

AML2410-4800 —Crossing Color Lines, Spring 2019 Course #: 10511

Instructor Name: Kayla B. Rodney

Course meeting times & locations: T 8-9 (3-4:55) R 9 (4-4:55) in MAT 0151

Office Location and Hours: Tuesday 10am-12pm and by appointment in Turlington 4342.

Course website:

Instructor Email: krodney1@ufl.edu

Course Description: While many see America as the land of opportunity and a melting pot, the United States has a long and complicated relationship with race, identity, and culture. We cannot deny that the cultural wealth of America is what truly makes it the great country it is. While recognizing diverse cultural makeup, we must also acknowledge the fact that the term *melting pot* is its own form of erasure, rooted in attempts to wipe out cultures and identities not seen as traditionally American. Too often, those who do not fit squarely into the status quo are forced to conform and melt in to the American ideal. So, where are the borders (and violations) of the ‘tradition,’ the places where racial lines are crossed, and what happens in that space? What are the specific tensions resulting in collusions at the border? That is what this class seeks to analyze.

Racial identification and passing have once again become important topics in American identity politics. Consider the recent outing of Rachel Dolezal, a white woman who pretended to be black in order to head the Spokane, Washington, NAACP. Consider the idea of transracial identity, originally defined as the identity of those adopted interracially, which has morphed into those who claim to believe they were born the wrong race. This course will seek to explore the limitations of crossing the color line, and what happens when people attempt to pass as another race. This class will primarily focus on racial passing between black and white individuals. Looking at novels such as *Passing* by Nella Larson and *Of One Blood* by Pauline Hopkins, movies including *Imitation of Life*, as well as slavery/reconstruction era documents with laws regarding race mixture/identification, we will explore what it means to ascribe to the social construct of race/culture—and where that subscription fails. We will also examine how, though a social construct, race still shapes the lives of every American citizen. Essentially, this course will examine literature that exposes the volatility of racial identification from the era of Darwinism to the present day. Writing assignments for this class will include a family tree assignment, a short critical analysis essay, a short personal essay, a creative mid-term, and a final presentation with paper. For 5 of the 16 weeks students will write a 200 word response for (one of) the primary texts assigned for the week.

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:

If a text is not listed here that is because it can be found online for free or can be accessed through free means

Passing- Nella Larson

Of One Blood- Pauline Hopkins

Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man- James Weldon Johnson

Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black- Gregory Howard Williams

Imitation of Life (\$2.99 on amazon)

The Color of Water- James McBride

We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America

Keywords for African American Studies

Assignments (see pgs 8-9 for Assignment Descriptions) **ALL ASSIGNMENTS DUE TUESDAY OF THEIR DUE WEEK!:**

5 Reading/Text Critical Responses 200 pts, 40 pts each (200 words each, must do 5 by end of semester)

Short Critical Analysis Essay on Text of Choice (1000 words) 150 pts

Creative Midterm: Family Tree Assignment (1,250 words) 200 pts

Essay: Short personal essay (500 words) 100 pts

Annotated Bib for the Research Paper (250 words) 50 pts

Final Paper (2,000 words) 300 pts

Total points for this course = 1,000 points

Total word count for this course = 6,000 words

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *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 six (6) 50 min classes (2 weeks), 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.
3. A note on tardiness: Students who enter class after roll has been taken are late, which disrupts the entire class. Three 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>
4. *Paper Format & Submission*: *Paper Format & Submission*: All written assignments should be submitted electronically to Canvas as a Microsoft Word document (doc or docx). Other file types will not be accepted. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All drafts should conform to MLA style.
5. *Late Papers/Assignments*: No late papers or assignments will be accepted. I *may* consider extenuating circumstances, *but you must contact me at least 48 hours before the assignment is due and provide documentation*. Computer or email problems are not valid excuses for late work; save documents frequently and on multiple disks.
6. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
7. *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/>.
8. 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.
9. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
10. *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.
11. *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>
12. 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>
13. *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. Additionally, emails to me must

follow professional protocols of subject, grammar, and tone--including proper salutations and signature. Remember that all emails sent through our UFL accounts are Public Records (Florida Statutes, Chapter 119).

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/>

In order to train you for research, half way through the semester there are weeks where you are required to find a scholarly source and present it to the class or ask you to look at sources previously assigned and discuss how they apply to the primary text discussed that week. On these weeks you will be required to find a source that can help you further your ideas and analysis of that week's texts. You will either find this source through data base research or through looking at previously assigned articles depending on the direction given for that week.

Always assume that all primary readings need to be completed for Tuesday of each week unless otherwise stated. Each week we will read or watch one primary text and then one secondary text.

Course Schedule:

Unit 1: Intro to Race in America (The Negro Problem)

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON TUESDAY OF THEIR ASSIGNED WEEK!

All primary texts should be read by Tuesday of their assigned weeks. All secondary texts should be read by Thursday of their assigned weeks.

Week 1 (1/8 & 1/10)

- Crash Course RACE IN AMERICA
- Class Introduction: Syllabus Review, Course Requirements, Paper Assignments & Due Dates
- **Elaine K. Ginsberg**
Introduction to Passing and the Fictions of Identity:
 - o <https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/600/>
- **Siobhan B. Somerville**
Scientific Racism and the Invention of the Homosexual Body
 - o <https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/385/>
- **Langston Hughes**
"Who's Passing for Who?"
"Spanish Blood"
"Dear Ma"
"Passing"
"Mulatto" (poem *and* play) poem recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lBSdhy10HBs>
- **Kate Chopin**
"Desiree's Baby"

Week 2 (1/15 & 1/17)

Due: 200 word response to Craft narrative

- **William and Ellen Craft**
Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom (1860) (online at doc south)
- **Elaine K. Ginsberg**
'A Most Respectable Looking Gentleman': Passing, Possession, and Transgression in Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom
 - o <https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/600/>

Week 3 (1/22 & 1/24)

(pick on of the following primary texts and write 200 word response)

- **Due: 200 word response to *Passing***
- *Passing*- Nella Larson
- **Catherine Rottenberg**
"Passing": Race, Identification, and Desire
 - o <http://lp.hscl.ufl.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,uid&db=edsglr&AN=edsgcl.121283929&site=eds-live>

Week 4 (1/29 & 1/31)

- **Due: 200 word response to *Autobiography***
- **Due: Short critical analysis essay of text of choice read up to this point**
- **James Weldon Johnson**
Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man
- **Siobhan B. Somerville**
"Double Lives on the Color Line: "Perverse" Desire in *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man*"
 - o <https://read.dukeupress.edu/books/book/385/>

Week 5 (2/5 & 2/7)

- **Due: 200 word response to first half of *Of One Blood***

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- **Pauline Hopkins (1st half)**
Of One Blood
- **Thoman J. Otten**
“Pauline Hopkins and the Hidden Self of Race” (on jstor)

Unit Two: Race and Media/ Pop Culture

Critical Text:

Love & Theft: Blackface Minstrelsy and the American Working Class (Race and American Culture) 20th Edition

Week 6 (2/12 & 2/14) Library Presentation

- **Due: 200 word response to first half of *Of One Blood***
- **Pauline Hopkins (to end)**
Of One Blood
- **Augusta Rohrbach**
“To Be Continued: Double Identity, Multiplicity and Antigenealogy as Narrative Strategies in Pauline Hopkins’ Magazine Fiction”
 - o <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/6026>

Week 7 (2/19 & 2/21)

- **Due: 200 word response to either *South Park* episode or *Atlanta* episode**
- **Due: Midterm- family tree assignment with 1500 word description of family racial heritage**
- ***South Park***
“Mr. Garrison's Fancy New Vagina”
- ***Atlanta***
“Trans-Racial”
- **James P. Byrne**
“The Genesis of Whiteface in Nineteenth-Century American Popular Culture.” (on jstor)
- **Homi Bhabha**
“Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse”

- [https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/special/crimefiction/homi_bhabha - of mimicry and man.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/currentstudents/undergraduate/modules/fulllist/special/crimefiction/homi_bhabha_-_of_mimicry_and_man.pdf)

Week 8 (2/26 & 2/28)

- **Due: 200 word response to the documentary**
- *Rachael Dolezal Documentary*
- **Roger Brubaker**
“The Dolezal affair: race, gender, and the micropolitics of identity”
 - <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01419870.2015.1084430?scroll=top&needAccess=true>

Week 9 (Spring Break no class 3/2-3/10)

Week 10 (3/12 & 3/14)

- **Due: 200 word response to *Life on the Color Line***
- **Gregory Howard Williams**
Life on the Color Line: The True Story of a White Boy Who Discovered He Was Black (1995)
- **Joanne the Scammer article:** <http://www.thefader.com/2016/08/09/joanne-the-scammer-branden-miller-messy-bitch-interview>
*find article and bring to class

Week 11 (3/19 & 3/21)

- **Due: Short Personal Essay Due**
- **Due: 200 word response to *Imitation of Life***
- *Imitation of Life* (\$2.99 on amazon)
*find article and bring to class
- Guest Presentation

Unit Three: The Melting Pot

Week 12 (3/26 & 3/28)

- 3/26- meet at Harn Museum
- **Due: 200 word response to *The Color of Water***
- **James McBride**

The Color of Water

- **Yuan-Chin Chang**
“Times Fluid, Mobile and Ambivalent: Constructing Racial & Personal Identity in James McBride’s *The Color of Water*”
 - o <http://www.journals.aiac.org.au/index.php/IJALEL/article/view/1566/1506>

Week 13 (4/2 & 4/4)

- **Due: 200 word response to one story from this section of *We Wear the Mask***
- *We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America* (1/3rd)
- **Paul Lawrence Dunbar**
Poem: “We Wear The Mask”
- *pick a previous scholarly article, how does it apply to these stories?

Week 14 (4/9 & 4/11)

- **Due: 200 word response to one story from this section of *We Wear the Mask***
- **Due: Annotated Bib**
- *We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America* (2/3rd)
- *pick a previous scholarly article, how does it apply to these stories?

Week 15 (4/16 & 4/18)

- **Due: 200 word response to one story from this section of *We Wear the Mask***
- *We Wear the Mask: 15 True Stories of Passing in America* (**finish**)
- *pick a previous scholarly article, how does it apply to these stories?
- find article and bring to class

Week 16 (4/23)

- **Due: Final Paper**
- **Due: Homemade satirical advertisement or meme that addresses one of the critical issues of this course**
- Presentation of meme or advertisement

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

Assessment Rubric

Short Critical Responses and In-Class Participation 200 pts

You will respond to at least 5 of the primary text with a 200 word critical response. These responses will count towards your participation. You are not required to incorporate the secondary texts. Each day at the start of class those who responded that week will read their response and then hand it in to me.

Short Critical Analysis Essay on Text of Choice (1000 words) 150 pts

The Short Critical Analysis Paper will ask students to write about how racial passing is displayed in a text of their choice. Each student is responsible for writing one *Short Critical Analysis Paper*, to be turned in at the beginning of class and each student will choose which text they are interested in. These papers will be focused and organized, showing critical thinking and an attempt to integrate ideas into course topics and objectives. Along with the paper itself, you will read your response at the beginning of class and come up with a list of four questions that you think are important to consider as we discuss the texts.

Creative Midterm: Family Tree Assignment (1,250 words) 200 pts

This assignment is exactly what it sounds like, a family tree. I would like you to go as far back as possible and analyze your family connections. Who knows what you may find? Once you have done your family tree, you will write a 1,200 word paper about the family connections therein and what you discovered looking at your family and its culture. In your paper discuss your family origins if known (For those of you with African ancestry I know that will be much more difficult to discover for free), how your family fits into the American fabric, and how your heritage affects how you identify.

Short Personal Essay (500 words) 100 pts

For this assignment you need to reflect on the things you have learned so far about both racial passing in America and your own family history. How does this make you feel about your racial identity? Do the things you've read and learned affirm your identity or question it? How so? How have your ideas on race in America changed since you've been in this class? Analyze your progress so far.

Annotated Bib for the Research Paper (250 words min) 50 pts

This assignment entails an abstract and 5-7 secondary sources with one paragraph descriptions of each source. Each description should include the following: A basic summary of the source, how you intend to use the source, and one key quote from the source.

Final Paper (2,000 words) 300 pts

The *Final Paper* will ask students to apply the critical readings to an analytical argument on passing in any of the primary texts assigned in class. Use the skills we have built throughout the course and in the previous essays. *Final Papers* should have a strong, clear, and creative argument about a text of the student's choosing, and should consult *five critical sources*. This should not be a regurgitation of the issues, ideas, and themes we have discussed in class, but should instead be a result of one's critical thinking, understanding of the text, and secondary research.

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.