

LIT 2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Section: 1A28

Time: MWF Period 7, 1:55-2:45

Room: TUR 2334

Instructor: Peter Gitto

Email: peter.gitto@ufl.edu

Office: TBA

Office Hours: Monday, Period 8, and by appointment

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? Why do we read literature?* It 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 the 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

Students should purchase the following texts:

Emily Dickinson, *Poems* (ISBN: 9780679429074) (Instead of purchase, you may also view them at Bartleby.com. I just ask you have a hardcopy of the poems in the class.)

James Joyce, *The Dead* (ISBN: 9780979660795)

Sophocles, *The Oedipus Cycle: Oedipus Rex, Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone* (ISBN: 9780156027649)

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (Norton Critical Editions, ISBN: 9780393925296)

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (ISBN: 9780156628709)

Michael Cunningham, *The Hours* (ISBN: 9780312243029)

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (ISBN: 9780451218599)

Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (ISBN: 9781101970782) (also available online)

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (ISBN: 9780375714573)

M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Harpham, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, 11th Edition. (ISBN: 978-1285465067) (Previous editions should be fine; I own the 8th edition)

Short stories and essays will be available as PDFs via Course Reserves.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (30%)
- 2 Brief Responses (10%)
- 1 Close Reading of a literary text or passage (20%)
- 1 Critical Analysis paper (20%)
- 1 Midterm Exam (20%)

1. Attendance & Participation (30%)

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken daily. Late arrivals to class will count as half an absence. You are permitted three absences without penalty. Six absences results in a failure of the course. A fourth or fifth absence will each reduce your final grade by a fraction (e.g., from B to B-). 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. Make acquaintance with a fellow classmate whom you can ask about what you missed in class. Students are responsible for all work covered in class, all announcements, and all changes to the syllabus made in class.

Participation: Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class and group discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade. Bring your texts to class every day—either electronic copies, print-outs, or books.

Students will periodically be asked to bring well-considered, thought provoking questions about the text to class to ask fellow students. Participation may include informal presentations to the class on the literature or its contexts. Informal work done in class in groups or individually will also contribute to this grade.

Announced quizzes or pop quizzes may be given on the assigned reading and will count towards the participation grade.

2. *Brief responses (10%)*

Twice over the course of the semester students are required to write a brief (300 word) response to the day's reading. Students may be asked to share their ideas with the class. We will sign up for specific due dates and texts.

These responses 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.

3. *Close Reading Assignment: 750 words (20%)*

This assignment will test student skills in close reading. 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.

4. *Critical Analysis Paper: 1,200 words (20%)*

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.

5. *Midterm Exam (20%)*

A midterm exam will test your knowledge of the texts assigned for the first half of the semester.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

Policy for missed assignments: Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), there will be no option to make up a missed exam or late assignment. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged in person prior to the expected absence. In case of illness, student should contact

instructor on his or her return to classes and produce documentation of their illness or emergency.

Cell phone and laptop policy: Cell phones should be muted and stowed away in your pocket or bag during class. Students may use laptops, e-readers, or tablets in class only to view texts under discussion.

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>

Final Grade Appeals: Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Department of English Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in higher, lower, or unchanged final grade.

Statement on Academic Honesty: All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>

Statement on Harassment: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>

Sexual Assault and Harassment: Title IX of the U.S. Higher Education Amendments of 1972 makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. Recent guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education state that these protections apply also to transgendered individuals. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/addressing_sexual_misconduct/reporting_sexual_misconduct/
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/interpersonal-violence>
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/group-listings>
<http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/programs/strive>
http://www.police.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/UPD-Safe-Campus-2014_Rev10-15-14.pdf

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

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; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

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 <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. 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://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

Classroom Behavior: 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.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change; students are responsible for all changes made to the syllabus and all changes announced in class, even if they are absent on the day of the announcement. It is each student's responsibility to keep up with the readings and all assignments.

Week 1 of Aug. 22: Poetry by Yeats and Frost

M: Introduction to course

W: William Butler Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" "The Wild Swans at Coole" "The Second Coming" Robert Frost: "After Apple-Picking"

F: Frost: "Fire and Ice" "The Road Not Taken" "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening"

Week 2, Aug. 29: Emily Dickinson Poems

"Much Madness is divinest Sense"

"I like a look of Agony"

"There's a certain Slant of Light"

"Tell all the Truth but tell it slant"

"Success is counted sweetest"

"Faith is a fine invention"

"Because I could not stop for Death"

"The Soul selects her own Society"

"I'm Nobody! Who are you?"

"Hope is the thing with feathers"

Week 3, Sept. 5: James Joyce, "The Dead"

M: holiday, no class.

Week 4, Sept. 12: Sophocles, *Antigone*

Germany in Autumn (film excerpt)

Week 5, Sept. 19: William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Week 6, Sept. 26: *The Merchant of Venice*, continued

Avraham Oz: "*The Merchant of Venice* in Israel"

Week 7, Oct. 3:

M: review

W: in class midterm exam

F: homecoming, no class

Week 8, Oct. 10: Short Stories

M: Jorge Luis Borges, "The Aleph"

W: Alice Munro, "The Moons of Jupiter"

F: Ursula K. Le Guin, "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas"

Close Reading Assignment due

Week 9, Oct. 17: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*Week 10, Oct. 24: Michael Cunningham, *The Hours*

Essay on Virginia Woolf's "Moments of Being"

Optional independent viewing: *The Great Beauty*, dir. Paolo SorrentinoWeek 11, Oct. 31: Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*Week 12, Nov. 7: Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (selections)

F: Holiday, no class

Week 13, Nov 14: Essays by David Sedaris"A Plague of Tics" from *Naked*"The Smoking Section" from *When You are Engulfed in Flames*"Six to Eight Black Men" from *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*From *Me Talk Pretty One Day*:

"Me Talk Pretty One Day"

"Jesus Shaves"

"Make That a Double"

Week 14, Nov. 21:

M: Writing Workshop

Thanksgiving, no class

Week 15, Nov. 28: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*Week 16, Dec. 5:

M: Wrap up

W: Critical Analysis due

F: Reading day, no class