

AML 2070 THE AMERICAN FANTASTIC
SEC. 0473 SPRING 2018

Instructor Name: Thomas Johnson

Course Meeting Time and Location: MWF 7th per. (1:55-2:45 p.m.), MAT 114

Office Location and Hours: TUR 4343, W 3 to 5 p.m. or by appt.

Course Website: Canvas

Instructor Email: tdjohnson@ufl.edu

Course Description:

This course will examine the American fantasy tradition, broadly defined to include stories that feature mysticism or happenings that characters perceive to be supernatural in origin. The beginning of the class will focus on cultivating a vocabulary for discussing fantasy, with readings that exemplify three major modes of fantasy fiction: the marvelous, the uncanny, and the fantastic. The marvelous depicts events that unambiguously contradict the “laws of reality,” the uncanny “emphasizes the mind’s ability to produce seemingly inexplicable events” (Telotte 62), and the fantastic mixes the first two categories. By discussing and writing about how authors such as Hawthorne, Poe, Fitzgerald, and Faulkner employ these different modes, we will come to see how the histories of the American literary canon and American fantasy are inextricably intertwined. Our readings demonstrate the malleability of divisions between canonical literature and genre fiction, and allow us to trace the development of the latter category in the twentieth century.

We will explore how fantasy is used to interrogate the founding myths of American culture, such as radical individualism and the American Dream. The second half of the course will focus on how women authors and authors of color have revised fantasy tropes in order to critique these myths. We will discuss how these authors challenge the notion that fantasy is an inherently conservative genre, by constructing narratives that grant agency to traditionally marginalized communities and propose alternatives to institutionalized racism and sexism.

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 includes multiple forms of effective writing; different writing styles, approaches, and formats; and various methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes, and contexts. Students will learn to organize complex arguments in writing by using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and logic analysis.
- 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.

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General Education Learning Outcomes:

This class 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> .

At the end of this course, students will be expected to achieve 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 developing reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts

Baum, L. Frank. *A Wonderful Welcome to Oz: The Marvelous Land of Oz, Ozma of Oz, and The Emerald City of Oz*. (ISBN: 978-0812974942)

Butler, Octavia. *Kindred*. (ISBN: 978-0807083697)

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. (ISBN: 978-0-393-93138-9)

James, Henry. *The Turn of the Screw*. (ISBN: 978-0393959048)

All other readings are either hyperlinked in the syllabus or available as PDFs on Canvas.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete *all assignments* to receive credit for this course. You are expected to be prepared for every class, including completing all reading and writing assignments on time.
2. **Attendance:** a) AML 2070 is a participation-oriented course, which means that you will build your skills and gain knowledge incrementally and systematically in each class throughout the semester. Attendance is crucial in engaging with other students about the reading and writing assignments. Much of the learning that takes place is spontaneous and difficult to reproduce outside of class. Consequently, if you miss six or more 50-minute periods, you will fail the entire course. b) Only those absences involving military service; court-mandated obligations, such as jury duty and court testimony; university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays, are exempt. Absences for illness or family emergencies will count toward your three allowed absences. Please provide a doctor's note. Each absence beyond three may lower your overall grade. If you are absent,

it is still your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. You are still responsible for turning assignments in on time. c) Please do not come late to class; arriving late disrupts the entire class. If you are more than 15 minutes late, you will be marked absent. Being tardy three times will equal one absence. Save your absences for when you really need them.

3. **Paper Format and Submission:** All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and follow other MLA formatting and citation guidelines. All assignments will be submitted on Canvas.
4. **Late Papers/Assignments:** Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class. Extensions can be negotiated in advance of deadline; late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.
5. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned and/or graded work in this course 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: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading Policy, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ungrad/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>.
11. Students who face difficulty 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/cwcDefault.aspx>
12. **Cell Phones and Laptops:** Cell phones must be silenced or on vibrate at the beginning of class. Laptops are not necessary for this class and must be kept shut and put away unless the instructor gives you permission to use them.
13. UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>. 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 with controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

Tentative Course Schedule

- Week 1** (January 8-12)
M: Go over syllabus
W: *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Genre*, Tzvetan Todorov (1975), Chapters 2 and 3
F: Native American folk tales

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY: FANTASY AND CANON FORMATION

- Week 2** (January 15-19)
M: **Martin Luther King Jr. Day – No Class**
W: “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” Washington Irving (1820)
F: “Ligeia” (1838)
- Week 3** (January 22-26)
M: “The Fall of the House of Usher” (1839), and “The Telltale Heart,” Edgar Allan Poe (1843)
W: “Rappaccini’s Daughter,” Nathaniel Hawthorne (1844)
F: “The Yellow Wallpaper,” Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1892) **Last possible date for reading response #1**
- Week 4** (January 29-February 2)
M: *The Turn of the Screw*, Henry James (1898), Chapters 1-8
W: Chapters 9-16
F: Chapters 17-24

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, PART I: LITERARY AND PULP FICTION

- Week 5** (February 5-9)
M: *The Marvelous Land of Oz*, L. Frank Baum (1902), p. 1-48
W: p. 49-100
F: p. 101-153 **Literary Analysis Due**
- Week 6** (February 12-16)
M: p. 154-189
W: “The Curious Case of Benjamin Button,” by F. Scott Fitzgerald (1922)
F: [“The Call of Cthulhu,” H.P. Lovecraft](#) (1926) **Last possible date for reading response #2**
- Week 7** (February 19-23)
M: *As I Lay Dying*, William Faulkner (1931), p. 1-49
W: p. 50-102
F: p. 103-149

Week 8 (February 26-March 2)
M: “The Lottery,” Shirley Jackson (1948)
W: “The April Witch,” Ray Bradbury (1952)
F: “Tomorrow and Tomorrow and Tomorrow,” Kurt Vonnegut (1953) **Last possible date for reading response #3**

Week 9 (March 5-9)
Spring Break

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, PART II: GENRE FICTION ON THE RISE

Week 10 (March 12-16)
M: “Revelation,” Flannery O’Connor (1965)
W: Peer review of compare/contrast essay
F: Instructor is away at conference **Compare/Contrast Essay Due**

Week 11 (March 19-23)
M: “The Heat Death of the Universe,” Pamela Zoline (1967)
W: “The Babysitter,” John Coover (1969)
F: “The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas,” Ursula K. LeGuin (1973)

Week 12 (March 26-30)
M: *Kindred*, Octavia Butler (1979), p. 1-44
W: p. 45-89
F: p. 90-134 **Last possible date for reading response #4**

Week 13 (April 2-6)
M: *Kindred*, p. 135-178
W: p. 179-222
F: p. 223-264

Week 14 (April 9-13)
M: [“Saint Marie,” Louise Erdrich](#) (1984), Excerpt from *The Intersection of Fantasy and Native America*, Amy H. Sturgis and David D. Oberhelman (2009)
W: “The Little Sisters of Eluria,” Stephen King (1998), chapters 1-3
F: “The Little Sisters of Eluria,” chapters 4-6

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY REVISIONS

Week 15 (April 16-20)
M: [“The Narcomancer,” by N.K. Jemisin \(2007\)](#)
W: [“The Pragmatical Princess,” Nisi Shawl \(2008\)](#)
F: “The Horror at Castle Cumberland,” Chesya Burke (2014) **Last possible date for reading response #5**

Week 16 (April 23-27)
M: Chesya Burke visits class
W: Research paper workshop
Research paper due April 30 by 11:59 p.m.

Assignments (see below for grading rubric):

Literary Analysis Essay (1,000 words; 100 points): You will choose one text discussed in class and perform a close-reading. Make a claim about the author's purpose for writing and how the author achieves their purpose. Use quotes and other evidence from the text to support your argument. Outside sources should not be used.

Compare and Contrast Essay (1,500 words; 200 points): You will choose two texts discussed in class and compare and contrast the fantastic narrative elements found in each. Your argument should center on why the differences and similarities in the two texts are present, taking into consideration each author's historical and cultural context. Cite textual evidence to support your claims. Use two to three scholarly sources to support your argument.

Researched Critical Essay (2,000 words; 300 points): You will choose one text discussed in class and develop an original critical argument about your interpretation of the text. Consult three to four academic sources to situate your argument in the context of a scholarly discussion. Use quotes from the text to support your argument.

Analytical Reading Responses (300 words each, 60 points each; 1500 words total, 300 points total): The responses are 300 words due every three weeks on a day of your choice for a total of 5 responses over the course of the semester. Each reading response should comment on that particular class day's reading. (For example, if you submit a response on Monday, your response should comment upon Monday's reading.) What was interesting, provocative, or troubling about the content of that reading assignment? What are your feelings about a particular character, plot development, or the author's use of literary devices? How does the reading relate to contemporary culture? These are just a few effective approaches to this assignment.

Class Participation (100 points): Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Missing a peer review will result in a 10% deduction from the final grade of the essay.

Assignments and Grade Distribution	Points
Literary Analysis (1000 words) - 10%	100
Compare and Contrast (1500 words) - 20%	200
Researched Critical Essay (2000 words) – 30%	300
Reading Responses (1500 words) – 30%	300

Class Participation – 10%

100

Total: 1000

A: 94-100 (4.0)
A-: 90-93 (3.67)
B+: 87-89 (3.33)
B: 84-86 (3.0)
B-: 80-83 (2.67)
C+: 77-79 (2.33)
C: 74-76 (2.0)
C-: 70-73 (1.67)
D+: 67-69 (1.33)
D: 64-66 (1.0)
D-: 60-63 (.67)
E: 0-59 (0)

A - You successfully completed the assignment at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Your paper reveals that you have grappled deeply with the assignment's topic. Your paper is clearly structured, thoroughly supported, and persuasive. The assignment contains no errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

B - You successfully completed the assignment at a moderately high level. Your paper reveals that you have thought deeply about the assignment's topic and have developed a largely persuasive argument, although your work may need slight revisions in terms of structure and/or content. The assignment is almost completely without errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

C - While your paper reveals that you have given some thought to the assignment's topic, your paper seems more of a rough draft than a final version and requires substantial revisions, likely in terms of both structure and content, in order to persuade the reader. While your assignment may be readable, it contains some errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax.

D - You did what the assignment required of you at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The paper's main ideas are poorly supported, and an organizational structure is difficult to discern. Frequently, writing at this level may suffer from many problems in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax which are so serious as to render portions of the paper nearly unreadable.

E - Papers which earn E's fail to show that the writer has given any consideration to the assignment's topic. The paper offers slim to no support for its argument, and an organizational structure cannot be discerned. The paper contains an unsatisfactory number of errors in grammar, spelling, and/or syntax. Importantly, if any of the paper has been plagiarized, it will also receive a failing grade.