

**Instructor Name:** Srimayee Basu

**Course meeting times & location:** T/R 8-9/9 & FLI 0111

**Office Location and Hours:** TUR 4335; Tuesday and Thursday Period 7 and by appointment.

**Course website:** Canvas

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

### **Course Description:**

This course will acquaint students with Critical Disability Studies and the study of the body politic through key works in American literature. Through these texts, we shall attempt to understand how the disabled or diseased body complicates our understanding of physical and intellectual autonomy. Instead of understanding disabilities and disease(s) from the exclusive domain of medical discourse, we will also view them as cultural constructions. We will consider how the politics of race, gender and sexuality shape templates of physical and intellectual competency: including conceptions of hysteria and mental illness, vilifications of queer and/or trans people, and racialized conceptions of evolution. Alongside our primary texts, we shall also read short excerpts from critical works by Judith Butler, Susan Sontag, Michel Foucault and Lennard Davis.

### **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:**

- Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (PDF on Canvas)
- Lennard J. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century." (PDF on Canvas)
- Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

- David Mitchell's and Sharon's Snyder's *Cultural Constructions of Disability* (PDF on Canvas)
- William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*
- Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power." (PDF on Canvas)
- John Steinbeck, *Of Mice and Men*
- Flannery O' Connor, "Good Country People," "The Lame Shall Enter First," "The Life You Save May Be Our Own" (PDF on Canvas)
- Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects." (PDF on Canvas)
- Ken Kesey, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*
- Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar*
- Toni Morrison, *Sula*
- Jennifer C. James and Cynthia Wu, "Race, Ethnicity, Disability, and Literature."
- Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*
- Susan Sontag, "Illness as a Metaphor." (PDF on Canvas)

**Assignments** (see below for Grading Rubric):

**Reading Quizzes (10 multiple choice quizzes; 10 points each):** Reading quizzes will be administered in class and will test your familiarity with the text's plot, narrative, and characters, as well as its key themes. These will be announced quizzes and their dates have been mentioned on the weekly schedule.

**Analytical Reflective Papers (500 words; 20 points each):** Five short write-ups where you will reflect on any concept, idea, or claim that has been invoked in the week's reading materials which aroused your intellectual curiosity. These are geared towards bringing about a fuller understanding of the weekly reading and facilitating a lively class discussion.

**Midterm Paper (1000 words; 300 points):** This paper will consist of a thematic analysis of one of the texts we are reading for class. The essay will incorporate two critical sources that 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. I encourage you to consult with me before you begin the writing process.

**Research Proposal (500 words; 100 points):** In this assignment, you will write a brief proposal for the topic that you wish to work with for your final research paper. Your proposal should include a primary text, a central argument, your proposed methodology and plan of research.

**Final Research Paper (2000 words; 400 points):** 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 and understanding of the text.

#### **Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is required. Each student is allowed four absences with no penalty. 50 points will be deducted from a student's final grade for each subsequent absence. If a student misses 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.
3. 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 so make it a habit to be in your seat when class begins.

4. *Paper Format & Submission*: Students will submit their essays through Canvas. Because I use the reviewing feature in Microsoft Word, papers must be saved in a Word-compatible format, generally .doc or .docx, or .rtf. You should save your papers using your last name and the assignment name as the filename. 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.
5. *Late Papers/Assignments* : Students should turn in essays on the day they are due—even if they cannot make it to class. 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 and require documentation.
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/secr/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/](http://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*: Common courtesy is mandatory in our classroom. Silence all cell phones, pagers, alarms, and so on when you enter the classroom; unexpected noises interrupt everyone’s concentration. *If a student is found text messaging in class, he or she will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day.* Sleeping, holding private conversations, and reading other material are also inappropriate behaviors during class time.
14. *Laptop Policy*: Students will not need to use a laptop for this class for anything but assigned texts, so please put it away before class begins and take it out only for accessing Canvas or Course Reserves. E-readers will be allowed; this does not include cell phones, which must be put away and on silent during class. Other devices, such as laptops and tablets, will be allowed on a provisional basis.
15. *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/>

Syllabus			
Wk	Day	Reading/Viewing Material	Due
1	8/22	Course Introduction; Syllabus Overview; Screening <i>Examined Life</i> - Judith Butler & Sunaura Taylor (15 minutes) <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOHZaPkF6qE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kOHZaPkF6qE</a>	

		Lecture and discussion on Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper"	
	8/24	Gilman continued	
2	8/29	Discussion on Lennard J. Davis, "Constructing Normalcy: The Bell Curve, the Novel, and the Invention of the Disabled Body in the Nineteenth Century."	
		Workshop on writing Reflective Papers; Quiz 1	
	8/31	Presentation by a representative from the UF Disability Resource Center	
3	9/5	Lecture and Discussion on Ernest Hemingway, <i>The Sun Also Rises</i>	
		Hemingway continued	
	9/7	Class at the HARN Museum of Art- Viewing the art installation titled <i>Unlimited - A creative response to living with ALS</i> and a discussion session with local artist Sandra Murphy-Pak	Reflective Paper 1
4	9/12	Hemingway continued; Quiz 2	
		Discussion on the introductory chapter of David Mitchell's and Sharon's Snyder's <i>Cultural Constructions of Disability</i>	
	9/14	Lecture and Discussion on William Faulkner, <i>The Sound and the Fury</i>	
5	9/19	Faulkner continued	
		Faulkner continued	
	9/21	Faulkner continued; Quiz 3	
6	9/26	Discussion on Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power."	Reflective Paper 2
		Lecture and Discussion on John Steinbeck, <i>Of Mice and Men</i>	
	9/28	Steinbeck continued	

7	10/3	Steinbeck continued; watching clips from Gary Sinise's 1992 cinematic adaptation of the novel; Quiz 4	
		Lecture and Discussion on Flannery O' Connor, "Good Country People"	
	10/5	O' Connor continued, "The Lame Shall Enter First"	Reflective Paper 3
8	10/10	O' Connor continued, "The Life You Save May Be Our Own"; Quiz 5	
		Workshop on Midterm Paper	
	10/12	Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects."	
9	10/17	Ken Kesey, <i>One Flew Over the Cuckoo 's Nest</i>	
		Kesey continued	
	10/19	Kesey continued	Midterm Paper
10	10/24	Screening sections of the 1975 film adaptation of Kesey's film in class; Quiz 6	
		Reviewing the "Interactive Timeline: The Disability Rights Movement" on PBS	
	10/26	Lecture and Discussion on Sylvia Plath, <i>The Bell Jar</i>	Reflective Paper 4
11	10/31	Plath continued	
		Plath continued	
	11/2	Screening "Labor and Childbirth." <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Bwmv4fenDo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Bwmv4fenDo</a> "Psychiatric Hospitals & Asylums in 1950s America"	Reflective Paper 5

		<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M20jiZ6PltI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M20jiZ6PltI</a> ; Quiz 7	
12	11/7	Lecture and Discussion on Toni Morrison, <i>Sula</i>	
		Workshop on Final Research Paper	
	11/9	Morrison continued	
13	11/14	Morrison continued; Quiz 8	
		Jennifer C. James and Cynthia Wu, "Race, Ethnicity, Disability, and Literature."	
	11/16	Lecture and Discussion on Audre Lorde, <i>The Cancer Journals</i>	
14	11/21	Lorde continued	
		Lorde continued; Quiz 9	
	11/24	No Class	
15	11/28	Susan Sontag, "Illness as a Metaphor."	
		Screening the documentary <i>Lives Worth Living</i> on the Disability Rights Movement on PBS.	
	11/30	Discussion based on the documentary, Quiz 10	
16	12/5	Wrap-up and Course Review	Final Research Paper

**Grading/Assessment Rubric**

## 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

## Grade Meanings

A Student did what the assignment asked at a superior level, meeting all 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 a student's 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.