> The Rope-Epilogue		
<u>Week 16-Final Thoughts</u>			
12/3	Jordan Peele’s <i>Get Out</i> (2017)		
12/5	Research Paper Peer Review		
12/12	RESEARCH PAPER DUE!!!!		

GRADING

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

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

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

Rubric

An “A” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a high quality level and demonstrates creativity and innovation. Work is complete and well organized, and moves beyond the expectations of the assignment. Work displays a thorough understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment critically engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates a clear and logical rationality. Work is relatively free of error.

A “B” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a proficient level. Work is complete and reasonably organized. Work displays an adequate understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates some logical rationale. Work may contain a few errors or require minor revisions.

A “C” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. Work is complete, but somewhat disorganized. Work attempts to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment attempts to engage with the concepts of the course but fails to demonstrate a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant revisions.

A “D” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet a poor quality level. Work is disorganized to the point of feeling incomplete. Work fails to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment fails to engage with concepts of the course and lacks a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant and even complete revision.

An “E” is primarily reserved for work that is incomplete or has not been turned in on time. Assignments at this level fail to meet the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet.

However, work that is incoherent, shoddy, or shows a lack of understanding of the assignment may also receive a failing grade.