

AML 2070-0535 (Class #10505) – American Literature Spring 2019



Instructor Name: Alyssa Dewees
Course meeting times & locations: MAT
0251, TR 8-9, 9

Office Location and Hours: TUR 4340 T
period 7, R period 8
Course website: Canvas
Instructor Email: adewees@ufl.edu

Course Description:

"Sitting at the table doesn't make you a diner. You must be eating some of what's on that plate. Being here in America doesn't make you an American. Being born here in America doesn't make you an American." -Malcolm X

This course will invite students to question what it is that makes American literature *American* and what constitutes our sense of an American identity. Students will be introduced to some of the most well-known authors and texts of American Literature, extending from the contact period to the 21st century, with Amerindian, African-American, Latino/a, and immigrant literatures and cultures incorporated throughout. Engaging with poetry, short fiction, essays, and novels, students of AML 2070 will deepen their understanding of the American canon as well as the cultural and historical forces which have shaped it. In addition to practicing close readings of the assigned texts, we will also examine pertinent literary, social, cultural, political, and philosophical movements and trends throughout these time periods. Furthermore, students will practice analyzing and researching literature as well as presenting their arguments in writing and through participation in class discussions.

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:

Recommended Texts:

The Norton Anthology of American Literature, shorter 9th edition, two volume set, ed. Robert S. Levine, ISBN-10: 978-0-393-26451-7

The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Scribner, ISBN-10: 978-0-743-27356-5

Assignments (see below for Grading Rubric):

Critical Response Journal (2,500 words, 200 points total)

Students will keep a journal to be submitted for a grade three times. The journal is a place to record and develop responses to your reading, to raise questions and explore uncertainties, to float hypotheses, compile evidence, record and (later) correct first impressions, make connections, complain and praise. **The journal is not for summarizing the assigned reading.** While the journals are less structured and more informal than the major essays, you will still be aiming for insightful analysis and interpretation. Interpretation means making claims (even hypothetical sketchy claims) about possible meanings and relations between things. Analysis means breaking things down into parts (in part to explore or support interpretations, often). It is most important to move beyond first responses and also to move beyond 'like' and 'dislike'. (Go there, but don't stop there.) You should be writing 1 typed, double-spaced page (or

equivalent, handwritten) per week. The highest grades go to the most inquisitive, persistent, detailed, thoughtfully reflective and effectively probing journals.

Close-Reading/Analysis Essay (1,250 words, 200 points)

This essay will be a sustained close-reading of any text on our syllabus which appears on or before the end of Week 7.

Researched Critical Essay (1,500 words, 350 points)

This essay will be a sustained, formally researched critical analysis in which you will make an original argument about one or more literary text(s) through a particular theoretical, historical, or critical lens.

- **Prospectus for the Researched Critical Essay (350 words, 15 points)**

The prospectus will present your idea for the Researched Critical Essay (this should include a tentative thesis), 1 source you plan to use in the paper, and a brief description of this source and its relevance to your paper.

- **Outline for the Researched Critical Essay (400 words, 35 points)**

The outline should present your argument and detail the organization of your entire paper

Attendance/Daily Participation (200 points)

The majority of class time will be spent reading, analyzing, and discussing the assigned texts and learning in workshops on writing and researching. For these reasons, daily and engaged participation is a priority in this course. All students should participate every day in some fashion, whether through offering points of view, raising questions, asking for clarification, and/or writing when it is required. Furthermore, peer reviews and reading quizzes will count towards this score. **For every class period, please come to class with 2 written questions or insights about the reading that you are prepared to share. You may be called upon to share one of these.** Your attendance will also be reflected in the points you receive in this category. Missing more than six 50 minute periods will result in failure from the course.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* In accordance with the University of Florida's policy (which can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), **if a student misses more than six periods during a fall or spring semester, he or she will fail the entire course. Missing class on a double period counts as two absences.** Exceptions to this policy include only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, and major illnesses documented and discussed with the instructor. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed.
3. *Paper Format & Submission:* All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.docx) documents to E-learning or as hard copies. 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. Be sure to staple papers before submitting hard copies.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Unless an extension is granted before the due date, late assignments will be accepted with a 10% deduction for every day the paper is late. No late assignments will be accepted more than 5 days beyond the due date. In-class reading quizzes cannot be made up.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

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. *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/>

SYLLABUS

Week 1

T 1/8 - Review syllabus, expectations, and assignments. View excerpts from the letters of Christopher Columbus.

R 1/10 - Bartolomé de las Casas, "A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies," Hernán Cortez, *from* The Second Letter to the Spanish Crown

Week 2

T 1/15 – Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *From The Relation of Álvaro Núñez Cabeza de Vaca*; Samuel de Champlain, *From The Voyages of Sieur de Champlain*

R 1/17 – William Bradford, *From Of Plymouth Plantation* (all excerpts from book I and book II)

Week 3

I

T 1/22 – Cotton Mather, "The Wonders of the Invisible World"; Jonathan Edwards, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

R 1/24 – J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, selections from *Letters from an American Farmer*
Critical Response Journal Due

Week 4

T 1/29 – Phillis Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” To the University of Cambridge, in New England,” “To His Excellency George Washington”; Judith Sargent Murray, “On the Equality of the Sexes”

R 1/31 – Thomas Paine, from “Common Sense” and “The Crisis, No. 1”

Week 5

T 2/5 – Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven,” “Annabel Lee,” “Ligeia”

R 2/7- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The Poet,” excerpt from “Nature” (read only “Introduction” and Ch. 1 “Nature”) **Close Reading/Analysis Due**

Week 6

T 2/12 – Abraham Lincoln, “A House Divided,” excerpts in *Slavery, Race, and the Making of American Literature*; Thomas Jefferson, from *Notes on the State of Virginia*; David Walker, from “David Walker’s Appeal in Four Articles”; and Sojourner Truth, “Speech to the Women’s Rights Convention”; Martin R. Delany, “Political Destiny of the Colored Race on the American Continent

R 2/14- Harriet Beecher Stowe, from *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (Ch. VII, Ch. IX, Ch. XII, Ch. XXVI)

Week 7

T 2/19 – Harriet Jacobs, from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Ch. I, Ch. VII, Ch. X, Ch. XIV, Ch. XXI, Ch. XLI)

R 2/21 – Margaret Fuller, excerpts from *The Great Lawsuit*

Week 8

T 2/26 – Melville, “Benito Cereno”

R 2/28 – Walt Whitman, “One’s-Self I Sing,” “Spontaneous Me,” “Beat! Beat! Drums!,” “A Woman Waits for Me” (online copy) **Critical Response Journal Due**

Week 9

Spring Break—No Class

Week 10

T 3/12 –Emily Dickinson, “Success is counted sweetest,” “Wild Nights—Wild Nights!,” “I like a look of Agony,” “I dreaded that first Robin, so” (online copy), “Mine—by the Right of the White Election!,” “Because I could not stop for Death—,” “Much Madness is divinest Sense”

R 3/14 – William Carlos Williams, “The Young Housewife,” “The Red Wheelbarrow,” “Spring and All,” and excerpt from *Spring and All* (in modernist manifestos)

Week 11

T 3/19 – T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land” **Prospectus Due**

R 3/21 – Wallace Stevens, “Sunday Morning,” “Anecdote of a Jar,” “Of Modern Poetry”

Week 12

T 3/26– F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

R 3/28 – F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

Week 13

T 4/2 – F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

R 4/4 – Tennessee Williams, “A Streetcar Named Desire” **Outline Due**

Week 14

T 4/9- Tennessee Williams, “A Streetcar Named Desire”

R 4/11 – Sylvia Plath, “Daddy,” “Lady Lazarus,” “Blackberrying,”

Week 15

T 4/16 – Allen Ginsberg, “Howl,” “Footnote to Howl,” “A Supermarket in California” **Critical Response Due**

R 4/18 – George Packer, From *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America*

Week 16

T 4/23 – Jesmyn Ward, from *Men We Reaped*; Course Evaluations; final questions

R 4/25 – **Researched Critical Essay Due**

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

Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY	UNSATISFACTORY
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.