

# AML2070: Survey of American Literature (section 0473)

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Office Location: Turlington 4361

Office Hours: M 8 (3.00-3.50 p.m.) and by appointment

Classroom: Matherly 009

## Course Information

### Course Description

How has the United States become the country it is today? What does it mean to be “American,” anyway? In this course, we will try to find answers to these and other questions by reading some of the major works in American literature, starting with texts from the colonial era and ending with some contemporary American novels. Through these works, you will be introduced to some of the major themes and topics in American literature, such as the American Dream and the notion of “freedom.” As we shall see, these terms can mean very different things to different people, depending on aspects of one’s identity such as race, class, and gender. While fiction will be our primary focus, we will also be reading a variety of poems, as well as some theoretical essays that will help us relate these works to their social, historical, and cultural contexts. Overall, this course will allow you to become acquainted with some of the most influential works in American literature and sharpen your critical thinking and writing skills, while considering the question that Crèvecoeur asked in 1782 and that is still relevant today: “What, then, is the American, this new man?”

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

### Course Objectives:

By the end of AML 2070, you will (be able to):

- Plan, draft, revise, and edit a paper
- Summarize, analyze, and synthesize academic sources
- Read critically and ask critical questions
- Accurately cite and incorporate sources
- Have a working knowledge of some of the main works of American literature and the contexts in which they were written
- Be familiar with some of the major themes and topics in modern American literature

### Course Texts

#### Required:

Texts appear in order of class use. You may purchase any version – hardcover, paperback, or electronic – as long as it is complete. Additional readings will be provided via course reserves.

- Baym, Nina et. al. *Norton Anthology of American Literature, Shorter 8th Edition*. 2 vols. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012. ISBN:0393918882.
- Gardner, Janet. *Writing about Literature*. 3rd ed. Boston, MA: Bedford/St.Martin's, 2012. ISBN: 1457606496.
- Potok, Chaim. *The Chosen*. 1967. New York: Fawcett Publications, 1987. ISBN: 449213447.
- Diaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. New York: Riverhead Trade, 2008. ISBN: 1594483299.

## Course Assignments

Assignment	Points
Article summary	50
2 critical responses	200 (total)
Midterm essay	200
Research proposal	50
Discussion questions	50 (total)
Final paper	250
Participation	200
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>

### Explanation of assignments

#### Article summary (50 points)

Any kind of research starts with reading what others have already written so that you get an impression of the arguments that already exist about your research topic. For this assignment, you will briefly summarize a scholarly article (provided by the instructor) in order to learn how to read academic articles and properly represent their arguments in your own writing (300 words).

#### Critical Responses (2 x 100 = 200 points)

In a critical response you briefly summarize and then analyze one of our main readings. You can think about the way certain things are represented in the text, for example, or consider the consequences or the limitations of a certain argument. Because textual analysis forces you to examine the text's arguments and look closely at underlying beliefs, ideas, and values, it improves your critical thinking skills. Looking closely at the text in this way may also help you find points of interest that you could explore further in your final essay (600 words each, 1200 words total).

#### Midterm essay (200 points)

The midterm essay gives you the opportunity to put all the writing skills you have acquired so far into practice. You will use some of the theory provided in class to perform a critical analysis of one of the works we have read. We will practice close reading, analyzing, and synthesizing throughout the semester. See Canvas for detailed instructions (*1500-1800 words*).

**Research proposal (50 points)**

You will write a brief proposal accompanied by a works-cited list of at least five sources (two of which can be articles that we have read in class) in which you line out your plan for your final research paper. The proposal serves two purposes: it is meant to help you narrow down your topic and come up with a research question, and it helps you to position your research in conversation with other scholars' works by becoming aware of additional lines of argument and controversies related to your topic (*500 words*).

**Research Paper (250 points)**

As the culmination of the course, your final paper will engage with one of the main texts we have read in class as well as some of the major issues and themes we have discussed. The paper should make a clear and thoughtful argument about the text(s) (articulated in a clear thesis statement), and should be informed by at least 3 outside critical sources. To make sure you are well prepared, you will hand in a detailed outline before starting the paper. The research paper will allow you to put into practice the skills you have refined over the course of the semester (close reading, analysis and synthesis). See Canvas for more detailed instructions (*2500 words*).

**Discussion Questions (50 points)**

Every week, you are expected to post a discussion question on one of the texts we are reading that week. Upload your question before 8pm on the day before we'll discuss the text. You will post ten questions in total. See Canvas for more detailed instructions.

**Participation (200 points)**

Class discussion will be an integral part of this course. Students are expected to come to class with readings and assignments completed and at least one question prepared so that they may make meaningful contributions in class. Even if you have already prepared a question for another class period, you are still expected to have done the reading and contribute in class.

Tardiness/attendance, participation in class discussion, and participation in activities such as peer reviews all count towards participation.

If you are very uncomfortable speaking up in class, please let me know during the first two weeks of the semester, so we can work out a solution.

**Grading Scale/Grading Rubric Grading Scale**

**Grading Scale**

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
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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

### **Grading Rubric**

Each assignment has its own requirements, but for each paper I will evaluate: 1. content, including argument, development, and support 2. organization, including thesis, topic sentences, and overall paragraph structure 3. mechanics, including grammar, spelling, and style.

#### **A PAPER**

An A-paper has a strong thesis and makes a coherent and original argument. It follows the assignment, is well-organized, communicates ideas clearly, and there are (almost) no mechanics mistakes.

#### **B PAPER**

A B-paper does the same things as an A-paper, but is somewhat lacking in one area: perhaps the structure of the paper could be improved (either on the paragraph level or in the essay as a whole), the writer provided insufficient evidence or analysis, or there are numerous mechanics mistakes. A B-paper could also be well-written, but lacking in originality.

#### **C PAPER**

The C-paper follows the assignment, but is lacking in two of the areas mentioned above (content, organization, mechanics). Usually, a C-paper also needs to try and move beyond a superficial engagement with the text.

#### **D PAPER**

The D-paper either does not follow the assignment, is lacking in all three areas, or both.

#### **E PAPER**

The E-paper is reserved for essays that are not turned in, or for work that is plagiarized.

For more information on Grading Policies at UF, see

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

### **Course schedule**

This schedule is tentative and subject to change throughout the semester. All assignments and readings are due the day they are listed. Make sure to check your UF e-mail and Canvas regularly for announcements and updates.

All readings are from the *Norton Anthology* or from *Reading and Writing about Literature* (RWL), unless otherwise noted.

## UNIT 1: DEFINING AMERICAN IDENTITY

### **Week 1 (January 7, 9)**

**W** Introductions

**F** Brief exercise - What does it mean to be "American"? (Canvas files)

### **Week 2 (January 12, 14, 16)**

**M** Read: "Introduction to Reading and Writing about Literature" and "The Role of Good Reading" (RWL)

**W** Read: Crèvecoeur, *From* Letter III: What is an American  
*From* Letter IX: Thoughts on Slavery

**F** Read: Howard Zinn, "Columbus, the Indians, and Human Progress"  
<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/zinncol1.html>

### **Week 3 (January 19, 21, 23)**

**M** No class, MLK day

**W** *Peer reviews article summary - bring draft to class*

**F** Article summary due

Read "The Writing Process" (RWL)

Re-read "Active Reading" and "Asking Critical Questions of Literature" (RWL 8-20)

Read thesis statement handouts (Canvas pages)

## UNIT 2: REDEFINING AMERICAN IDENTITY

### **Week 4 (January 26, 28, 30)**

**M** Read Zitkala-Sa "Impressions of an Indian Childhood"

**W** Continue Zitkala-Sa

Read "Using evidence effectively" (Canvas pages)

Read "Using quotations effectively" (RWL)

**F** *Peer reviews critical response #1 - bring draft to class!*

### **Week 5 (February 2, 4, 6)**

**M** Critical response #1 due

Read Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"

**W** Continuation "The Yellow Wallpaper"

**F** Read Sojourner Truth, "Speech to the Women's Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio, 1851"

**Week 6 (February 9, 11, 13)**

**M** Read Mark Twain, *Huckleberry Finn*

**W** Continue *Huckleberry Finn*

Read Shelley Fisher Fishkin, From *Lighting out of the Territory*

**F** Peer reviews critical response #2 - bring draft to class!

Read Booker T. Washington, "Up from Slavery"

Read W.E.B. du Bois, "The Souls of Black Folk"

**Week 7 (February 16, 18, 20)**

**M** Critical response #2 due

Continue Washington/DuBois

**W** Read "American Literature Since 1945"

**F** Re-read "The Role of Good Reading" (RWL)

Read "Writing about Poems" (RWL)

**UNIT 3: AMERICAN IDENTITY AFTER WWII**

**Week 8 (February 23, 25, 27)**

**M** Read Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"

Read "This is the Beat Generation," John Clellon Holmes (Canvas pages)

**W** Read Amiri Baraka, "An Agony. As Now." and "A Poem for Willie Best"

**F** *Mandatory conferences midterm essay - bring essay draft!*

**Week 9**

**S P R I N G B R E A K (no class)**

**Week 10 (March 9, 11, 13)**

**M** Midterm due!

**W** Read Sylvia Plath, "Lady Lazarus," "Morning Song," "Daddy"

**F** Continue Sylvia Plath

Read "Writing a research proposal" (Canvas)

UNIT 4: CULTURE, GENDER & IDENTITY

**Week 11 (March 16, 18, 20)**

**M** Read Maxine Hong Kingston, "The Woman Warrior"

**W** *Mandatory conferences research proposal - bring finished draft!*

**F** Research proposal due!

**Week 12 (March 23, 25, 27)**

**M** Read Gloria Anzaldua, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"

**W** Continue Gloria Anzaldua

**F** Start reading Chaim Potok, *The Chosen* ch. 1-3

UNIT 5: MINORITY PERSPECTIVES ON AMERICAN IDENTITY

**Week 13 (March 30, April 1, 3)**

**M** Continue reading *The Chosen*, ch. 4-6

**W** Continue reading *The Chosen*, ch. 7-8

**F** Finish reading *The Chosen*, ch. 9-10-11

**Week 14 (April 6, 8, 10)**

**M** Start reading Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* ch 1+2

**W** Continue reading *Oscar Wao* ch 3

**F** Continue reading *Oscar Wao* ch. 4+5

**Week 15 (April 13, 15, 17)**

**M** Finish reading *Oscar Wao* ch. 6- end

**W** *Peer reviews final paper - bring draft!*

**F** *Mandatory conferences final paper!*

**Week 16 (April 20, 22)**

**M** Evaluations & wrap-up

**W** Final paper DUE at midnight!

## Course Policies Participation and Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation are crucial. While I may occasionally give short lectures, the bulk of our time will be spent talking and engaging together with the course material and with each other's ideas. In order to do this, it is essential that you come to class prepared to address the day's material. This means printing out (if necessary) and completing all reading before class, bringing the reading to class, and being prepared to discuss the reading thoughtfully. You should have interpretations, questions, and responses to share with the class, and you should be prepared to offer these and to be called on in our conversation. Discussion and work in class are important parts of this course, so active, thoughtful participation will have an impact on your final grade.

In this course we will follow a strict attendance policy. **If you miss more than six periods during the term, you will fail the entire course.** The university exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored and religious holidays events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, **you can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades.**

**Please Note:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and required work. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Being late is disruptive, so try to always be on time. Three incidents of tardiness will count as one absence.

### Classroom Conduct

Keep in mind that UF 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. Any use of electronic devices not related to classroom learning: phones, personal data assistants, iPods, etc. are disruptive and will not be tolerated. Please put them on silent and keep them out of sight.

### Assignment Maintenance Responsibilities

You are responsible for maintaining copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, marked work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of marked papers, it is the your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

## **Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission**

I do not accept late work. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) to E-learning/Canvas before class on the designated due date. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All assignments and postings should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

## **Final Grade Appeals**

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

## **University Policies General Education**

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

## **Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit**

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>

## **Statement of Writing Requirement**

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-math-requirement.aspx>

## **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>. The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

## **Statement Concerning Sexual Harassment**

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

## **Statement Concerning Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

### **Statement Concerning Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

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):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) 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, 15 Aug. 2007  
<<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>>)

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>