

**AML 2070: Survey of American Literature**  
**The Literature of American Monsters**  
Spring 2020 Course Syllabus

**Instructor:** Chesya Burke  
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**Class meets:** M/W/F Period 5

**Office location:** TBA  
**Office hours:** TBA  
and by appointment



### **Course Description**

This survey course will interrogate the construction of “the other” as American monsters. The fear of malicious witches, monstrous savages, and dark hoards of zombies have long dominated the imagination of the U.S., sparking public panic and the creation of laws which seek to control minority bodies. These constructions are part of oppressive ideologies that have shaped the emergence of American history, social relations, literature and culture through puritanical and religious philosophies. As such, this course offers a foray into key discussions that surround the creation of “the other” as a monster, paying particular attention to the monstrous minority and its influence on American policies of fear. We will examine the concept of “the other,” attempting to define it within black feminist theory. This course seeks to answer the questions: How does the fear of “the other” form early American views about people of color, women and children? How are monsters racialized and sexualized? Text will include *The Crucible*, *Dracula*, and the writings of H.P. Lovecraft.

Writing assignments for this course will include short critical analysis essay, a group panel presentation, mid-term and final. Each week we will focus on a different horror film while reading supplementary text, stories and novels. Students will address the ways in which black horror has historically examined social issues, but also on the ways contemporary artists use horror today.

This course fulfills the 6000-word University Writing Requirement. Assignments will include short response papers, in-class writing, literary analysis papers. Writing assignments will be designed to engage students in close reading and developing critical analysis skills.

### **Course Goals and Objectives**

By the end of AML 2410, students will be able to:

- Read, write, and think critically about the images of black people and culture in media, as well as texts beyond the scope of the course
- Discuss the historical and critical context of texts
- Communicate ideas and analyses of texts
- Develop well-supported, persuasive, polished academic essays
- Establish and support significant historical, literary, and critical or theoretical claims
- Conduct formal research on literature and use secondary sources to support their arguments

### **General Education Objectives**

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and 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**

Deloria, Vine Jr., *Custer Died for Your Sins: An Indian Manifesto*

Mather, Cotton, *Wonders of the Invisible World*

Morrison, Toni, *Playing in the Dark*

Miller, Arthur, *The Crucible*

Rice, Anne, *Interview With A Vampire*

Seabrook, W.B., *The Magic Island*

\*See schedule for full list of additional readings, which will be available on Canvas

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Unless otherwise noted, all assignments are due before class on the date indicated.**

- **Blog Posts—15%** (3 total, 350 words each = 1000 words)

**Due: The day before we discuss in class.**

Student will choose three different movies or readings throughout the semester to write a response blog post. Each student must use least one movie and one short story.

You will write three blog posts corresponding to each of the movies or short stories or novels. Use the blog posts to extend our classroom conversations and explore an idea that interest you. You may discuss a text (short story or novel) or film we encountered in that unit, raise questions about something we discussed, challenge a particular text, apply a concept to contemporary events, and so on. You may also explore an idea related to our course, and to that unit even if we have not covered it in class. You may use your blog posts to think through concepts and ideas we discussed in class, but make sure to expand on those topics instead of repeating them. Stylistically, use your blog post to practice writing a good thesis statement and developing an argument. Your blog posts should be analytical and demonstrate critical thinking. Do not summarize texts. Everything will be posted on Canvas.

- **Blog Post Comments—10%** (4 total, 250 words each = 1000 words)

**Due: Within 24 hours of the blog post being posted**

You will be required to post at least one comment to a classmate's blog post every time a blog post is due. The comments are due within 24 hours of the blog being posted. Your comment should engage with the post by raising questions or building on it. Avoid evaluating posts as 'good' or 'bad.'

- **Short Position Paper—15%** (1000 words)

**Due Date: Variable. Students sign up to do one response paper, which is due on the date indicated on the syllabus. Due at the beginning of class.**

Every student will sign up to do one response paper once in the term. In the response paper, you must engage with one of the critical articles on the theme or texts for that week. Your response should be critical and evaluative. Briefly summarize the concept or argument from the text, and then make connections between the text and the film, photos, or other objects we studied that week. Alongside your written response, you will create a multimedia artefact which illustrates an important argument or concept from the reading. (For example, what multimedia artefact might you

create to represent Orientalism?) You can create a photo, video, meme, or another object. The response paper and multimedia artefact are due at the beginning of class. You will briefly present your paper and artefact to the class.

- **Group Panel Presentation—15%** (1 to 2 pages)

**Due: Variable throughout the semester**

You will present your short position paper on a panel with your fellow classmates.

- **Proposal—10%** (250-500 words)

**Due: April 16**

Students will write a brief proposal that outlines their topic for the horror project assignment. The proposal will contain the following elements: characters, plot, and unique topic that focuses on social issues.

- **Final Monster Creation—25%** (1500 words)

**Due: April 22**

For this assignment, you will create your own digital media project. To prepare for this assignment, choose a topic from our class which interests you, and formulate your own unique work. This can include a mock podcast with another classmate, critical vlog, etc. Think about a project that assesses one's aesthetic and social/ethical choices, whether that takes the form of a producer's pitch, a self-evaluation, or an artist Statement, etc.

- **Quizzes & Participation—10%**

This accounts for in-class discussion, quizzes, in-class work, and other related activities.

**Note on Assignments:** Students should not write about the same topic for the different assignments. For instance, don't write on the Get Out for your discussion post, response paper, and other assignment. You may, however, choose the broad theme of "Representation" (for instance) and then explore different issues related to that in your discussion post, response paper, and rhetorical analysis.

## **Course Policies**

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.

2. Attendance: Because of the participatory nature of this course, attendance is crucial. You have **up to 2 absences (50 min classes) or 1 (hour and 45 min class)** that you can take without penalty (aside from missing potential quizzes). Note: Thursdays count as two classes. Students who miss **six** class periods **will fail** the course (although the twelve-day rule, laid out below, is the one case for exceptions). It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences. Screening sessions count toward attendance. Prolonged absences will affect your quiz average, since in most cases (aside from the exceptions below) missed in-class assignments cannot be made up. In addition, prolonged absences will affect your grade as follows:

3 absences: 10% off final course grade

4 absences: 15% off final course grade

5 absences: 20% off final course grade

6 absences: Automatic failure of the overall course

If you are absent, please make yourself aware of all due dates and turn in assignments on time

Please check with your classmates to obtain notes for the day you missed.

3. All members of the class are expected to adhere to official UF time. For this reason, if you are late to class, this will count as  $\frac{1}{2}$  **an absence**. If you are more than **10 minutes late**, I will mark you as absent. If you are frequently late to class or absent, this will also negatively affect your participation grade in the course. Three occurrences of tardiness equal one absence.

Students are expected to bring the required reading for the day to class with them. If a student recurrently fails to bring the reading (in print or electronic format), you may be marked as absent.

4. Classroom behavior and netiquette: Within this course, we will be dealing with sensitive topics and sometimes have difficult discussions on race, class, oppression and other delicate topics. You are always expected to treat your classmates and instructor with respect.

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: You will submit your first paper—Response #1—both online on Canvas and in printed paper format. The rest of your assignments you will submit online through Canvas. All written work should follow MLA format, 7th or 8th edition.

7. Late Papers/Assignments: I will consider a request for an extension if you approach me at least three days before the assignment is due. A late paper or other assignment will lose half a letter grade for each day it is late. I advise completing all assignments early to ensure that you can print or submit them without problems.

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.

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 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 your instructor early in the semester.
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). 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>

## SCHEDULE

\*Dates and readings are tentative and subject to change.

### **Week 1 Introduction/U.S. Ideology**

- Jan 6: "What is the other?"  
"Who are our classic American monsters?"
- Jan 8: "Ben Franklin, Letter to the London Packet"  
([http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI\\_religions14.html](http://press-pubs.uchicago.edu/founders/documents/amendI_religions14.html))
- Jan 10: Thomas Jefferson:  
Draft of Declaration of Independence, Notes on the State of Virginia,  
(<https://jeffersonpapers.princeton.edu/selected-documents/jefferson%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%9COriginal-rough-draught%E2%80%9D-declaration-independence-0>)

### **Week 2 Witchcraft and the fear of women:**

- Jan 13: "*Wonders of the Invisible World*" (Intro / pg viii-xxxi)
- Jan 15: "*Wonders of the Invisible World*" (pg 1-59)
- Jan 17: "*Wonders of the Invisible World*" (pg 59-104)

### **Week 3 Witches continued:**

- Jan 20: The Long and Short of Salem Witchcraft: Chronology and Collective Violence in 1692 (Jstor/Canvas)
- Jan 22: *The Crucible* (Act 1 and 2)  
(<https://esprdg.cscmonavenir.ca/files/2013/10/21078735-The-Crucible-Arthur-Miller-2hmdzot.pdf>)
- Jan 24: *The Crucible* (Act 3 and 4)
- Week 4**  
Jan 27: **Monstrous Minority:**  
MLK DAY (NO CLASS)
- Jan 29: *Remarks Concerning the Savages of North America, Franklin, Benjamin.*  
(Canvas: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-41-02-0280> )
- Jan 31: *Supernatural Horror in Literature* by H. P. Lovecraft." (Canvas)
- Week 5**  
Feb 3: **Monstrous Minority:**  
*Custer Died for Your Sins* (Chap 1, 2 and 3)  
(<https://mvlindsey.files.wordpress.com/2015/08/custer-died-for-your-sins-deloria-jr-1987.pdf>)
- Feb 5: *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Chap 4, 5 and 6)
- Feb 7: *Custer Died for Your Sins* (Chap 7, 8 and 10)
- Week 6**  
Feb 10: **Monstrous Minority cont:**  
*Confessions of Nat Turner*  
(Canvas: <http://www.melanet.com/nat/nat.html>)
- Feb 12: *Dirty, Diseased and Demented: The Irish, the Chinese, and Racist Representation*  
(Canvas: <https://journals.openedition.org/transtexts/1011#tocto1n1>)
- Feb 14: *Noel Ignatiev, How the Irish Became White* (chapter 1 and 2)  
(Canvas: <http://jroan.com/HtIBWhite.pdf>)
- Week 7**  
Feb 17: **Fear of the Dark Hoard/Zombies**  
*Playing in the Dark* (Preface, pages 1-62)
- Feb 19: *Playing in the Dark* (pages 62-132)
- Feb 21: How the zombie represents America's deepest fears:  
A sociopolitical history of zombies, from Haiti to The Walking Dead.  
(<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/10/31/13440402/zombie-political-history>)
- Week 8**  
Feb 24: **Anti-Blackness and Zombies:**  
Coleman, Horror Noire  
"In the Beginning there was White Zombie" (pg 49-56)

Feb 26: The Tragic, Forgotten History of Zombies  
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/10/how-america-erased-the-tragic-history-of-the-zombie/412264/>)

Feb 28: How the zombie represents America's deepest fears  
(<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/10/31/13440402/zombie-political-history>)

**Week 9      Zombies continued:**

Mar 2:      SPRING BREAK

Mar 4:      SPRING BREAK

Mar 6:      SPRING BREAK

**Week 10      Zombies cont.:**

Mar 9:      Seabrook, W.B., *The Magic Island* (Book 1)  
(<https://archive.org/details/magicislandbywbs00seab/page/104>)

Mar 11:      Seabrook, W.B., *The Magic Island* (Book 2 and 3)

Mar 13:      Seabrook, W.B., *The Magic Island* (Book 4)

**Week 11      Finding Humanity in "The Other":**

Mar 16:      Brooks, "Finding the Humanity in Horror"  
(<http://ir.uiowa.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1098&context=poroi>)

Mar 18:      Burke, QUE: Change (Canvas)

Mar 20:      Newsome, "Wake" (in class film)

**Week 12**

Mar 23:      Holland-Moore, Empty Vessel

**Purity of Whiteness: The Vampire:**

Mar 25:      *Der Vampir* (Canvas)

Mar 27:      Writing Instruction: Thesis Statement  
**Introduce Final Paper Assignment**

**Week 13      Cont.:**

Mar 30:      Nosferatu (in class film: excerpts)  
Dracula (excerpts)

Apr 1:      Civilized Vampires v/s Savage Wolves



[https://biblio.csusm.edu/sites/default/files/reserves/ch\\_13\\_civilized\\_vampires\\_versus\\_savage\\_werewolves.pdf](https://biblio.csusm.edu/sites/default/files/reserves/ch_13_civilized_vampires_versus_savage_werewolves.pdf)

Apr 3: Workshop

**Week 14 Cont.:**

Apr 6: Interview With a Vampire  
**Final Project Proposals Due**

Apr 8: Interview With a Vampire

Apr 10: Interview With a Vampire

**Week 15 Whiteness as Monstrous**

Apr 13: Peele's Get Out (in class film: 1/3)  
(Read for class: Say, She Toy (Canvas))

Apr 15: Peele's Get Out (in class film: 1/3)  
(Read for class: <https://cinemathread.com/pov/get-out-the-evolution-of-race-in-western-horror-films/>)

Apr 17: Peele's Get Out (in class film: 1/3)  
Class Review

**Week 16**

Apr 20: Paper Topic Review

Apr 22: Paper Topic Review  
**Final Papers Due**

**Grading**

Grading for this course will be rigorous. If an assignment illustrates disregard for spelling, grammar, citation guidelines, or a general carelessness in the writing, the assignment will not receive a passing grade. The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled.

As your instructor, I will evaluate and provide feedback on your written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. You can find the University Writing Program's rubric on the last page of the syllabus. I will also deliver more specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments during the course of the semester.

**Grade Issues**

University policy prohibits discussions of grades via email. If you have a question about a grade, you may schedule an appointment to meet with me to discuss it.

## **Grade Breakdown**

Discussion Posts: 15% each

Discussion Post Comments: 10% each

Group Panel Presentation: 15%

Short Position Paper: 15%

Project Proposal: 10%

Final Creation: 25%

Quizzes & Participation: 10%

## **ASSIGNMENT RUBRIC**

|                            | SATISFACTORY (Y)   | UNSATISFACTORY (N)  |
|----------------------------|--|---|
| 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 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.

Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.