

**AML 2070: Survey of American Literature**  
**The American Fairy Tale**  
 Spring 2017 Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Jill Coste

**Email:** [jillcoste@ufl.edu](mailto:jillcoste@ufl.edu)

**Class meets:** T/Th 8,9/9 in MAT 0118

**Office location:** TUR 4335

**Office hours:** T 12:30-2:30 p.m.

and by appointment

### Course Description

While the phrase “The American Dream” can often evoke starry-eyed visions of success, it can just as frequently elicit skepticism. What, indeed, does “The American Dream” mean to different groups of people in varying cultural contexts? America has long enjoyed a mythology of inclusiveness, prosperity, and equality, but its literature reflects a more complex reality. In this survey course, we will read, interpret, and discuss a broad range of American texts from the eighteenth through the twenty-first century, paying careful attention to how storytelling shapes American ideology. We will examine folklore, autobiography, fantasy, poetry, adaptation, and contemporary fiction in order to assess different conceptions of American identity, community, and power.

This course is designed to encourage critical thinking and analysis about the texts we study in relation to the culture in which we live. Literature exists not simply for entertainment; it serves as a record of the cultural and historical Zeitgeist in which it was written. Beyond exploring recurring themes and motifs in the texts for this class, we will also consider the literature in light of the American Dream mythology, considering in what ways this dream is a reality and in what ways it is a fairy tale.

This course fulfills the 6000-word University Writing Requirement. Assignments will include short response papers, in-class writing, literary analysis papers, and reading quizzes. Writing assignments will be designed to engage students in close reading and developing critical analysis skills.

### Course Goals and Objectives

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

- Read, write, and think critically about American literature and culture, as well as texts beyond the scope of the course
- Discuss the historical and critical context of texts
- Communicate their ideas and analyses of texts
- Develop well-supported, persuasive, polished academic essays
- Establish and support significant historical, literary, and critical or theoretical claims
- Conduct formal research on literature and use secondary sources to support their arguments

### 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).
- 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 (in order of class schedule)**

Horatio Alger, *Ragged Dick*

L. Frank Baum, *American Fairy Tales*

Sandra Cisneros, *The House on Mango Street*

Sherman Alexie, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*

\*See schedule for full list of additional readings, which will be available on Canvas

### **Course Requirements**

**Response Papers (2 responses; 500 words each; 100 points total):** There will be two response assignments that will require your critical engagement with the texts. I will provide prompts that ask guided inquiries that will lead you to close-read the text(s), situate it in its historical context, and/or offer a new perspective on the work or writer. Each response must follow the same academic writing style required of standard essays, including well-crafted paragraphs, a thesis or hypothesis, well-supported claims, and effective stylistic elements. Each response will be on a different text, but the ideas explored in these responses can be further developed in longer papers.

**Museum Project (1000 words; 125 points):** In March, we will visit the Harn Museum on campus and engage in an interactive discussion about one of the exhibits. You will complete a written project about your experience at the museum. Further details will be distributed with a prompt in advance of the visit.

**Close Reading Analysis (1000 words; 150 points):** You will choose one text and conduct a persuasive close reading of part of that work. In this assignment, you will analyze the selection and develop an argument about the way in which the author's composition influences your thematic reading. This assignment is designed to assess analytical and critical skills, so no outside research should be conducted.

**Critical Analysis (1200 words; 225 points):** You will perform an extended critical analysis of one of the texts already studied in class. In this assignment, you will develop a thematic reading and then use that theme to analyze the text. The goal of this assignment is for you to formulate a specific and substantial critical argument that addresses a significant aspect of a text, justifying your claims through a systematic critique of two or three detailed textual examples. Topics must be discussed with me before you begin writing.

**Final Paper: Researched Critical Analysis (1800 words; 300 points):** In this assignment, you will use the skills developed throughout the course and in previous papers. This assignment is a sustained, formally researched critical analysis in which you will make an original argument about one or more texts through a particular theoretical, historical, or critical lens. You will develop a topic of your own choosing, subject to my approval. This assignment is an opportunity to develop unique, interesting arguments. The paper should incorporate both primary and secondary texts and offer evidence of your critical thinking and interpretive abilities.

**Discussion Questions (40 points total):** Four times over the course of the semester, you will submit before class a set of **two** thoughtful and clear questions, each capable of generating various responses and lasting discussion about the text and its relation to some of the major themes, issues, or other texts we have been thinking about throughout the course. **Your typed questions must be submitted to Canvas by 11:59 p.m. the Monday before class.** The weeks you decide to submit questions are up to you, but you are required to submit them four times for four different readings.

**Class Participation (60 points total):** Literature and writing about literature are designed for discussion, therefore this class follows suit. You are expected to participate. You will arrive prepared, pay attention, and be involved in class activities. We will engage in both small group and large class discussion and writing activities. Simply attending class is not enough; I expect you to be actively engaged. Participation points are earned through your attendance, preparation, and engagement with the texts in both discussion and the in-class writing and workshops.

**In-Class Writing:** Most classes will begin with a brief writing exercise about the text in order to stimulate your thinking and subsequent class participation. Scores will be integrated into your participation grade.

**Quizzes:** At my discretion, pop quizzes on the readings will be given at the beginning of class. There will be no make-up quizzes, but your lowest score will be dropped. Scores will be integrated into your participation grade.

### Course Policies

**Assignments:** You must complete *all* assignments to receive credit for this course.

**Attendance:** You must attend class to succeed in this course. You are allowed to miss three periods without penalty. Please note that missing a Tuesday double-block class counts as two periods. After you reach this three-period limit, your overall grade will be penalized by 20 points per absence. **If you miss more than six periods, you will automatically fail the course.** If you enter class after the official start of the period, you are late—which disrupts the entire class. **Three instances of tardiness count as one absence.** If you are 15 minutes late or more for a class period, I consider you absent.

If you must miss class, you are still responsible for knowing what was covered in class. Notifying me that you will be absent does not mean that the absence is excused. I understand that you sometimes must miss class for doctor's appointments, run-of-the-mill illnesses, transportation issues, family obligations, or travel. I recommend saving your absences for these circumstances. You will not be allowed to make up any quizzes or in-class writing prompts given on the day of your absence.

**Paper Format and Submission:** You will submit your first paper—Response #1—both online on Canvas and in printed paper format. The rest of your assignments you will submit online through Canvas. All written work should follow MLA format, 7th or 8th edition.

**Late work and extensions:** I will consider a request for an extension if you approach me at least three days before the assignment is due. A late paper or other assignment will lose half a letter grade for each day it is late. I advise completing all assignments early to ensure that you can print or submit them without problems.

**Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

**Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.** Plagiarism includes copying the ideas or writings of someone else and claiming it as your own work, collaborating with someone else on an assignment, and/or resubmitting work that you have done for another class. DON'T DO IT. 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/>.

*Pro Tip:* You should never copy and paste something from the internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

**All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course.** Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if you fail to understand and employ proper documentation techniques. When in doubt, ask for help!

**Students with Disabilities:** The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

**UF Grading Policies:** For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

**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.

**Course Evaluations:** Towards 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>

**Canvas:** I will regularly post announcements, assignments, readings, and supplemental class material on Canvas. You should check it frequently.

**Email:** I will try to answer emails quickly, but I may take longer to respond on nights and weekends. Please do not email me with questions about details you can find in the syllabus (due dates, etc.) or for a summary of a class you missed. You are responsible for finding out what you missed by checking with a peer.

**Respect:** The best classroom experience comes from students respecting each other and the instructor. This includes everything from coming to class on time, to refraining from private conversations during class, to not texting during a lecture. You are encouraged to join in class discussions, and varying views are welcomed, but please refrain from using obscene or offensive language and interrupting others.

**Electronics:** Your active participation is required in this course, and electronics can be distracting. As such, all forms of electronics, including but not limited to laptops, cell phones, iPods, and iPads, **are not allowed for use in this class unless approved by the instructor.** Of course, many of your readings are available online, in which case I will allow electronics to access the texts. Calling, texting, surfing the web, or listening to music in class is not acceptable and is simply disrespectful. Be forewarned that I reserve the right to confiscate any devices should they prove to be a distraction to the class, or to your classmates, in any way.

**Office Hours:** I welcome all students to attend office hours with questions about literature, reading, writing, or the course in general. If you are coming to talk about an assignment, please bring the prompt and whatever writing you have begun with you. It will assist me in answering any questions you may have.

**Writing Studio:** The University Writing Studio is located in Tigert 302 and is available to all UF students. It's an excellent resource for getting feedback and guidance on your written work. Visit their site at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/> for more information.

### Course Schedule

Please note that the following schedule is approximate, as dates and topics may shift as the semester continues. Please note that secondary readings will occasionally be assigned and will be posted on Canvas.

**All readings are to be completed outside of class by the discussion date.**

Week	Day	Reading/Viewing Material	Assignments Due
1	R 1/5	Intro/syllabus, literary and historical context, writing activity	
2	T 1/10	Iroquois Creation Myth; Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought From Africa to America"; Folklore, "The Invisible One"	
	R 1/12	Harriet Spofford, "Circumstance"; Folklore TBA	
3	T 1/17	Excerpts from <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	Response #1
	R 1/19	Excerpts from <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i>	
4	T 1/24	Washington Irving, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"	
	R 1/26	Washington Irving, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"	
5	T 1/31	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"	
	R 2/2	Black Hawk cont'd; secondary reading TBD	Close Reading Draft
6	T 2/7	Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Close Reading Final

	R 2/9	Harriet Jacobs, excerpts from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	
7	T 2/14	Horatio Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i> , Ralph Waldo Emerson, excerpts from "Self Reliance"	
	R 2/16	Horatio Alger, <i>Ragged Dick</i>	Critical Analysis Draft
8	T 2/21	L. Frank Baum, <i>American Fairy Tales</i>	Critical Analysis Final
	R 2/23	L. Frank Baum, <i>American Fairy Tales</i>	
9	T 2/28	T.S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; "The Hollow Men"	
	R 3/2	James Thurber, "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"	
10	T 3/7	No Class - Spring Break	
	R 3/9	No Class - Spring Break	
11	T 3/14	W.E.B. Du Bois, excerpts from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> , Claude McKay, "America"; Langston Hughes, "Harlem," "I, Too"	Response #2
	R 3/16	Maya Angelou, "Still I Rise"; Toni Morrison, "Récitatif"	
12	T 3/21	Trip to Harn Museum - project/exhibit TB A	
	R 3/23	Anne Sexton, excerpts from <i>Transformations</i>	
13	T 3/28	Steven Sondheim, <i>Into the Woods</i> (viewing options TBA)	Ham Project
	R 3/30	Steven Sondheim, <i>Into the Woods</i> ; Kate Bemheimer, excerpt from <i>My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me</i>	
14	T 4/4	Sandra Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i>	
	R 4/6	Sandra Cisneros, <i>The House on Mango Street</i>	
15	T 4/11	Sherman Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i>	Research Sources
	R 4/13	Sherman Alexie, <i>Absolutely True Diary</i>	
16	T 4/18	Kate Bemheimer, additional excerpts from <i>My Mother She Killed Me, My Father He Ate Me</i>	Researched Critical Analysis Draft
Finals Week	T 4/24	Researched Critical Analysis Due, Revisions Due (You may revise your Close Reading or Critical Analysis paper. This is optional.)	Researched Critical Analysis Final

**Grading**

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 not receive a passing grade. The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled.

As your instructor, I will evaluate and provide feedback on your written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. You can find the University Writing Program's rubric on the last page of the syllabus. I will also deliver more specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments during the course of the semester.

**Grade Issues**

University policy prohibits discussions of grades via email. If you have a question about a grade, you may schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss it.

**Grade Scale**

A:	93-100	C:	73-76
A-:	90-92	C-:	70-72
B+:	87-89	D+:	67-69
B:	83-86	D:	63-66
B-:	80-82	D-:	60-62
C+:	77-79	E:	0-59

**ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC**

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
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.

<p>ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.</p>
<p>STYDE</p>	<p>Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>MECHANICS</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.</p>