

FAQs

While students can find most of this information fully detailed in the syllabus below, they may also refer to these FAQs throughout the semester as a quick reference point. These FAQs are meant to supplement, not substitute, the details in the rest of the syllabus.

- **Attendance**

Q) How many classes can I miss?

A) UF's policy is that students cannot miss more than *five periods*. Please communicate with the instructor to inform her of any emergencies, field trips, conference or academic travel arrangements, etc.

Q) How can I make up work?

A) Students should contact Ms. Brooks **no more than 48 hours after their absence** to arrange an extension. If students delay to make up work or ask for an extension, they waive the right to complete their missing work. Some assignments, like reading pop quizzes or in-class group work, cannot be made up. Ms. Brooks reserves the right to allow or deny extension and make-up requests on an individual basis.

- **Extra Credit**

Q) Do you offer extra credit?

A) Yes. Please refer to the BINGO card and instructions at the end of the syllabus. The instructor may add other opportunities at her discretion.

- **Book Expenses**

Q) How much will the textbooks cost?

A) Most of these texts can be found online or will be posted for free on our Canvas page.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Technologies have shaped the course of human life. From cave paintings to the printing press, humans have used a variety of technologies to tell stories and to communicate with one another. In this class, we will analyze American history through some unique U.S. technologies. We'll study how different authors and storytellers have used these different technologies to preserve their culture, and we'll critique how these authors have represented those technologies in their literature. We'll contrast these historic representations of technology alongside modern versions, such as the first American railroads versus Amtrak.

We will explore two primary questions: 1) What is technology, and how has it helped Americans tell stories? and 2) How are these technologies, in of themselves, a form of literature worth

protecting?

As students read these texts written about and with different technologies, they'll also have the opportunity to participate in skill-check learning labs where students can learn the physical and digital skills that they'd need to know if they were using certain technologies (such as traveling by train, using a Singer sewing machine, etc.). We'll explore diverse kinds of storytelling including thick-mapping, geo-caching, blogging, podcasting, and more.

The course will grant 6,000 words toward students' overall university writing requirement.

(Image credit to x-ray delta one on Flickr.com)

COURSE GOALS and OBJECTIVES

By the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Define "composition," "digital humanities," "land-based literacy," "literacy," "digital literacy", and "storytelling"
2. Define and engage in critical making practices
3. Learn and participate in various storytelling technologies
4. Name some of the major organizations that are working to educate the public about different, often forgotten or under-recognized, technologies (esp. indigenous technologies)
5. Define and implement Materialist, Cultural Rhetorics, Digital Humanities, and Folklore frameworks in their readings
6. Contemplate how we build technologies and how technologies build us, as people (AKA what's the mutual relationship between people and their tech?)
7. Answer how different communities have used and created different technologies based on their different resources and to meet their different needs
8. Describe some major inventions from U.S. creators and describe how those inventions shaped American culture
9. Draw connections between literary texts and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and reading; furthermore, students will draw interdisciplinary and interpersonal connections between literature and the environment

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Most of the texts for this course are free. The instructor has posted the readings on Canvas or linked them in the syllabus. Occasionally, students will need to watch an episode of a TV show that may be on a streaming platform like Netflix. If students need to pay for any materials or shows, such as *Westworld* episodes, the instructor can provide alternatives to those students for whom cost is an obstacle. Ask the instructor for help obtaining these shows, if needed.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

- Participation and attendance: 15% = 150 points
- Pit stop #1 written reflection of 850 words: 12% = 120 points
- Pit stop #2 written reflection of 850 words: 12% = 120 points
- Pit stop #3 and written reflection of 850 words: 12% = 120 points
- Pit stop #4 and written reflection of 850 words: 12% = 120 points
- Written reflection on a service learning project (more details to follow in class) of 850 words: 12% = 120 points
- Final research paper, 1500 words: 25% = 200 points

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>

Grading Policies: For information on UF Grading policies, [click here to learn more.](#)

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.

COURSE POLICIES

- A. **Attendance:** Our classroom is a community, and communities work best when everyone is involved. Please be mindful of the attendance policy. Requirements for class attendance

and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with university policies that can be found by [clicking this link](#).

- **If a student misses six periods during a semester, they will fail the entire course (as per university policy).** 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.
- B. **Tardiness:** Students who arrive late to class disrupt their peers' learning and risk missing important announcements and information. Be courteous and on time.
- C. **Classroom Behavior:** Be excellent to one another. Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Try to be mindful of these different lived experiences during our class. Please don't come to class if you're sick.
- D. **Class Preparation:** Be prepared each day with our readings, any notes you have taken on the readings, paper to write on, and a writing utensil.
- E. **Late Papers/Assignments:** You must ask for an extension or request make-up work no more than 48 hours after you have missed class. Extensions are accepted or denied on a case-by-case basis.
- F. **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities:** Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Please check your Canvas submissions to confirm that you've submitted the correct file, that your assignment is formatted correctly, and that it's not corrupted. Students can find assistance with using Canvas and submitting online assignments at the [Hub's Info Help Desk](#).

ACADEMIC HONESTY and DEFINITION of PLAGIARISM

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: 'On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.'"

The Honor Code ([available by clicking here](#)) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course. Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if you fail to understand and employ proper documentation techniques. When in doubt, ask for help!

STUDENT WELLNESS

In order to perform at our best and contribute fully to our learning community, students need to feel their best. Please refer to the below resources to learn more about UF's wellness resources.

- **Mental Health/Counseling:** Students who are in distress or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF's Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or [contact them online by clicking this link](#).
- **Hunger/Food Insecurity:** The Association of American Colleges and Universities reports that [60% of university students experience food insecurity](#) or housing insecurity during their college careers. The Field and Fork pantry is a [free food pantry on campus](#), located near the Reitz Union.
- **Harassment:** UF's policy on Sexual Harassment: 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. [Read more by clicking here](#).
- **Students with disabilities** who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565 or [website available by clicking here](#)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor early in the semester.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: Readings and assignments are subject to change. Pay attention to Canvas and announcements in class. Students are encouraged to check their emails and their Canvas accounts each week day to keep up with potential updates.

What is literacy, what is technology, and how are they related?

Week 1: Topic and Class Introduction

Monday 8/23: Syllabus and Course Overview

Wednesday 8/25: What is technology? “Cultivating Land-Based Literacies” by Rios (Canvas) and Accawi’s “The Telephone” (Access [by clicking here](#))

Friday 8/27: What is literacy? Excerpt from Shipka’s *Toward a Composition Made Whole* (Canvas)

Week 2: Indigenous Technologies

Monday 8/30: Digital vs. digit-all storytelling: Haas’ “Wampum as Hypertext” (Access by [clicking here](#))

Wednesday 9/01: Hula and using the body as a communication technology: Solberg’s “Hawaiian Music, Poetry, and Dance” (Access [by clicking here: you may need to log in to JStor using your UF credentials](#))

Friday 9/03: The tipi as a storytelling technology and as a place where other stories were told: Webpage from Denver Art Museum about a tipi as a piece of art (Access [by clicking here](#)), tipi as oral history in the Apsáalooke tribes (access [by clicking here](#)), and watch a short episode of *Tipi Tales* children’s TV show (Access [by clicking here](#))

Week 3: Indigenous Technologies, continued

Monday 9/06: No class -- holiday

Wednesday 9/08: No class -- Rosh Hashanah

Friday 9/10: In-class Jigsaw activity: which indigenous groups are still using these technologies, and who is preserving them? ***Pit-stop #1 due by 11:59 PM Eastern***

Week 4: The Railroad (1830)

Monday 9/13: Excerpts of Chang’s *Ghosts of Gold Mountain* (Canvas)

Wednesday 9/15: No class -- Yom Kippur

Friday 9/17: Excerpt of Whitehead's *The Underground Railroad* (Canvas)

Week 5: The Railroad, continued

Monday 9/20: O'Henry's "Hearts and Hands" (Access [by clicking here](#))

Wednesday 9/22: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Railroad War" (Canvas)

Friday 9/24: Sandburg's "Buffalo Dusk" (Access [by clicking here](#)) and watch Thornton's documentary about traveling across the U.S. on Amtrak (Access [by clicking here](#)) **Skill-check learning lab activity #1**

Week 6: Hand-Sewing and Sewing Machines (1846) as Technologies

Monday 9/27: Historical piece about sewing machines (Access [by clicking here](#)) and Walsh's "The Democratization of Fashion: The Emergence of the Women's Dress Pattern Industry" (Access [by clicking here: you may need to log in to JStor with your UF credentials.](#))

Wednesday 9/29: Angela Walker's "Everyday Use" (Canvas) and quilt discovery experience on NPS (Access [by clicking here](#))

Friday 10/01: Read about the Social Justice Sewing Academy (Access website [by clicking here](#)) and participate in an in-class sewing machine activity **Pit-stop #2 due by 11:59 PM Eastern**

Week 7: One-on-One conferences

Monday 10/04: One-on-one conferences (to be scheduled during class)

Wednesday 10/06: Laken Brooks is away on field research, but has arranged a guest speaker (more details to follow)

Friday 10/08: No class: homecoming

Week 8: The Assembly Line (1913)

Monday 10/11: Excerpts of Sinclair's *The Jungle* (Canvas)

Wednesday 10/13: *I Love Lucy* assembly line scene (Access [by clicking here](#)) and Pittman's "Dis-assembly lines" essay (from introduction to the very start of the "Within and Without the Home" subheading - about half of the essay. Access [by clicking here](#))

Friday 10/15: Documentary about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire (Access [by clicking here](#))

Week 9: The Car (invented in late 1800s but remained inaccessible for many in U.S. due to cost until Henry Ford used assembly lines in 1913)

Monday 10/18: Excerpt of *The Great Gatsby* (Canvas) -- watching film version of iconic car scene in class. Contrast Daisy from the novel with Bertha Benz, a German inventor who was the first woman to drive an extended distance (Access [by clicking here](#))

Wednesday 10/20: O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (Canvas)

Friday 10/22: Packer's "Brownies" (Access [by clicking here](#))

Week 10: The Radio (1920s)

Monday 10/25: Cheever's "The Enormous Radio" (Access [by clicking here](#))

Wednesday 10/27: Fireside Chats from FDR (listen to several of your choice, access [by clicking here](#)) and *The War of the Worlds* radio broadcast episode (Canvas)

Friday 10/29: Hemingway's "The Gambler, The Nun, and the Radio" (Access [by clicking here](#)) **Pit stop #3 due at 11:59 PM Eastern**

Week 11: Animated Cartoons (When he got his big break in 1928, Walt Disney was far from the first animator, but he built the most iconic American entertainment dynasty)

Monday 11/01: "Steamboat Willie" (Access [by clicking here](#)), "The Animation Process from 1938" (Access [by clicking here](#)), and Railton's article about blackface in early animation (Access [by clicking here](#))

Wednesday 11/03: Read Lind's honor's thesis "Learn to Adapt: Depictions of Female Protagonists in Disney Fairy Tale Adaptations" and consider what these changes over time may tell us about changing American culture and values (Canvas)

→ For example, consider [THIS take on Snow White](#) (1937) vs. [THIS Shrek adaptation of Snow White](#) (2007)

Friday 11/05: In-class activity: close-reading Disney parks as their own texts. What "all-American" stories do they tell? What stories do they obscure?

Week 12: Television (1950s signaled the decline of radio and the boom of television in U.S. households)

Monday 11/08: Loory's "The TV" (Access [by clicking here](#))

Wednesday 11/10: **Content warning:** today's homework features poetic and metaphorical

descriptions of violence and assault. Read with care. Machago's "Especially Heinous: 272 Views of Law & Order SVU" (Access [by clicking here](#))

Friday 11/12: **Content warning:** today's homework may include graphic violence from war scenes. Watch and read with care. Read National Archive post about the Vietnam War and television (Access [by clicking here](#))

Week 13: Reflecting and Looking Forward: When Technology is Misused

Monday 11/15: *Life in the Iron Mills* (Canvas) **Pit stop #4 due at 11:59 PM Eastern**

Wednesday 11/17: *Bitch Planet* (Canvas)

Friday 11/19: Using technology not to tell authentic stories, but to twist or misrepresent a story: documentary about Deep-Fakes (Info posted on Canvas)

Week 14: Holiday Vacation

Monday 11/22: Service learning day, no in-person class

Wednesday 11/24: No Class: Thanksgiving holiday

Friday 11/26: No class: Thanksgiving holiday

Week 15: The Music Video and Video Storytelling (1981)

Monday 11/29: Sections of Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (Canvas)

Wednesday 12/01: Todrick Hall's *Straight Outta Oz* (on Canvas)

Friday 12/03: In-class video activity **Service learning reflection due at 11:59 PM Eastern**

Week 16: Final Essay Workshopping

Monday 12/06: **Skill-check #2** and open office hours to workshop final essay

Wednesday 12/08: Open office hours to workshop final essay

Friday 12/10: No class: university reading days start. Good luck on your final exams, and thanks for a great semester! **Final research essay due by 11:59 PM Eastern**

The instructor reserves the right to adjust the schedule/assignments as needed to accommodate course goals and to better meet student needs. Days and assignments may shift depending on university cancellations, conference/professional travel days, or emergencies.

Literary BINGO Extra Credit Opportunity

Students who seek extra credit should consult the instructor at least a month before the last major class assignment is due. In consultation with the instructor, students will make a plan for which tasks they will complete to obtain "BINGO." Upon obtaining "BINGO," students will receive points back on an assignment of their choice based on the difficulty, thoroughness, and number of tasks completed.

Submitting these BINGO responses does not guarantee extra credit. Students must complete each BINGO entry thoroughly and thoughtfully to receive credit. The instructor will not accept BINGO entries unless the student has first consulted the instructor to make an individual extra credit plan.

B	I	N	G	O
Visit the University Writing Program and have a tutor read your essay.	Complete a 15-minute informational interview with a campus subject librarian, a library conservationist, a curator, or a Uoff Press editor.	Attend a campus literary event like a symposium, conference, or book/author talk.	Go on a library virtual tour and write 1 paragraph about the resources about which you've learned.	Interview a family member, friend, or neighbor about their experiences with their favorite technology.
Pick a paragraph from one of your or a friend's reflection; revise it to be more effective.	Find an example of a non-print type of literature: quilting, video games, cooking, beading, etc. Write a brief reflection of how that medium employs storytelling.	Make a song, a short podcast, a video, a poem, an advertisement, or a commercial about one of the texts we've read in class.	Write a one page, double-spaced, analysis of a sociopolitical or historical issue or event that impacted one of the texts we've read in class.	Watch a TED Talk about technology and storytelling. Write a paragraph describing that talk.
Make two memes related to texts we've read in class.	Use Google Ngram Viewer to experiment with stylometry. Take a screenshot of your charts.	Make an infographic about one of the texts we've read in class.	Write a short research statement about an American inventor who you think everyone should	Suggest 5 texts that would suit this class by BIPOC (Black, indigenous, people of color) authors, women, and/or LGBTQ+

			know about (and why).	authors
Use Google's Tour Creator to make a VR tour related to the settings in books we've read, author's homes, or related locations.	Read a Native American text about a storytelling technology we haven't covered in class. Write a paragraph describing the story behind that tech: who used it; who still uses it; what stories does it tell; how does it work; what skills are need to use this tech?	Try a new recipe and send a picture. Write a paragraph about the kitch technologies you had to use to make that recipe.	Draw a new illustration or design a new cover for a text we've read in class.	Watch one of these TED Talks about literature and write a short reflection.
Watch a film, television, or video adaptation of one of the texts we've read in class. Write a brief (one or two paragraph) reflection comparing the two pieces.	Write one page, double-spaced, identifying 3 grammar or writing weaknesses you have and planning strategies to improve.	According to the PEW Research Center, 1 in 4 adults don't read a book after they graduate. Propose several potential causes or solutions to this problem.	Visit the University Writing Program and have a tutor read your essay.	Find 3 typos on advertisements, signs, etc. Take a picture/screenshot and rewrite the sentences to be more effective.