

LIT 2000: Introduction to Literature (Class #17246) Fall 2017

Instructor: Corinne Matthews

E-mail: ck.matthews@ufl.edu

Class Meeting Time: MWF Period 6 (12:50 PM – 1:40 PM)

Course website: Canvas

Office: TBD

Office Hours: MW 11:30-12:30

Location: Turlington 2328

Course Description:

This course examines the role literature has played in individuals' lives and in society. It is centered on three questions: *What is literature? Why do we write literature? And why do we read literature?* LIT 2000 introduces students to a diverse range of literary genres, from different national traditions and historical periods.

Among the primary aims of this course is to help students develop critical skills of literary analysis and interpretation. Students will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical contexts shape the meaning and significance of literature. By becoming more skillful readers of literature and its contexts, students become better readers of the worlds that literature addresses, develop their ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand their own relationship to science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

Course Objectives:

In addition to gaining a deeper appreciation of the expressive potential of language and the varieties of literature, students will develop a broader cultural literacy and an understanding of the changing definition and role of literature in society.

Therefore, by the conclusion of the course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works and the structures and conventions of different literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analysis, while identifying and interpreting formal and genre-related elements in the texts.
3. Critically assess the variety of roles that literature has played historically and continues to play in the human experience.
4. Draw connections between literary texts and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and reading.

Required Materials:

Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*.

Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz*.

Morrison, Toni. *Sula*.

Naipul, V.S. *Miguel Street*.

Satrapa, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*.

Shakespeare, William. *The Merchant of Venice*.

Selznick, Brian. *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*.

Note: While you may purchase any edition of these texts, please be sure that they are not abridged.

Grade Distribution: (see below for Assignment Descriptions and Grading Scale)

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (15%)
- 4 Brief Responses (20%)
- 1 Close Reading of a literary text or passage (20%)
- 1 Critical Analysis paper (25%)
- 1 Midterm Exam (20%)

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is mandatory and will be taken daily. You may miss up to three classes without penalty. After three unexcused absences, you will lose 3% off your final grade for each additional unexcused absence. **If you miss two full weeks of class (6 unexcused absences), you will automatically fail the course.** Arriving late to class three times will count as one absence. Absences will be excused only in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and those absences covered by UF's twelve-day rule (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class and for making up all assignments. Students are responsible for all work covered in class, all announcements, and all changes to the syllabus made in class.
3. *Paper Format & Submission:* Except for the Brief Responses, which will be submitted to the Discussion Boards on Canvas, all papers should be formatted per MLA standards (TNR 12, double-spaced, one-inch margins, MLA header, and MLA citations) and submitted to the assignment on Canvas as a .doc or .docx file. Please note that failure of technology is not an excuse, so plan your time accordingly.
Note: You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Papers that are submitted late will lose ten percent off their final grade for each day that they are late. After three days, I will not accept late papers. Brief Responses will not be accepted late.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work 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: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/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 English 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/evals/Default.aspx>
11. 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>
12. *Classroom behavior and etiquette:* I will not tolerate any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity, in written assignments or in class discussion. In addition, please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Many 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. You must turn cell phones to silent before coming to class. Cell phones may never be used in class. You may use laptops, e-readers, or tablets in class only to view texts under discussion. Students who violate this policy will receive an absence for the class period and may lose their right to use technology in the classroom.
13. *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/>
14. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available, or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

Assignment Descriptions:

1. Participation and Class Discussion

Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will contribute to this portion of the final grade. You should come to class each day with one typed or written question or observation to raise during class discussion and hand in at the end of class for credit. Also be certain to bring your texts to class every day—either electronic copies, print-outs, or books – and paper and pen or pencil with which to write. Participation in writing lessons and peer review workshops is also included in this grade.

2. Brief Responses

Four times over the course of the semester students are required to write a brief (about 300 word) response to the day's reading. These responses must be uploaded to our course Discussion Board BEFORE class the day on which they are due. Please consult the Brief Responses assignment prompt for further instructions and check the Canvas Discussion Boards for the due date for Brief Responses to each text.

These responses should raise either interpretive or critical questions concerned with textual meaning. They comment on themes, figurative language and symbolism within the narrative. They also may make judgments regarding the period, history, politics and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of interpretive and critical responses indicates that there may well be neither simply "right" nor simply "wrong" answers; the success of a response is based on the evidence and reasoning students employ to support their analysis and judgment. Students are also expected to comment on their peer's responses at least 4 times across the semester. These comments should also be submitted before class.

3. Close Reading Assignment: 2-3 pages

This assignment will test student skills in close reading, especially as that skill pertains to works of poetry and short fiction. Students will be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through a close reading. No outside sources may be used for this assignment. Please consult the assignment prompt for a more detailed description of this essay.

4. Critical Analysis Paper: 3-4 pages

This assignment asks students to combine close reading skills with critical concepts or historical information introduced in class or supplemental readings. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence. Please consult the assignment prompt for a more detailed description of this essay.

5. Midterm Exam

This take-home exam will be distributed on-line (via Canvas). The exam will be comprised of matching, multiple choice, and short essay questions based on readings, lectures and discussion. Submitted exams will be assessed for evidence of collusion.

Grading Scale:

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

Note: A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

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

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Class Schedule (MWF)

Please note that this schedule is a guide and may change. *Always check Canvas!*

Unit One: What is Literature?

Week 1: Introduction—The Borders of Literature

W (8/22): Syllabus and Course Overview

F (8/24): Eagleton, Terry — “What is Literature?”

Week 2: Epic

M (8/27): Dante — *Inferno* Canto I

W (8/29): Dante — *Inferno* Canto XXVI

F (8/31): Shakespeare — *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts 1-2

Week 3: Drama

M (9/3): **NO CLASS—Labor Day**

W (9/5): Shakespeare — *The Merchant of Venice*, Acts 3-4

F (9/7): Shakespeare — *The Merchant of Venice*, Act 5

Response #1 Due

Week 4: Poetry

M (9/10): Dickinson — “Much Madness is divinest Sense,” “I heard a Fly buzz - when I died,”
“Because I could not stop for Death”

W (9/12): Browning — “My Last Duchess”

F (9/14): Plath — “Fever 103°,” “Morning Song”

Week 5: Short Story

M (9/17): Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

W (9/19): Alice Munro, “The Moons of Jupiter”

F (9/21): **Close Reading Rough Draft Due** for Peer Review Workshop

Unit Two: Why Write Literature?

Week 6: Self Expression/Construction

M (9/24): “The Six Motives of Creativity: Mary Gaitskill on Why Writers Write.”

(<https://www.brainpickings.org/2014/02/28/mary-gaitskill-writing/>)

Close Reading Final Draft Due

W (9/26): Levi — *Survival in Auschwitz*, Author’s Preface – “Our Nights”

F (9/28): Levi — *Survival in Auschwitz*, “The Work” – “The Events of Summer”

Week 7: World Making

M (10/1): Levi — *Survival in Auschwitz*, “October 1944” – “The Story of Ten Days”

Timothy Snyder, “Holocaust: The Ignored Reality”

(<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/22875>)

Response #2 Due

W (10/3): Naipul — *Miguel Street*, Ch. 1-7

F (10/5): Naipul — *Miguel Street*, Ch. 8-12

Week 8: Shaping Citizens

M (10/8): Naipul — *Miguel Street*, Ch. 13-17

W (10/10): **Midterm Exam**

F (10/12): Morrison — *Sula*, Beginning - 1922

Week 9: Shaping Citizens cont.

M (10/15): Morrison — *Sula*, 1923 - 1937

W (10/17): Morrison — *Sula*, 1939 - 1965

Response #3 Due

F (10/19): Calvino — *Invisible Cities*, Ch. 1-3

Week 10: Exploration and Discovery

M (10/22): Calvino — *Invisible Cities*, Ch. 4-6

W (10/24): Calvino — *Invisible Cities*, Ch. 7-9

F (10/26): Neil Gaiman — “Why our future depends on libraries, reading and daydreaming.” *The Guardian*. (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/oct/15/neil-gaiman-future-libraries-reading-daydreaming>)

Unit Three: Why Read Literature?

Week 11: Exploration and Discovery

M (10/29): Scott McCloud — Selections from *Understanding Comics* (on Canvas)

Newgarden and Karasik — “How to Read Nancy” (on Canvas)

Please bring *Persepolis* to class

W (10/31): Strapi — *Persepolis*, Introduction – “The Sheep”

F (11/2): **NO CLASS—Homecoming**

Week 12: Finding New Selves

M (11/5): Strapi — *Persepolis*, “The Trip” – “The Dowry”

W (11/7): Naghibi and O’Malley, “Estranging the Familiar: ‘East’ and ‘West’ in Satrapi’s *Persepolis*”
(on Canvas)

Response #4 Due

F (11/9): Rushdie — *East, West: Stories*, “Good Advice is Rarer than Rubies” and “At the Auction of the Ruby Slippers”

Week 13: Moving Beyond the Self

M (11/12): **NO CLASS—Veterans Day**

W (11/14): Rushdie — *East, West: Stories*, “The Harmony of the Spheres”

F (11/16): Rushdie — *East, West: Stories*, “The Courter”

Week 14: Writing Process

M (11/19): **Rough Draft of Critical Analysis Due** for Peer Review Workshop

W (11/21): **NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break**

F (11/23): **NO CLASS—Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15: New Ways of Seeing

M (11/26): Selznick — *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, Part 1

W (11/28): Selznick — *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, Part 2

F (11/30): Selznick — *The Invention of Hugo Cabret*, film clips

Catherine Butler — “Why It’s Time to Take Children’s Literature Seriously.” *The Conversation*. (<https://theconversation.com/why-its-time-to-take-childrens-books-seriously-58079>)

Week 16:

M (12/3): **Critical Analysis Final Draft Due**

W (12/5): L.D. Burnett — “Holding on to What Makes Us Human”

(<https://www.chronicle.com/article/Holding-On-to-What-Makes-Us/237381>)

F (12/7): **NO CLASS—Reading Day**