

AML 2070 – Survey of American Literature: Histories of Violence in American Literature (Section 1625, Class #10423), Fall 2020

Instructor Name: John Mark Robison

Course meeting times & locations: Tuesday 7th and Thursday 7th and 8th Period, Synchronous Zoom Conference

Office Location and Hours: TR 6th Period, Zoom Conference

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: jrobison1@ufl.edu

Course Description:

From colonial first contact and the slave trade to the present militarization of the southern border, violence mars American history at almost every turn. American literature must represent and respond to these histories of violence. This class will examine how a diverse set of authors have done so across a wide range of historical moments. Texts covered will examine violence in the following periods, processes, and events: colonial first contact, the displacement and genocide of Native Americans, American slavery and the transatlantic slave trade, the civil war, reconstruction and the Jim Crow era, the wars of the twentieth century, twentieth and twenty-first century police brutality, and recent conflicts on the southern border. Throughout, we will focus not only on physical violence, but also on the subjective violence of racist, misogynist, and otherwise repressive social institutions. In addition to specific readings, this course will also introduce the aesthetic, philosophical, and religious movements that have shaped American literature. Emphasis will be placed upon thinking through works in their historical context to better understand the texts discussed, our current historical moment, and the possible futures of both American culture and American literature.

COVID Statement

I understand that these are not normal times, and I recognize that online classes may not be your first preference. While I expect you to give your best effort for this course, I am aware that there is a lot going on right now. If you are having trouble, communicate with me. I am willing to be flexible with most due dates on assignments that do not require collaboration with your peers. You must, however, communicate with me ahead of time.

As a matter of University policy, you are not permitted to enroll in multiple courses during the same period. That is, you may not enroll in a course that conflicts with this class's scheduled meeting time, Period 7 on Tuesday and Periods 7 and 8 on Thursday—even if that other course is entirely asynchronous.

This class will be conducted synchronously. We will meet as a class via Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday. I will provide meeting URLs through Canvas in advance of these sessions, accessible in the calendar tab. When we meet virtually as a group, it will always be during period 7. Attendance at these meetings is required. If your schedule does not allow you to make these meetings, do not take this course.

General Education Objectives:

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

Required Texts:

Beloved

Toni Morrison

Publisher: Vintage

ISBN: 1400033411

No Country for Old Men

Cormac McCarthy

Publisher: Vintage

ISBN: 0375706674

Both of these texts are widely available through online booksellers like Bookshop.org. Given their age and popularity, they should also be easily accessible at used bookstores and libraries.

The following texts will be made available on Canvas

Mary Rowlandson: "Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson"

Johnathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"

Henry David Thoreau: "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience"

Herman Melville: "Bartleby the Scrivener"

Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Yong Goodman Brown," "The Minister's Black Veil"

Edgar Allan Poe: "Ligeia," "The Purloined Letter"

Phillis Wheatley: "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To the Right Honorable

William, Earl of Darmouth," "Thoughts on the Works of Providence"

Walt Whitman: "Beat! Beat! Drums!," "The Wound Dresser," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd"

Harriet Jacobs: Selections from *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Frederick Douglass: Selections from *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself*

Kate Chopin: "The Story of an Hour," "Désirée's Baby"

Charlotte Gilman Perkins: "The Yellow Wallpaper"

T. S. Eliot: "The Loves Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"

Langston Hughes: "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "I, Too," "Theme for English B," "Democracy," "Dream Boogie"

William Faulkner: "Barn Burning"

Flannery O'Connor: "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

Sylvia Plath: "Morning Song," "Lady Lazarus," "Daddy," "Ariel"

Gwendolyn Brooks: "We Real Cool," "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi.

Meanwhile, A Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon," "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," "To the Diaspora"

Allen Ginsberg: "Howl"

Thomas Pynchon: "Entropy"

Assignments:

Participation/Attendance: 100 Points

Discussion is essential to this course. As such, during in class discussions, you are expected to contribute your ideas and interpretations of the readings assigned. The points you receive for this category will also reflect your attendance.

Discussion Posts: 100 Points (Averaged)

For each author, on the day we are scheduled to discuss their work in class, you will submit a discussion post on Canvas of roughly 100 words raising a question or an argument about the text or texts read. This must be uploaded by noon. Note that on most Thursdays this will require two discussion posts, as two authors will often be discussed in this longer block. For authors assigned multiple days of class, you will submit separate posts for each day of in class discussion. I will use these posts to direct our discussion, so be prepared to talk about your post in class if called upon. These posts will be graded on a completion basis, and at the end of the semester, will be averaged out to 100 points. Posts of inadequate length or posts obviously demonstrating that you have not read the text will not receive credit. You do not have to submit a discussion post for the author on whom you write your Author Handout.

Author Handout: 100 Points

At the beginning of the semester you will choose an author we are studying this semester. You will then create a one-page, bulleted handout that presents a brief sketch of the author's biography, an overview of their major works, and a description of the distinguishing features of their writing. You should design this handout to be easily skimmed. I will make these handouts available to all students on Canvas. The idea is to collectively create a reference book of sorts for the authors covered this semester. The word "Handout" here is somewhat metaphoric, as these will obviously be distributed digitally. I will create the handout for the first few authors covered to give the class an example. Your handout is due the day that we discuss your author in class. Therefore, the author handout does not appear on the course schedule.

Four Reading Responses: 200 Points (50 Points each), 2000 Words (500 Words each)

A critical reading response is due every few weeks. For each response, students will select a work from the most recent weeks and perform a close reading of all or part of this text. This should not be mere summary. Rather, you should develop a short argument about how the text works and/or what it is trying to accomplish. These responses are meant to increase your familiarity with literary analysis and prepare you for the more in-depth analysis you will perform for the final paper.

Poem Analysis: 150 Points, 1000 Words

You will choose one poem on the syllabus to carefully analyze. No outside sources may be used. This should be a holistic interpretation, not an analysis of a particular element of the poem. You may not write about a poem that you wrote about in a Reading Response. You may write on a poem on the syllabus that we have not yet covered in class.

Final Paper Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography 50 Points, 1000 Words

You will submit a prospectus and annotated bibliography for the final paper.

Prospectus 25 Points, 250 Words

Offer a summary of what your final paper will argue. As this paper will be on a text read in class, there is no need to introduce the text here; launch straight into the core argument of your paper.

Annotated Bibliography 25 Points, 750 Words

You must provide references in correct MLA format for at least five scholarly sources. Your annotations should give a summary of each text and describe how you might use it in your final paper.

Final Research Paper: 250 Points, 2000 Words

You will write a critical essay on one of the texts on the syllabus using four to five scholarly sources. You may not write on the text you selected for the poem analysis. You will propose an original argument about how the text works. You must put this argument in conversation with the scholarly literature on that text.

Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is required. Each student is allowed four absences with no penalty. 50 points will be deducted from a student's final grade for each subsequent absence. If you miss six periods during a semester, you will fail the entire course. Only those absences involving a documented illness, university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays will be exempt from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed.
Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record. Students who enter the conference after the start of class are late and will be marked as tardy. Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. Additionally, if you arrive more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent for that period. If you enter the conference late, I will not stop class to adjust your attendance, so please remind me at the end of class to mark you as present.
UF's official policy on attendance: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>
3. *Paper Format & Submission:* Students will submit their essays through Canvas. You should save your papers using your last name and the assignment name as the filename. Submit through the assignment tab by attaching the document to the assignment page. If you are experiencing technical difficulty with the website, contact me *before the assignment is due*.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Students should turn in essays on the day they are due—even if they cannot make it to class. Computer or email problems are not valid excuses for late work; save documents frequently and on multiple disks. Late work will not be accepted. Any other work that is not turned in by class time on the due date will not be accepted and will automatically count as a zero. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require documentation. I am much more likely to grant an extension for exceptional circumstances if you ask beforehand than if you ask after an assignment's due date has passed.
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.* 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 (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honorcode/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.>

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 your instructor early in the semester.
8. *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: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
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), cblount@ufl.edu. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
11. Even though this course is online, to the best of your ability, you should present yourself just as you would in the physical classroom. I understand that we do not all have perfect control over the environment we conference from, but do your best to maintain professionalism.
12. *Course Evaluations*. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
13. Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Schedule:

| Date | Class Discussion | Assignment Due |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Week 1 | | |
| Tuesday, September 1 | Course Introduction | |
| Thursday September 3 | Introductory Conferences | |

| Week 2 | | |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Tuesday, September 8 | Johnathan Edwards: "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" | |
| Thursday, September 10 | Mary Rowlandson: "Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson" | |
| Week 3 | | |
| Tuesday, September 15 | Henry David Thoreau: "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience" | |
| Thursday, September 17 | Herman Melville: "Bartleby the Scrivener" Nathaniel Hawthorne: "Yong Goodman Brown," "The Minister's Black Veil" | |
| Week 4 | | |
| Tuesday, September 22 | Edgar Allen Poe: "Ligeia," "The Purloined Letter" | Reading Response 1 |
| Thursday September 24 | Phillis Wheatley: "On Being Brought from Africa to America," "To the Right Honorable William, Earl of Dartmouth," "Thoughts on the Works of Providence" Writing Workshop 1: Reading, analyzing, and writing about literary texts | |
| Week 5 | | |
| Tuesday, September 29 | Walt Whitman: "Beat! Beat! Drums!," "The Wound Dresser," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" | |
| Thursday, October 1 | Frederick Douglas: Selections <i>Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglas, an American Slave, Written by Himself</i> | |
| Week 6 | | |
| Tuesday, October 6 | Harriet Jacobs: Selections from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> | |
| Thursday, October 8 | Kate Chopin: "The Story of an Hour," "Désirée's Baby" Writing Workshop 2: Quoting, paraphrasing, and discussing texts | |
| Week 7 | | |
| Tuesday, October 13 | Charlotte Gilman Perkins: "The Yellow Wallpaper" | Reading Response 2 |
| Thursday, October 15 | T.S. Eliot: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" | |

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| | Langston Hughes: “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “I, Too,” “Theme for English B,” “Democracy,” “Dream Boogie” | |
| Week 8 | | |
| Tuesday, October 20 | Sylvia Plath: “Morning Song,” “Lady Lazarus,” “Daddy,” “Ariel” | |
| Thursday, October 22 | William Faulkner: “Barn Burning” Writing Workshop 3: Finding, reading, and annotating secondary sources | |
| Week 9 | | |
| Tuesday, October 27 | Flannery O’Connor: “A Good Man is Hard to Find” | |
| Thursday, October 29 | Toni Morrison: <i>Beloved</i> | |
| Week 10 | | |
| Tuesday, November 3 | Toni Morrison: <i>Beloved</i> | Poem Analysis |
| Thursday, November 5 | Toni Morrison: <i>Beloved</i> | |
| Week 11 | | |
| Tuesday, November 10 | Toni Morrison: <i>Beloved</i> | |
| Thursday, November 12 | Gwendolyn Brooks: “We Real Cool,” “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till,” “To the Diaspora” Writing Workshop 4: Organizing and Drafting | |
| Week 12 | | |
| Tuesday, November 17 | Cormac McCarthy: <i>No Country for Old Men</i> | Reading Response 3 |
| Thursday, November 19 | Cormac McCarthy: <i>No Country for Old Men</i> | |
| Week 13 | | |
| Tuesday, November 24 | Cormac McCarthy <i>No Country for Old Men</i> | Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography |
| Week 14 | | |
| Tuesday, December 1 | Thomas Pynchon: “Entropy” | |
| Thursday, December 3 | Allen Ginsberg: “Howl” Writing workshop 5: Revising, editing, and proofreading your writing | |
| Week 15 | | |

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| Tuesday, December 8 | Course Retrospective | Reading Response 4 |
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Final Paper Due on Tuesday, December 15th

Grading Scale:

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|----|------|--------|----|------|-------|
| A | 4.0 | 93-100 | C | 2.0 | 73-76 |
| A- | 3.67 | 90-92 | C- | 1.67 | 70-72 |
| B+ | 3.33 | 87-89 | D+ | 1.33 | 67-69 |
| B | 3.0 | 83-86 | D | 1.0 | 63-66 |
| B- | 2.67 | 80-82 | D- | 0.67 | 60-62 |
| C+ | 2.33 | 77-79 | E | 0.00 | 0-59 |

Assessment Rubric

| | SATISFACTORY | UNSATISFACTORY |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| CONTENT | Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources. | Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources. |
| ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE | Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences. | Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader. |
| ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT | Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments. | Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis. |
| STYLE | Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure. | Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly. |
| MECHANICS | Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of | Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede |

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| | the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points. | the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility. |
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