

## LIT 2000 (Class #15489): Introduction to Literature

**Instructor Name:** Rachal Burton

**Course meeting times & locations:** M, W, F, | Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM) CBD 0210

**Office Location and Hours:** TUR 4367; Periods 4 - 5 (10:40 AM - 12:35 PM) and by appointment

**Course website:** Canvas

**Instructor Email:** rachal.burton@ufl.edu

### 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

- \*\*Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*
- \*Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
- V.S. Naipaul, *Miguel Street*

- Toni Morrison, *Sula*
- Miguel de Cervantes *Don Quijote* (Available via [Project Guttenberg](#))
- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*
- Carlo Collodi, *Pinocchio*
- \*Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis*

Available on Canvas:

- Stephen Greenblatt, “Culture”
- Homer, *The Odyssey*, “Preface” and Book XIX
- \*Emily Dickinson
  - “Wild Nights! - Wild Nights!”
  - “After great pain, a formal feeling comes”
  - “I dwell in Possibility”
- Langston Hughes
  - “Afro-American Fragment”
  - “Harlem” (What happens to a dream deferred)
- Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”
- Alice Munro, “The Moons of Jupiter”
- Jack Zipes, “Towards a Definition of the Literary Fairy Tale”
- Neil Gaiman, “Why Our Future Depends on Libraries, Reading, and Daydreaming”
- Steve McCloud, “Setting the Record Straight”
- Jensen, “Lessons on the Craft of Scholarly Reading”
- Helen Vendler, “How to Welcome and Nurture the Poets and Painters of the Future”

\* Refers to LIT 2000 Common Texts

\*\* Denotes full-text available online or free on Amazon

### **GRADE DISTRIBUTION** (see below for Grading Scale)

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

### **COURSE POLICIES**

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance* is required.

- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

- You are allowed three absences. **Each absence after three will lower your final grade by a third letter grade.**
  - If a student misses **six** periods during a semester, they will fail the entire course. **Only** those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays are exempt from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor **prior** to the date that will be missed. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.
  - When you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you've missed *and* come to the next class prepared; contact a classmate or the instructor to find out what work you've missed. It is also your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates. You should check Canvas daily for new announcements or assignment details/rubrics.
3. *Tardiness*: If students enter class after roll has been taken they are late, which disrupts the entire class. **Three** instances of tardiness count as **one** absence.
  4. *Paper Format & Submission*: Papers will be submitted in an accepted electronic file format (.doc, .docx, .rtf) on Canvas; no other formats are permitted. Your papers must be formatted according to MLA style and should be in 12-point Times New Roman font and double-spaced with 1-inch margins and the appropriate heading and pages numbered.
  5. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Papers received late will be docked by a third letter grade. No late papers will be accepted after two days, unless there are extenuating circumstances.
  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/sccr/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. *Writing Studio*: The University Writing Studio (formerly the Writing Center) is located in 2215 Turlington Hall and is available to all UF students. Students have the opportunity to work one-on-one with a consultant on issues specific to their own particular development. Because the Writing Studio's aim is to help students become more effective writers, they do not simply proofread or edit documents. They can, however, assist students to become better proofreaders and editors of their own work.

13. 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>
14. *Classroom behavior and netiquette*: Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some 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 are expected to be courteous in email messages and threaded discussions.
15. Laptops are only open for composing research or reading. No Internet surfing during class.
16. *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/>
17. *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.)

## **Tentative Schedule**

The calendar contains the reading and writing assignments for the semester. Readings will be discussed on the day they appear, and assignments will be due on the date they appear. Students should note that the schedule is a guideline & may change.

### **UNIT ONE: What Is Literature?**

#### **Week 1: Introduction and Epic**

M - 1/7: Syllabus & Introductions

W - 1/9: Greenblatt, "Culture"

F - 1/11: Homer, *The Odyssey* "Preface" and Book XIX

#### **Week 2: Drama**

M - 1/14: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* Acts 1-2

W - 1/16: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* Acts 3-4

F - 1/18: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* Act 5; **Response #1 Due**; Introduce Close Reading Assignment

### **Week 3: Poetry**

M – 1/21: **NO CLASS – Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

W - 1/23: Dickinson, “Wild Nights! - Wild Nights!” and “After great pain, a formal feeling comes”

F – 1/25: “I dwell in Possibility;” Hughes, “Afro-American Fragment”

### **Week 4: Poetry cont’d and Short Story**

M - 1/28: Hughes, “Harlem” (What happens to a dream deferred); Screening: YouTube clip of Hughes reading poem and Helen Levitt’s *In the Street* (1952)

W - 1/30: O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”

F - 2/1: Munro, “The Moons of Jupiter”

### **Week 5: Short Story cont’d**

M - 2/4: Finish discussing Munro; Draft paper in Class; **Close Reading Draft Due on CANVAS by Tuesday (2/5) @ 10:00 am**

W - 2/6: **Close Reading Draft Workshop & Peer Review**

## **UNIT TWO: Why Write Literature?**

### **Self-Expression/Self Construction**

F - 2/8: **Close Reading Assignment Due**; Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Ch. “The Journey” to “On the Bottom”)

### **Week 6**

M - 2/11: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Ch. “Initiation” to “The Events of the Summer”)

W - 2/13: Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (Ch. “October 1944” to “A Conversation with Primo Levi”)

### **World Making**

F - 2/15: Naipaul, *Miguel Street* (Ch. “Bogart” to “Wordsworth”)

## **Week 7**

M - 2/18: Naipaul, *Miguel Street* (Ch. “The Coward” to “Love, Love, Love Alone”)

W - 2/20: Naipaul, *Miguel Street* (Ch. “The Mechanical Genius” to “How I Left Miguel Street”);

**Response #2 Due**

## **Shaping Citizens**

F - 2/22: Morrison, *Sula* (Ch. “Foreword” to “1920”)

## **Week 8**

M - 2/25: Morrison, *Sula* (Ch. “1921” to “1937”)

W - 2/27: Morrison, *Sula* (Ch. “1939” to “1965”)

F - 3/1: **Midterm Exam Due @ 11:59 pm (NO CLASS)**

**Week 9 (3/2 – 3/9): NO CLASS SPRING BREAK**

## **Week 10: Shaping Citizens, cont’d**

M - 3/11: Collodi, *Pinocchio* (“Introduction” to Ch. VII)

W - 3/13: Collodi, *Pinocchio* (Ch. VIII to XXV)

F - 3/15: Collodi, *Pinocchio* (Ch. XXVI to XXXVII);

## **Week 11**

M - 3/18: Zipes, “Towards a Definition of the Literary Fairy Tale”

W - 3/20: Finish discussing Zipes; Gaiman, “Why Our Future Depends on Libraries, Reading, and Daydreaming”; Guest lecture by Corinne Matthews; **Response #3 Due**

## **Exploration & Discovery**

F - 3/22: Cervantes, *Don Quijote* (Vol. 1: Author’s Preface and Ch. I-X)

## **Week 12**

M - 3/25: Cervantes, *Don Quijote* (Vol. 1: Ch. LII; Vol. 2: Preface and Ch. LXII-LXVI)

W - 3/27: Cervantes, *Don Quijote* (Vol. 2: Ch. LXVII-LXXIV)

### **Finding New Selves/Moving Beyond the Self**

F - 3/29: Introduce Critical Analysis Paper; Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*

### **Week 13**

M - 4/1: Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*

W - 4/3: Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*; **Response #4 Due**

### **New Ways of Seeing**

F - 4/5: Satrapi, *Persepolis* (“Introduction” to “The Dowry”)

### **Week 14**

M - 4/8: Satrapi, *Persepolis* (Ch. “The Soup” to “The Return”)

W - 4/10: Satrapi, *Persepolis* (Ch. “The Joke” to “The End”)

F - 4/12: **NO CLASS, INSTRUCTOR AT CONFERENCE**; Library Research Day  
(Presentation by Jeanne Ewert, **meet at Library West Rm. 211**)

### **Week 15: New Ways of Seeing cont’d and Research & Writing**

M - 4/15: Finish discussing Satrapi; McCloud “Setting the Record Straight”

W - 4/17: Finish discussing McCloud; Guest lecture by Ayanni Cooper

F - 4/19: Jensen, “Lessons on the Craft of Scholarly Reading”; **Critical Analysis Drafts due on CANVAS by 11:59 pm**

### **Week 16: Wrap Up**

M - 4/22: **Critical Analysis Paper Draft Workshop and Peer Review**

W - 4/24: Helen Vendler, “How to Welcome and Nurture the Poets and Painters of the Future”;  
Course evaluations/Debrief class; **Critical Analysis Paper Due**

## ASSIGNMENTS

### 1. *Participation and In-Class Discussion (150 points)*

Students are expected to read the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade. You should come to class each day with one 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.

### 2. *Brief responses (200 points)*

Four times over the course of the semester students are required to write a brief (300 words) response to the day's reading. These responses must be uploaded to Canvas BEFORE class the day on which they are due.

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. Students are also expected to comment on their peer's responses at least 5 times across the semester.

### 3. *Close Reading Assignment: 2-3 pages (200 points)*

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.

### 4. *Midterm Exam (200 points)*

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

5. *Critical Analysis Paper: 3-4 pages (250 points)*

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.

**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>