

**AML 2070: American Literature Survey**  
**American Literary Migrations**

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**Office Hours:** TBD

**Online Syllabus:** Sakai

**Course Description**

In this course, we will read, examine, and discuss writings from the American literary canon, paying special attention to writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In particular, we will look at literature that focuses on American migration, emigration, and immigration in order to better contextualize the changing landscape of the United States from the beginnings of American colonialism and into the contemporary period. As such, we will consider the ways in which the nation's shifting borders and shifting citizenship are reflected differently in the works of several authors.

The primary aims of this course are 1) to expose students to the writings of both canonical and non-canonical American authors 2) to engage with the cultural, historical, political, and personal contexts of various texts in order to more fully analyze both the text and the circumstances of the

period in American history 3) to close read each text (which we will do daily), and to better understand how to write about texts critically.

### Outcomes

By the end of AML 2070, students will be able to:

- read, write, and think critically about American Literature
- discuss the historical and critical context of various texts
- use evidence to effectively support argumentative claims or theses
- write an organized, logical argument
- avoid plagiarism
- write coherent, cohesive, and clear paragraphs
- understand the larger context of the American literary canon

### Required Readings

Morrison, Toni. *A Mercy*.

Otsuka, Julie. *When the Emperor Was Divine*

Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*.

Silko, Leslie Marmon. *Ceremony*.

West, Nathaniel. *The Day of the Locust*

**Note:** You will be assigned various readings from online sources. Many of these will be posted to the Sakai course page, although some may not be. In any case, you must **print** any assigned online reading and **bring it to class** on the day indicated on the course schedule.

### Grading and Course Credit Policies

Grading for this course will be rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citation guidelines, or a general carelessness in the writing, the assignment will be failed. Do not rely on your instructor for copyediting, even on drafts.

The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled. **Submitted assignments short of the minimum word count will receive a major point deduction.**

### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage (Point %)
A	4.0	93–100 (98)
A-	3.67	90–92 (91)
B+	3.33	87–89 (88)
B	3.0	83–86 (85)

B-	2.67	80–82 (81)
C+	2.33	77–79 (78)
C	2.0	73–76 (75)
C-	1.67	70–72 (71)
D+	1.33	67–69 (68)
D	1.0	63–66 (65)
D-	0.67	60–62 (61)
E	0.00	0–59 (0)

### 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

### Assignment Descriptions (Total Points Possible: 1055)

*Participation* 50 pts

*Homework and Reading Quizzes* 80 pts

One of the best ways to become a better writer is to become a more critical reader. To this end, there will be weekly quizzes in order to ensure and supplement out-of-class reading. Quizzes will take place during the first ten minutes of class, and will be on the

reading assigned for that day. They can be both open and closed book, and they can be both announced and unannounced. There are no make-ups quizzes for any reason.

*Reading Responses (500 words, 5 entries) 25 pts each*

Reading responses should be focused and organized, showing critical thinking and an attempt to integrate ideas into course topics and objectives. Each student is responsible for writing a response to five total readings, and can choose which days to respond. Reading responses will be due at the beginning of class. No late responses will be accepted. We will provide a number of examples and further explanation in the coming week.

*Essay One: Close Reading (750 words) 100 pts*

Choose a passage from a novel or short story we have read in class, or a poem (or section of a poem) to closely read. You will analyze the passage by paying close attention to its composition (diction, syntax, rhyme, rhythm, meter) and will make an argument about the way in which the author's composition influences your thematic reading. This assignment is particularly useful when analyzing poetry. Please contact the instructor before beginning your analysis.

*Essay Two: Midterm Paper (1200 words) 200 pts*

This assignment will be a thematic analysis of one of the texts we are reading for class. Your essay should incorporate the use of at least two critical sources who speak to similar issues and themes you are exploring in your texts. Consider the ways in which 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: Final Paper (1800-2200 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 a text of your choosing, and should consult at least 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 your own critical thinking on 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.

## **Classroom Policies**

### *Attendance and Tardiness*

Attendance is required. Each student is allowed three absence with no penalty. 50 points will be deducted from a student's final grade for each subsequent absence. If a student misses more than six periods during a semester, he or she will fail the entire course. For classes in which there is a double block, attendance will be taken twice. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays will be exempt from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor

prior to the date that will be missed. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record. The instructor is not responsible for informing students of their attendance record; however, students are encouraged to ask the student for the number of absences they have accrued should they have any concerns.

**Note:** If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a university-sponsored event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Students who enter class after the start of class are late and are marked as tardy. Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. Additionally, if you arrive more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent for that period. Tardiness disrupts the class and shows a disregard for your instructors and your classmates, so make it a habit to be in your seat when class begins.

#### *Late Work*

Students should turn in a copy of his or her essay on the day that it is due, even if he or she cannot make it to class. The mailbox location is listed above; the mailroom is open during regular business hours. A student may e-mail his or her essay for the purpose of avoiding lateness but is still required to turn in a copy for grading. Computer or email problems are not valid excuses for late work; save documents frequently and on multiple disks.

**Late work will not be accepted.** Any other work that is not turned in by class time on the due date will not be accepted and will automatically count as a zero. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### *Essay Submission*

Students will submit essays BOTH as a hardcopy in class and through Sakai.

- Because I use the reviewing feature in Microsoft Word, papers must be saved in a Word-compatible format, generally .doc or .docx, or .rtf.
- Students should save your papers using your last name and the assignment name as the filename. For example: hunzikerexplicaiton.doc
- Submit through the assignment tab by attaching the document to the assignment page.
- If you are experiencing technical difficulty with the website, print a hard copy of the paper and bring to class and/or email me your assignment. However, you will still need to attach the assignment once the website is running again.

#### *Participation*

Everyone is expected to participate in class. Be prepared to discuss the readings, answer questions about them, and ask questions about parts you did not understand. On these occasions, any disruptive or unconstructive behavior will be dealt with strictly. In any case, if students come

to class unprepared (e.g., without the required materials) and unable to participate, his or her participation grade will be penalized and he or she may be dismissed from class for the day.

### *Classroom Disruptions*

Common courtesy is mandatory in our classroom. Silence all cell phones, pagers, alarms, and so on when you enter the classroom; noise distractions are rude and interrupt everyone's learning. *If students are found text messaging in class, he or she will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day.* Sleeping, talking in private conversations, and reading other material are also inappropriate behaviors during class time. *Students will not need to use a laptop for this class, so please put it away before class begins.* Disciplinary action (dismissal from the classroom, grade deduction, and beyond) will be taken if a student disrupts the learning environment in any way.

### *Plagiarism*

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it 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:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the Internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. 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, 8 July 2011)

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.

### *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 may 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.

### *Students with Disabilities*

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office in Peabody 202.

That office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Tentative Course Schedule** (Readings are due on the day that they appear)

#### **Week 1: Settler Colonialism**

- 8.26** Course Introduction; Syllabus Overview
- 8.28** Defining the beginnings of American Literature and Settler Colonialism; “Iroquois Creation Story”

#### **Week 2: Indian Removal/Slave Narratives**

- 9.2** Native American autobiography; William Apess, “An Indian’s Looking-Glass for the White Man”; Black Hawk, “Life of Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak, or Black Hawk” (excerpt on Sakai)
- 9.4** Introduction to Slave Narratives; Harriet Jacobs, “Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl” (excerpt on Sakai)

#### **Week 3: Defining the American Pastoral**

- 9.9** Country Landscapes//How to close read; Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself”; Emily Dickinson, “Success is counted sweetest,” “Because I could not stop for Death,” “A narrow Fellow in the Grass,” “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant”
- 9.11** Robert Frost, “The Mending Wall,” “The Road Not Taken,” “Birches,” “Fire and Ice,” “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

#### **Week 4: American Modernism**

- 9.16** American Modernism; Wallace Stevens, “The Emperor of Ice-Cream,” “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock,” “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird”; William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow,” “This is Just to Say”
- 9.19** American Modernism cont’d; T.S. Eliot, “The Waste Land,” “The Hollow Men”

#### **Week 5: The Great Migration: Defining the Postbellum City**

- 9.23** **E1 DUE**; Harlem Renaissance//Zora Neale Hurston, “How It Feels to Be Colored Me,” “Mules and Men,”; Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “The Weary Blues,” “I, Too,” “Song for a Dark Girl,” “Harlem,” “Theme for English B,” “Life is Fine”
- 9.25** James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues”; Ralph Ellison, “Battle Royal”

## **Week 6: Defining the City: Westward Expansion**

**9.30** Nathaniel West, *The Day of the Locust* (chapters 1-15)

**10.2** Nathaniel West, *Day of the Locust* (Chapters 16-27)

## **Week 7: Japanese Internment**

**10.7** Introduction to Japanese Internment; Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (pg 1-48)

**10.9** Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (49-105)

## **Week 8: Cont'd//Indian Re-education**

**10.14** Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine* (105-144)

**10.16** Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-54)

## **Week 9: Cont'd**

**10.21** **R1 DUE**; Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (55-100)

**10.23** Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (100-159)

## **Week 10: War at Home: Indian Re-education**

**10.28** Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (159-201)

**10.30** Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (201-262)

## **Week 11: Cold War Imperialism and American Domesticity**

**11.4** **E2 DUE**; Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (Chapters 1-4)

**11.6** Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (Chapters 5-9)

## **Week 12: Cont'd**

**11.11** NO CLASS: Holiday

**11.13** Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (Chapters 10-20)

## **Week 13: (Im)migrations//Neo-slave Narratives**

**11.18** Jhumpa Lahiri, Amy Tan (two short stories, TBD)

**11.20** Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

**Week 14: Reimagining American History: The Neo-slave Narrative**

**11.25** **R2 DUE;** Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

**11.27** NO CLASS: Holiday

**Week 15: Cont'd**

**12.2** Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

**12.4** Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*

**Week 16: Final Papers Due**