

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA  
LIT 2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

FALL 2020

**CLASS # 16567, SECTION 19CD**

Instructor: Suvendu Ghatak

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Virtual Office Hours: Friday Period 5 (11:45am- 12:35pm) & by appointment via Zoom.

Course Meeting Format & Schedule: We will adopt a hybrid format for the course, with one asynchronous and two synchronous sessions per week. Tuesday Period 9 (4:05 pm- 4:55 pm) & Thursday Period 9 (4:05pm- 4:55pm) will be conducted as synchronous classes via zoom. For the asynchronous sessions I will ask you to submit assignments before the classes on Tuesday, starting from the 2<sup>nd</sup> week.

COURSE PRE-REQUISITE: ENC 1101

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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

Among the primary aims of this course is to help students develop the critical skill of analysis and interpretation. Students will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical context 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 interactions with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

### COURSE OBJECTIVE

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 it is expected that 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.

## COVID-19 STATEMENT

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the F2F course has transferred to an online platform for the Fall. However, this change in format does not alter the class objectives in any way. I remain committed to allay the challenges you might face in your studies during this challenging time. Clear and prompt communication regarding the issues you encounter remains crucial to accommodate the adjustments the semester might require.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech. <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm>
- Sophocles, *The Three Theban Plays: Antigone; Oedipus the King; Oedipus at Colonus* trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin Classics, 2000).
- Homer, *The Odyssey* trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin Classics, 1999).
- Seamus Heaney, "Digging", "Punishment", "Blackberry Picking" and "Death of a Naturalist". <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/seamus-heaney>
- Camara Laye, *The Dark Child: Autobiography of an African Boy* trans. James Kirkup et al (Penguin Reprint 2010).
- James Joyce, *Dubliners* <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2814/2814-h/2814-h.htm>
- Frank O'Connor, "My Oedipus Complex" <https://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0201-oconnor.html>
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (Vintage, 2004).
- José Saramago, *The Tale of the Unknown Island* Illustrated by Peter Sis, trans. Margaret Jill Costa (Harcourt, 1999). <https://www.you-books.com/book/J-Saramago/Tale-of-the-Unknown-Island>
- D. H. Lawrence, "Fish". <https://allpoetry.com/poem/8510225-Fish-by-D-H-Lawrence>
- Marianne Moore, "The Pangolin". <https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/the-pangolin/>
- Rabindranath Tagore, *Selected Short Stories* trans. William Radice (Penguin Books, 2005).
- Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese* (Square Fish, 2008).

**Explanation:** The texts should be purchased at the University Bookstore. You could also get online copies of the poems and the short stories. I have attached links to some of the texts available online. I will upload some others on Canvas. Students are expected to purchase longer texts at the bookstore.

## GRADE DISTRIBUTION

### Summary of grading

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (10%)
- Posting Responses and Participating in Discussions on Canvas (20%)
- Close Reading of a literary text or passage (15%)
- Critical Analysis paper (25%)
- Take Home Exam (10%)
- Class Presentation (10%)
- Short Critical/Creative Essay or Project (10%)

#### *1. Attendance & Participation (10%)*

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by class roll or sign-up sheet. For the asynchronous sessions, completion of the activity by the scheduled time counts as attendance. Students will lose 1% from their final grade for every unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the 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.

**Participation:** Students are expected to review the assigned readings before class. Each week will begin with a series of basic questions on the contents of the assigned readings. If students are unable to answer these questions, it will be assumed that they have not prepared the homework and will lose 1%. Consistent participation in class discussions, demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade.

#### *2. Posting Responses and Participating in Discussions on Canvas (20%)*

Before every discussion section, each student is required to post a 300-word response to the text for each week (starting from the **2nd** week and except on weeks **7, 10 & 12**). Highlight a significant theme or passage that you think requires further analysis/ discussion. Discussion posts should be submitted 24 hours before the class.

To engage in the online discussion forum, students may **EITHER POSE QUESTIONS** at the end of their weekly post **OR ANSWER QUESTIONS** by replying to another student's post. Students must ensure they engage with their peers' posts and be prepared to discuss those questions in class.

The weekly discussion posts count as one asynchronous session per week (for weeks **7, 10 & 12 Take Home Exam, Close Reading and Critical Analysis** assignments fulfil your participations in the asynchronous session).

**Description of assignment:** *Interpretive* (or *Critical*) questions are open-ended and are concerned with textual meaning. They ask for opinions on themes, figurative language and symbolism within the narrative. They also ask for judgments regarding the period, history, politics and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of Interpretive and Critical questions—which often use phrases such as "do you think" or "why do you suppose"—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 you employ to support your analysis and judgment.

**3. Take Home Exam (10%)**

The take-home exam will be distributed on-line (via Canvas) and will be two hours in length. The exams will be comprised of short answer AND short essay questions based on readings, lectures, and discussion sections.

Submitted exams will be assessed for evidence of collusion. **The questions will be circulated on the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the semester and you need to submit answers before the class on the 7<sup>th</sup> week.**

**4. Close Reading: 750 words, 15%**

This assignment will test your skills in close reading, especially as that skill pertains to works of poetry and short fiction. You 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.

**The Close Reading assignment is due during the 10<sup>th</sup> week of the semester**

**5. Critical Analysis: 1,500 words, 25%**

This assignment will ask you to combine close reading skills with critical concepts or historical information introduced in one of the supplemental readings. The goal is for you to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence.

**The Critical Analysis Assignment is due during the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the semester.**

These papers will be graded on a point scale of 1 to 10: 9-10, excellent; 8-8.9, good to very good; 7-7.9 average to good; 6-6.9, below average; below 6 is not a passing grade. All students, whatever their grade, will have the option to rewrite the essay.

**6. Class Presentation on One Primary Text (10%)**

You will be required to select a primary text and prepare a 10-minute presentation with a visual aid. The presenter should research the author's biography and historical-cultural contexts relevant to the text. Consider this as an opportunity to share your thoughts on the text and show how they resonate with larger issues that other people might find interesting. You may use videos, movie clips or any other media references that you consider relevant to your presentation.

*Post your presentation (power-point presentation/ handout) to the appropriate discussion board before your presentation day. We will assign primary texts during the first week of class.*

**7. Short Critical/Creative Essay or Project (10%)**

As the final assignment you need to choose a topic, conduct research, and write a 1500 words paper where you propose and substantiate your argument. You need to identify and engage with 3 secondary scholarly sources in your essay. You might build up on your presentation to write the essay. A proposal, suggesting a manageable project, will be due on **13<sup>th</sup>** week of the semester.

You might also create a video essay, a painting, a scrapbook, a graphic novel or use any other media form for your project, just be sure to add a 500-word artist's statement on how your interpretation of the topic is original and significant.

## GRADING SCALE AND GPA EQUIVALENT

<b>A</b>	<b>A-</b>	<b>B+</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>B-</b>	<b>C+</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>C-</b>	<b>D+</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>D-</b>	<b>E</b>
100-93 (4.0)	92-90 (3.67)	89-87 (3.33)	86-83 (3.0)	82-80 (2.67)	79-77 (2.33)	76-73 (2.0)	72-70 (1.67)	69-67 (1.33)	63-66 (1.0)	62-60 (0.67)	59- (0)

**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/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

## COURSE POLICIES

1. You must **complete all** assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. **Course Satisfaction:** Please note that this course satisfies a humanities credit, not a composition credit. There is no word requirement, but students are expected to write critical essays that follow the format of a regular academic essay (with an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion).
3. **Attendance Policy:** Attendance is fundamental for the success of this course. Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illness) as you would for any job. Find a list of UF approved excuses, and certified illnesses here for which alone a make-up option will be applicable (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>). You will fail the course if you accrue **six** 50-minute absences. You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue **four** absences. Note that missing a *double* session counts as **two** absences.
4. **Late Policy:** Please be punctual. Arriving late at 3 sessions equal 1 absence. Make sure, however, to contact me through email or Canvas as soon as possible when something prevents you from arriving (on time) to class. Please communicate with me openly and honestly.
5. **Late Papers/Assignments:** No late submissions will be accepted unless an extension has been previously agreed upon with the instructor. I am flexible and empathetic, considering our present circumstances, but, again, clear and prompt communication is essential for this course and elsewhere.
6. **Paper Format & Submission:** All papers will be submitted electronically, via Canvas unless otherwise stated. Each submitted paper must be in .doc or .docx format.
7. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
8. Students should be respectful of their peers and different viewpoints on subjects discussed, just as in face-to-face meetings. Disrespectful behavior is unprofessional and will result in lower participation grades or a meeting with the instructor to address the behavior.

Additionally, emails to the instructor must follow professional protocols of subject, grammar, and tone—including proper salutations and signature. Remember that all emails sent through our UFL accounts are Public Records (Florida Statutes, Chapter 119).

9. The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/policy-statement/>
10. **Academic Honesty:** Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. Also, turn-it-in will be used as a plagiarism checker and any document that goes over 50% will receive a grade of zero. For University of Florida's honor code, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>
11. **Students with disabilities** who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.
12. **Counseling and Mental Health Resources:** Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>).
13. **Online Course Evaluation:** Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at 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://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>.
14. **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). Please contact Ms. Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
15. **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 <http://folacl.org/>.)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change

**UNIT I – WHAT IS LITERATURE?**

WEEK 1 **INTRODUCTION: The Borders of Literature?**

Reading:

King, “I have a dream” speech Text and audio:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm>

WEEK 2 **Drama**

Reading:

Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*.

WEEK 3 **Epic**

Reading:

Homer, *Odysseus*, Book XIX

WEEK 4 **Poetry**

Reading:

Seamus Heaney, “Digging”, “Punishment”, “Blueberry Picking” and “Death of a Naturalist”

WEEK 5 **Short Story**

Reading

Frank O’Connor, “My Oedipus Complex”

**UNIT II – WHY DO WE WRITE?**

WEEK 6 **World Making (Cosmopoiesis)**

Reading:

James Joyce, “The Dead”

**N.B. TAKE HOME EXAM. SUBMIT ANSWERS 48HOURS BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS**

WEEK 7 **Self-Expression/Self-Construction:**

Reading:

Camara Laye, *The Dark Child*

WEEK 8 **Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction**

Reading:

Toni Morrison, *Beloved* Part I

WEEK 9 Toni Morrison, *Beloved* Part II and III

**N.B. CLOSE READING ASSIGNMENT DUE 48 HOURS BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS**

**UNIT III    WHY DO WE READ?****WEEK 10    Exploration & Discovery:**Reading:

José Saramago, “The Tale of the Unknown Island”

**WEEK 11    Moving Beyond the Self**Reading:

D. H. Lawrence, “Fish”

Marianne Moore, “The Pangolin”

**N.B. CRITICAL ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT DUE 48 HOURS BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS****WEEK 12    Finding New Selves**Reading:

Rabindranath Tagore, “Skeleton”

**WEEK 13    NO CLASS. HAPPY TURKEY DAYS!****N.B. PROPOSAL FOR FINAL ESSAY/PROJECT DUE 24 HOURS BEFORE THE NEXT CLASS****WEEK 14    New Ways of Seeing**Reading:Gene Luen Yang, *American Born Chinese*Selected Chapters from Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics***WEEK 15    Conclusion: Where to now?**

Does Great Literature Make Us Better? Gregory Currie.

[http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/?\\_r=0](http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/?_r=0)**N.B. FINAL ESSAY/PROJECT DUE ON DECEMBER 10**