

## **AML2070 - Survey Of American Literature Section 5613, Class # 10425, Fall 2020**

### **Course Information:**

**Instructor Name:** Fi Stewart-Taylor (Just "Fi," pronounced like "Fee")

**Course meeting times & locations:**

Synchronous zoom sessions to be held

T| Period 2 - 3 (8:30 AM - 10:25 AM)

R | Period 3 (9:35 AM - 10:25 AM)

Solidarity with all my late sleepers, I feel your pain.

**Office Location and Hours:** Zoom, by way of my kitchen table, Tuesdays at 12pm.

**Course website:** Canvas- if you are not automatically added, send me a message.

**Instructor Email:** F.StewartTaylor@UFL

### **Table of Contents**

AML2070 - Survey Of American Literature Section 5613, Class # 10425, Fall 2020.....	1
Course Information:.....	1
Table of Contents .....	1
Course Description: .....	2
COVID Statement .....	3
General Education Objectives, verbatim from UF English Official Policy .....	4
General Education Learning Outcomes: verbatim from UF English Official Policy .....	4
Required Texts:.....	4
Assignments: (see below for Grading Rubric): .....	5
Rubric .....	6
Course Policies: these policies are Required by the UF English Department or CLASC.....	7
My Additional Policies .....	8
Calendar/Schedule of Readings : .....	9

## Course Description:

What is "queer literature"? Given that both "queer" and "literature" operate as umbrella terms, and who or what "fits" under each umbrella is highly contested, putting the two terms together invites us to explore a number of productive frictions. Both questions are also historically determined- our concept of "queer," a term of identity which covers a number of different genders, sexualities, identities, preferences, and behaviors, wouldn't be recognizable- some would say would be impossible!- even 100 years ago. Likewise, "literature" is deeply contested, and people famous and obscure alike have dedicated their lives to arguing about what constitutes literature, who can write it, and why (and if) it matters at all. While postmodernism has, in some circles, rendered obsolete the concept of one, single, true for all time, body of literature, "Great books" style programs, from St. John's College to Oprah's Book Club, still tell us what we should read and why, often containing explicit or implicit arguments about whose voices are worth hearing, celebrating, and believing.

This course will prioritize texts by authors who either historians broadly agree loved members of their own gender, or who identified as gay, bisexual, lesbian, trans, or were recognized as gender variant in their own lifetime. This will omit a number of significant texts about queer people, (for example, "Brokeback Mountain," or "The Price of Salt," which you might know for their film adaptations) but offers us a chance to think about the relation between author, audience, and publication conditions quite directly. Texts will range in style, genre, and form, but many will in some way enable us to engage with and challenge both the traditional American literary canon and assumptions about what queerness and literature can be.

As an American Literature survey, we will connect our work to the sometimes painful, sometimes hopeful- and sometimes, for some people, both at once- history of the United States. We will move quite quickly through a broad historical and geographic landscape, and thus we will necessarily miss a number of important moments, authors, and perspectives. Some that I, personally, regret are that we will read more deeply in the Black Arts movement, for example, that time did not permit us to sink our teeth into one of Tennessee William's longer plays (my favorite is *Something Cloudy, Something Clear*), and that choosing to include Gertrude Stein's poetry limited the time I chose to spend on the Harlem Renaissance- a profoundly queer time and place! Much of the work we will read clusters around midcentury, from the 1930s to the 1970s, in part as an artifact of the growing visibility in media of gay people in America during that time, although I have tried to include some diverse contemporary voices as well as stories which we would now call "queer" but which represent earlier models of sex and gender. I encourage you to notice the gaps and absences in this syllabus, just as this syllabus is a response to certain gaps and absences in traditional survey courses.

Finally, many of these texts happen to be favorites of mine, or are texts I sought out when I was younger because I knew the author was queer. I hope, whether you are queer or not, that you are able to enjoy some of these texts, and that one or two might prompt you to think about literature in a new way.

## **Course objectives:**

Students will discuss literature in several contexts and registers, including historical context, formal and thematic analyses, context within the "canon" of American literature, and a queer lens.

Students will develop familiarity with some of the broad outlines of a classical American literary canon, but will engage with, and be invited to offer critiques of, the canon and the concept of canons.

Students will learn some history of queer identities, including and especially those which are informed by BIPOC identities.

Students will develop confidence in formal analysis of literary texts, in visual analysis of multimodal texts, and in critical analysis of canonical texts.

Students will write regularly and develop confidence in writing analytical and argumentative texts.

## **COVID Statement**

Nothing in this statement should be interpreted to override any official statements by the University of Florida or the UF Department of English.

I'm not going to ask you all to perform normalcy during a crisis. I will, to the best of my ability, conduct this class with kindness as well as rigor, and if I have to choose between the two, I will choose kindness. All of the inequalities of access which compound in our classrooms under normal circumstances are heightened by the pandemic. I will try to support you in developing some tools to practice thinking about those problems. I promise I will work with you, up to and including filing an incomplete, if you are otherwise unable to complete this class because of the consequences of COVID-19.

Please communicate proactively and directly with me if and when COVID-19 begins to impact your ability to complete our work together according to the schedule outlined in the course below, or when other access needs arise.

I have modified some of my curricular choices to try to accommodate our new state of exception. This includes teaching using mostly PDFs and book excerpts, as it may be more difficult to order books online or students may have lost work-study jobs and thus may have limited ability to purchase books. I have also prioritized many short papers over a few longer ones, and have opted to have a reduced requirement for secondary research, since for those of you at home, accessing library items may be difficult. If you require any accommodations for trouble accessing technology, including wireless internet, adequate word processing software or tools, or a safe place to work on our course materials, please let me know and I will try to either support you in gaining access or work with you on options which keep you up to date and meeting course requirements while working with your unique access needs.

You can find the University of Florida's guide to COVID-19 resources for students at <https://guides.uflib.ufl.edu/covid-19/students>

## **General Education Objectives, *verbatim from UF English Official Policy***

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: *verbatim from UF English Official Policy***

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:**

You will receive a course packet, in PDF form, containing all required short texts, which you can find in the syllabus below. You must be able to access and view PDFs, or you must arrange with me to acquire a print copy of the course packet. In addition, you should purchase or download the following full books, unabridged, in any edition:

*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Walker Evans and James Agee

*Go Tell It On The Mountain*, James Baldwin

**Assignments: (see below for Grading Rubric):**

All assignments have due dates in the span of a week- turning them in any time between Monday and Sunday of that week is fine.

1. **Introductory Paper, due week 2.** Based on the keyword essays we read for the first week of class, what intersections do you see between "queerness" and "literature?" What do you know about previous attempts to define literature, either from your own experience or from the readings, and what have your experiences studying "literature" been like? Do you find it useful to define literature? Do you think "inclusive" definitions of literature is a useful metric for inclusion and diversity in society? Why or why not? (350 words, 100 points)
2. **Unit Response Papers, due throughout the semester:** There is a prompt for each week of reading, of which you should select 5 to respond to. Each response paper should be 350 words, and should engage directly with a primary or secondary source from the unit. As we progress in the class, your response papers should start to show some thought about how course materials relate across the semester. (1750 words total, 100 points each)
3. **Thematic Analysis, due week 5:** Write a paper analyzing the use of themes in one of the texts from our first unit. For example, you might choose to write about the use of free verse to Your paper should have a strong argumentative thesis, demonstrate awareness of at least one literary technique, and address a course theme. (650 words, 200 points)
4. **Compare and Contrast Paper, due week 8:** As a midterm, pick any two literary works from the first half of our course, and compare how they address a theme of your choice. You should use the skills you developed in the thematic analysis assignment, and develop a thesis-driven argument about how a single theme can be compared in the two works- what is similar, and what is different? What might cause those differences, and how might historical context or formal differences account for those thematic differences? (800 words, 250 points)
5. **"One From The Vaults" Podcast/Script, due week 10:** Write a script for a podcast-style explanation of an American queer text not discussed in our syllabus. Use the model of the Lou Sullivan episode of *One From The Vault* to guide your sense of the tone and style of a podcast, which is informal but informative, but feel free to imbue your own personality into your work. You should put forward an argument by describing the historical context of the work and its author, and explaining how this work is either typical, as in represents a well known form of literature and/or queerness for the period, or unexpected, and explain how it differs from more expected forms of literature and/or queerness. You may record this as a podcast if you would like, or you may submit just the script. (500 words, 300 points.)
6. **Visual Analysis Paper, due week 12 .** Pick any text from our course which includes a visual component. Analyze the use of visual rhetoric or the synthesis of visual and textual elements. Describe what the visual elements contribute that written text alone could not, if anything. (750 words, 100 points)
6. **Prospectus, 200 words, due week 13.** Briefly explain your choice of a text for the final paper, what secondary source you plan to use, and what your main argument will be.

**7. Final paper, due one week after class ends.** Select any text by a queer author who worked in the United States, from any time period- write about it using the model of any of our previous assignments except the podcast. Find one secondary source to support your argument. You must have a clear thesis statement, and your evidence, from the text and from your secondary source, must support your thesis statement. 800 words.

**8. Self evaluation, due on the last day of class.** 200 words. 100 points, graded on completion. Write about your experiences in this class: what was your biggest challenge? What was your biggest triumph? What did you learn about literature, and how were your assumptions about literature and queerness challenged or confirmed by this class? What, if anything, has changed about how you think about literature, or about yourself as a writer?

## **Rubric**

A work: Will put forth a clear argument, with a thesis statement, develop it from specific, adequately cited, primary and secondary sources, critically engage with and challenge the secondary sources and clearly engage with the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties of the primary sources and with course themes. Such work will always or mostly demonstrate attention to standard English conventions, grammar, etc.

B work: Will put forth an argument, support it with primary and secondary sources, reference the argument put forth by the secondary sources and engage with the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties of the primary sources and with course themes. Such work will mostly demonstrate attention to standard English conventions, grammar, etc.

C work: Will have start of an argument, although it may not be clear in specifics or stakes, will reference course themes, and reference primary and secondary sources. Such work may struggle with conventions, grammar, etc.

D work : May not yet have an argument, but will engage with primary and secondary sources and reference the visual, rhetorical, and formal properties of the primary sources as well as course themes. Such work may struggle with conventions, grammar, etc.

E work: Work which does not engage at all with visual, rhetorical, or formal qualities of primary or secondary sources or course themes will receive an E.

### *Grading Scale*

A / 100 – 90

B / 89 – 80

C / 79 – 70

D / 69– 60

E / 59 - 0

**Course Policies: *these policies are Required by the UF English Department or CLASC.***

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* UF attendance policies can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/> >

Despite working over Zoom instead of in a classroom, our classroom depends on each of you, working together, to learn and discuss course materials together. Please be in direct contact with me if you must miss class, so we can figure out what, if anything, you will need to make up. I will excuse all absences consistent with University policy and those emergency absences which COVID-19 will create. Generally, I encourage you to proactively communicate with me about all absences, excused and unexcused, because we can always do more if we are able to discuss your work and how to keep on track for the class. 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 2 absences.

3. Latecomers receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I know you attended.
4. My policy on classroom etiquette: This classroom is intended to be a safer space for students of all backgrounds and abilities. All student behavior should reflect this commitment, and all instructor behavior should as well.
5. *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: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/policy-statement/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission:* Please submit all paper through canvas as either a .pdf or a .doc. All other formats will constitute no submission until a paper in .pdf or .doc can be turned in, or until a student makes the text of the paper available in plaintext in the body of an email or other appropriate venue. Papers I cannot open are considered late, but will not be penalized provided a student is able to provide a readable version of the assignment; students will not be penalized for technological problems.
7. *Late Papers/Assignments:* I will accept all late papers from the first half of the course up until the 7th week of class, and will accept all late papers from the second half of the course until the day the final is due. Overdue papers may be subject to penalties if no extension is arranged.
8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
9. *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.>

Our classroom will use the definition of plagiarism from the current UF Student Honor Code:

A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.>

10. Students with *disabilities* who require 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 your instructor early in the semester. If you have other access needs, including those not covered by the DRC, I encourage you to let me know what those needs are, and we will discuss how best to support your participation in this class.

11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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/>

12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

13. *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.

14. *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>

## My Additional Policies

15. Students with children, students who have other caretaking responsibilities, and students who may be living at home are encouraged to let me know if and when they could use accommodations, and caretakers are welcome to include those they are caring for on Zoom calls, provided other attendees do not pose a serious distraction or danger to classmates.
16. The above invitation to Zoom calls also applies to pets, although caring for a pet is not comparable to caring for a person.
17. Hidden curriculum: Often, colleges and universities can seem to have hidden rules, especially for first generation college students who might not have family who can guide them in the norms of college. I will do my best to be entirely up front with any policies which might result in penalties to your grade, and to create classroom norms which welcome and celebrate many different ways of learning and participating. Otherwise, please feel free to use my office hours to ask any questions about the



AML 2070, Stewart-Taylor, Fall 2020

University of Florida or professionalization questions about college- I will do my best to point you to appropriate resources.

**Calendar/Schedule of Readings** follows, next page:

<p>Week 1</p> <p>Finding Footholds</p>	<p>Due this week, any time between Monday and Sunday:</p> <p>Brief quiz, on canvas, about your access needs and digital learning preferences.</p>	<p>Tues, Sept 1</p> <p>Community introductions, expectations:</p> <p>keywords exercise</p> <p>Read keywords: "Queer" "literature"</p>	<p>Thurs, Sept 3</p> <p>"They Acted Like Women"- Blackfoot story collected by Hugh Dempsey</p>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Regional Literature as American Literature</p>	<p>Due this week, any time between Monday and Sunday:</p> <p>Introductory paper,</p> <p>Response paper: describe how you interpret the representation of "nature" and "self" in one these texts.</p>	<p>Tues, Sept 8</p> <p><i>Song of Myself</i>, Walt Whitman</p>	<p>Thurs, Sept 10</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>Country of the Pointed Firs</i>, Sarah Orne Jewett</p>
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Contesting Gender in Early Modern Short Fiction &amp; contemporary debates in queer theory</p>	<p>Response paper: respond to one or both of the secondary texts we read. Do you agree or disagree? Use evidence from the text.</p>	<p>Tues, Sept 15</p> <p>"Paul's Case" and "A Wagner Matinee," Willa Cather</p>	<p>Thu, Sept 17</p> <p>Eve Sedgwick "Willa Cather and Others" and Grace Lavery on Eve Sedgwick: <a href="https://grace.substack.com/p/sedgwick">https://grace.substack.com/p/sedgwick</a></p>
<p>Week 4</p> <p>Modernist Poetry &amp; Gay Historical Memory</p>	<p>Response paper: Why does it matter if Langston Hughes was gay? Why would the film maker think so, and does your perception of Langston Hughes change if you think of his as a "gay poet?" Is Langston Hughes a "gay poet" the way Gertrude Stein is a lesbian poet?</p>	<p>Tues, Sept 22</p> <p>I, Too, Sing America/The Negro Speaks of Rivers/Lenin Langston Hughes</p> <p><i>In class: Looking for Langston</i></p>	<p>Th, Sept 24</p> <p>Poems from <i>Tender Buttons</i>, Gertrude Stein</p>

<p>Week 5</p> <p>The Depression &amp; Photo/Journalism as Literature</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>First longer paper, thematic analysis on <i>Song of Myself</i> or <i>Country of the Pointed Firs</i>.</p> <p>Response paper: How is literary nonfiction different from fiction? Should we use the same tools to analyze it?</p>	<p>Tues, Sept. 29</p> <p><i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i></p>	<p>Th, Oct 1</p> <p><i>Let Us Now Praise Famous Men</i></p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>30s-40s Theater &amp; Memory</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>Response paper:</p> <p>Compare use of memory in these texts, one a melodrama and one much more restrained in style.</p>	<p>Tues, Oct 6</p> <p><i>The Long Goodbye</i>, Tennessee Williams</p>	<p>Th, Oct 8</p> <p><i>The Long Christmas Dinner</i>, Thornton Wilder</p>
<p>Week 7:</p> <p>James Baldwin Week: Another 1950s</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>Response paper: How does Baldwin challenge or confirm your assumptions about the 1950s? What about it challenges or affirms those assumptions? How can literature inform your understanding of an era?</p>	<p>Tues, Oct 13</p> <p><i>Go Tell It On The Mountain</i>, James Baldwin</p>	<p>Th, Oct 15</p> <p><i>Go Tell It On The Mountain</i>, James Baldwin</p>
<p>Week 8</p> <p>Gay Culture in the 60s</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>Second longer paper due this week: compare any two texts from the first half of class</p> <p>Response paper: Without <i>City of Night</i>, Lou Sullivan's ideas about gay culture would have been very different. How can literature create, as well as describe, a community? Is this like or unlike other descriptions of community in literature- for example, Sarah Jewett's Maine?</p>	<p>Tues, Oct 20</p> <p>Chapters from <i>City of Night</i>, John Rechy</p>	<p>Th, Oct 22</p> <p>Lou Sullivan <i>One From the Vaults</i> ep by Morgan Page (Vaults assignment introduction and research day)</p>

Week 9 Woman of Color Political Biography/Black Arts Movement	Response paper: How are these authors using autobiography as a form of literature? Is there a political element to all autobiography?	Tues, Oct 27  "La Prieta," from <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i> , Gloria Anzaldua	Th, Oct 29  Excerpt from <i>Zami: A New Spelling of my Name</i> , by Audre Lorde
Week 10  Gay Comics/Comics as Literature	Podcast script due  Response paper: What new concerns do comics or visual rhetoric introduce to your thoughts about literature so far? What about comedy? Should literature be serious?	Tues, Nov 3 <i>(U.S. election day- let me know if you need to be excused to vote)</i>  <i>Gay Comix #1</i> , ed Howard Cruse	Th, Nov 5  Strips from <i>Dykes to Watch Out For</i> , Alison Bechdel
Week 11  Genre vs(?) Literature	Response paper: how do these two genre texts challenge or confirm your ideas about "literature," especially compared with other texts we have read together?	"Aye, and Gomorrah," Samuel Delany	Fri, Nov 13 Recipes from <i>White Trash Cooking</i> , Ernest Matthew Mickler
Week 12 Popular/Underground: Trans Narratives Go Mainstream (And Don't)	Third longer paper due: Visual analysis paper  Response paper: Janet Mock is a celebrity- Tourmaline is an independent filmmaker. Marsha Johnson died in relative obscurity. What relationship does fame have with literature? What relationship does fame have with queerness? What about visibility?	Chapter from <i>Redefining Realness</i> , Janet Mock	Fri, Nov 20  <i>Happy Birthday Marsha</i> , Tourmaline
Week 13  Thanksgiving Week	Prospectus due before Sunday, November 29th.	T Nov 24  NO CLASS	Th, Nov 26  NO CLASS; Indigenous People's Day

AML 2070, Stewart-Taylor, Fall 2020

<p>Week 14</p> <p>Contemporary Poetry and Closing Thoughts</p>	<p>Due this week:</p> <p>Response paper: How does the poetry we read together this week strike you as similar to or different from any other poetry we read together this semester? What about the representation or version of queerness in the poetry?</p>	<p>"Self Portrait as Exit Wound" and "Kissing in Vietnamese," from <i>Night Sky With Exit Wounds</i> Ocean Vuong</p>	<p>Fri, Dec 4</p> <p>Excerpt from <i>IRL</i>, Tommy Pico</p>
<p>Week 15</p>		<p>Student presentations and workshop day</p>	<p>Th, Dec 9 NO CLASS-READING DAY.</p> <p>Final paper due Dec 12th.</p>