

AML4213: Early American Literatures

Dr. Jodi Schorb

This course meets T4 (Tuesdays 10:40 -11:30) & R4-5 (Thursdays 10-40-12:35) in Matherly 113

Instructor Contact info:

Office: Turlington Hall 4334

Email:

This semester, all students **will email me through our Course Canvas page** using the Inbox feature. This keeps all student/instructor email in one central place. I will be alerted when you message me in Canvas and you can set Canvas notifications to alert you when your message gets a response. If for any reason you cannot message me through the Canvas course page, my work email is jschorb@ufl.edu



Matherly Hall, 2024.

Office Hours:

Tuesdays: In Person, Turlington 4334, from **12:10-1:10 pm**, or by office phone (352) 294-2875.

Note: I am also available for brief consults in person on Tuesday after class ends outside Matherly.

Wednesdays: [Zoom](#), 4:00-5pm

Fridays: [Zoom](#), 11am-12pm

Course Description & Goals:

If you enjoy historical perspectives on literature, are curious about how early Americans entered print, or want to diversify your knowledge of the nation's first forms of literary expression, this course is well suited to your interests.

Rather than memorization or tests, the class will focus on hands-on activities that allow students to explore generative questions (which we will decide as a group) and create their own ways of exploring the puzzles and pleasures of past lives and literatures. This means handling early manuscripts and books in UF special collections, exploring digitized archives using new digital humanities tools, establishing common questions about the materials that can serve as touchstones across the semester, and having a supportive space to explore questions that most interest you about the study of the past.

Some likely topics include how people made sense of the world around them through self writing, how to grapple with some of the contradictory qualities of early life writing, how emerging ideas of selfhood and natural rights were taken up through a variety of forms, and how excluded populations asserted themselves through print.

Students will gain background to help strengthen close reading and academic writing; they will be supported by an assignment and course structure that encourages them to dig deeper into things of interest emerging (directly or indirectly) from course materials and discussions (with shorter reflective papers building to a longer exploratory analysis essay); they will discover things collaboratively and individually. No knowledge of American literature prior to 1800 (or after!) is required.

A weekly course schedule of readings is appended to the end of the syllabus.

Please refer to the Digital Syllabus (on Canvas) for each day's assigned readings and assignment deadlines.

The list of required textbooks is here:

THE EARLIEST AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURES: A CRITICAL READER (2021), Edited by ZACHARY MCLEOD HUTCHINS & CASSANDER L. SMITH. ISBN 9781469665603

All other required readings will be linked via on the Course Canvas site ([ELS](#)) to eBooks in UF Library [Catalog](#), historical journals housed UF Library [Databases](#), reliable editions on [Hathi Trust](#) or other fair-use scholarly webpages, or uploaded into UF Library Electronic Reserves ([ARES](#)). The Schedule of Readings on Canvas will make clear how you access additional assigned readings.

On days where we are not reading from one of the two adopted books, students are expected to bring a tablet or a laptop to class and to have the readings open and handy. Students should also have an e-book reader or pdf reader that allows them to annotate and mark up their electronic readings.

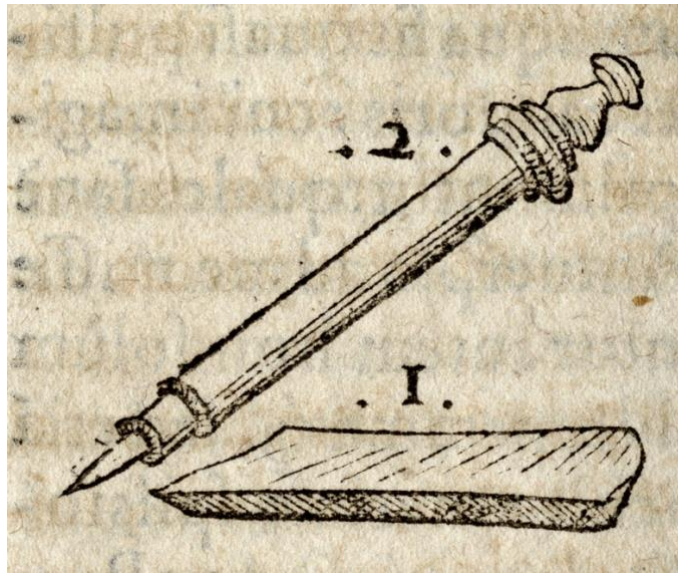
To successfully complete all readings and assignments, students are expected to meet [UF's requirements for Student Computing](#) for computing and internet access; see IT Policies for definitions and resources.

For help with reading technology needed for pdf and online annotation, contact the UF Computing Help Desk: Web: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu> (Links to an external site.) Phone: (352) 392-HELP (4357) Email: helpdesk@ufl.edu Walk-in: HUB 132

Attendance:

You are expected to attend class regularly with the following caveats:

- It is rare for a student to miss more than four classes a semester since we have 31 meetings; if you miss more than four classes (and most students will not miss any), you should be in communication with me on the reasons, seeking extensions where possible.
- Do not write to an instructor asking, "if you missed anything" or asking for info on "what you missed." If you must miss a session, you must also plan with a student to get notes before you return.
- Do write to an instructor to briefly explain your absence and to ask, "were there any announcements or changes to the schedule of readings for next class?"
- Please reach out to me if something is substantially impacting your performance and you wish for any flexibility in a certain area or any added help.
- Students with more than four unexplained absences should expect the attendance portion of the grade to be less than peers.
- Students are expected to contact the instructor if they anticipate extended medical absences so that we can work on a plan to keep up with the class, demonstrate ongoing engagement, and provide relevant documentation sufficient to adjust course deadlines or other obligations.
- Students who become ill with viruses, colds, Covid, etc. are expected to be considerate of others and mitigate the risk of spreading illness in the tight quarters of our classroom when likely contagious. If you risk running afoul of attendance requirements due to serious illness, reach out to me for accommodation.
- University policy requires that absences be accepted with prior notice for university sponsored events (e.g., athletics) and religious holidays.
- Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies. [Click here to read the university attendance policies.](#)



Student evaluation and grading:

Note: All students are welcome to bring a brainstorm or a draft of their written work to my office (or to the campus writing center) for any assignment. Students are encouraged to consult with me on your topic or your outline, especially if you struggle with thesis construction or maintaining an organized focus.

The course grade will be calculated as follows:

<p>Two Reflective Writing Assignments (3 pages) These are not structured around a standard thesis, but possess a clear direction, has topic sentences and paragraphs that convey core ideas along thoughtfully, merges synthesis of class ideas and readings with purposeful example, and above all, devotes more time than standard literary analysis essays to something you have been thinking about and thinking THROUGH across a couple readings. what for you are the most interesting takeaways, discoveries, and/or questions to emerge from your interests? 10% each</p>	20%
<p>Two Analysis Essays (5-6 pages) that emerge from each of the two main units. 25% each. I will release a guideline sheet 4 weeks in advance for each,</p>	50%
<p>Regular attendance (see policy)</p>	10%
<p>In-Class Engagement & Participation (Class wide discussion, small group exchanges, in-class activities) See participation grading standards below.</p>	15%
<p>Peer workshop (2) promptness, preparedness, productive peer advice</p>	5%
<p>TOTAL</p>	100%

Grading Expectations for Essays:

“A” assignments are thoughtful, carefully developed, and clearly presented. They demonstrate strong comprehension of the materials under discussion, clear engagement with course themes and contexts, and offer sustained analysis and arguments that illuminate the chosen text and questions posed by the assignment. A-papers are well-organized (from the macro level to the paragraph level), well-supported (in both the major claims as well as the supplemental support, including source documentation), well-developed (sitting with the implications of their discoveries and ideas), and written in an engaging, polished, and clear prose style. (A+ fully meets this criterion, A- means the submission hovered between the A and B descriptions, but this description captured the submission better than the next description down.)

“B” assignments are solid, competent, and capable, but would **clearly** benefit from **either** more complex development and risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), more consistent explanation or examples, better organization for flow and logic, **OR** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, grammar, sentence-level mechanics). (B+ papers contain some of the qualities of A-level submissions, but this description captured the submission better than the above; B- submissions hovered between this and the lower description, but this description captured the overall submission a bit better.)

C assignments are passable and often promising, but have **multiple** key areas that require **considerable** improvement: a more rigorous topic, a stronger thesis or central concept, much fuller development of ideas, significantly improved focus (guiding the reader through your core point and how you get from A to B), much fuller support or far more examples and with clear citations (including subtler examples or more impactful examples), or needing much clearer presentation (paragraph structure, prose style, grammar, sentence-level mechanics)

D assignments are not yet adequate; they may struggle to narrow down a viable topic or organize and sustain a persuasive reading in readable prose, or they may be quite difficult to follow, meander off track, lack basic citation, or present a superficial response to the assignment.

F assignments fail to meet the basic criteria of the five core aspects of writing: argument, organization, development, style, and mechanics, or they fail to respond in any meaningful way to the assignment, **or they contain ANY passages (even at the sentence level) that are plagiarized.**

Grading expectations for Course Participation & Preparation:

To earn a solid “A” for regular participation and preparation, the A level student is **regularly** prepared and engaged. They have their materials handy and are able to refer to specifics in their materials during class. They are able to **make connections** from the readings and/or **build productive discussion from others** - student or instructor ideas. They contribute to the ongoing discussion (large or small) by responding thoughtfully to others and/or by asking questions that help build useful group understanding. They contribute regularly and are active listeners in group work.

B-range participants **mostly** meet the above criteria, C range participants **occasionally** meet the above criteria, D range participants **rarely** meet the above, F range participants **fail** to meet the above criteria.

Holistic Grading of Written Assignments (Numeric Percent to Letter Conversion):

When I grade, I grade holistically by placing what you turned in alongside the grading standards above, then determining which description *most closely matches*. Two students may earn an A, but one may see on Canvas they received 96% and another 93%; the higher percent aligned closely with the criteria, the lower percent means that the student was somewhere in between the A and the A-, and this captures that. . So, this chart = lets you see what letter grade an 86% assignment earns. This chart is also used to determine your grade in the course.

A+	98-100	A-	90-92
A	93-97	B+	88-89

B	83-87	C-	70-72
B-	80-82	D+	68-69.
C+	78-79	D	63-67
C	73-7	F	62 or under

Disability Accommodation:

Students who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here](#) to get started with the Disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with me early (ideally in the first three weeks) to discuss aspects of a positive, accessible, and accommodating learning and work environment.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is intellectual theft and fraud. It means passing off some other entity's work (including borrowed words and phrases) as one's own. It occurs when one fails to acknowledge the source(s) of phrases, ideas, quotations, or information. It also occurs when another person or entity supplies the language used in any part of one's paper, even if the entity is unknown (i.e., paper bank, public online sources, study website, Wikipedia, a scholarly webpage, AI, ChatGPT). When in doubt, cite. If you have concerns or questions about documenting sources, consult with me in office hour. If UF issues overriding policies on AI use, these policies will be modified accordingly. For now, all ideas and all language on all assignments should be your own.

Plagiarism does not include incorporating peer or writing lab feedback from classroom workshops into your essays, as long as you do not allow another entity to substantially shape or change your wording or intent. The same applies to consultations with writing center staff.

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "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 Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code.](#)

Grade appeals:

In the unlikely event that a student wishes to appeal their final grade, the student should reach out to Prof.

Course evaluations:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Instructor Pedagogy:

A strong class doesn't just happen by chance: it involves each of us committing to building and sustaining a learning community attentive to each other's ideas, staying open to listening to and learning from the array of perspectives in the reading materials and in class discussion.

There is no expectation to embrace the perspectives and claims of the primary or secondary texts or the instructor. We are reading from early colonization, settlement, diaspora, enslavement, revolution, and times of rapid social change and upheaval. I have chosen and curated sources that make informed interpretive argument and researched historical discoveries. It's natural and often really productive and eye-opening to assess readings from contemporary cultural norms, it is also helpful, especially when material is alienating, offensive, dull, biased, etc. to find a way into a primary text by thinking historically about its language and its claims: who is speaking, on behalf of whose interests, to what imagined audience, for what purpose? What else do texts do that authors themselves may not be aware of? Do the secondary sources illuminate the texts under discussion? Are they persuasive? All this is up for discussion and thoughtful debate. Humanities methods of critical reading, inquiry, literary interpretation work encourage readers to approach course material in a curious, responsive way and may often surprise you, challenge assumptions, and deepen or nuance what you thought you knew. The professor, thus, does not contain all knowledge, decide what can or cannot be discussed, or maintain they hold the truth at students' expense, but instead provides informed expertise, models scholarly exploration, and guides students through ways of reading and possible interpretations. I have no expectation that my reading or interpretation of a text must align with your takeaway. That would make for a really boring humanities course.

My classroom role is to cultivate a discussion-forward atmosphere where students feel they have both useful guidance and encouragement to think through material themselves, and that they have space and time to model some of their critical thinking processes to other classmates or to shape their ideas by talking them out with classmates. I will often use the first part of class, or the period ahead of a double period to provide guidance, limited lecture, background context, or useful scaffolding.

Be mindful that your behavior doesn't distract others or divert group attention from the task at hand; when in small groups, be attentive to your group (this is not time to look at phones or leave your seat). Be mindful that others can see your screen and avoid creating distractions. And above all, if anything in the classroom is impacting your ability to engage thoughtfully, please talk to me directly, in office hour preferably, without fear of penalty or retribution. My goal is to help students find their own way in and through the material, be accountable to peers, and make the learning environment a generative and positive experience.

Additional UF syllabus policies & recommended resources:

Recording policy:

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a

recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Policy on Course Syllabi 3 UF, Academic Affairs, August 5th, 2021, Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Health and Wellness Resources:

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or [visit the Student Health Care Center website](#).

University Police Department: [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies). (JS adds: Note that UFPD also houses the [Office of Victim's Services](#), which can be reached at 352-392-5648 during business hours; you can also request Victim's Services staff via UFPD dispatch after hours via the UFPD dispatch at the main UFPD phone line. This unit is distinct from UFPD and assists a range of campus members: those who are victims of a crime, those who suspect they might be victims of a crime, and those in difficult situations that may not arise to the level of a crime; for example, Victim's Services staff can offer steps and guidance to students who feel unsafe, who are experiencing conflicts on campus, or who are experiencing unwanted behavior from students on campus, etc. These Victim Services advocates provide confidential advice and talk you through your options.)

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).

GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the [GatorWell website](#) or call 352-273-4450.

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or

via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Student Complaints On-Campus: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

On-Line Students Complaints: [View the Distance Learning Student Complaint Process.](#)

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Schedule of Readings, Assignment Due Dates.

This is subject to small modification. Students should always refer to the Course Page Canvas syllabus for deadlines, assignment instructions, and assigned readings, activities, and homework.



UNIT 1: IMAGINING AMERICA

Tues 1/9

Brief course Introduction and syllabus overview. Allegorical engraving, discussion and analysis.

Thurs 1/11,

Course policies and syllabus overview and questions.

Read/view three stories passed down by peoples whose homeland was the vast geographical and cosmological space that would only later become reinscribed as the hemispheric "Americas":

- Hopi Origin Story [Links to an external site.](#) (4 minute digital short), produced for the PBS Series "Native America"
- Josiah Jeremy (Mi'cmaq), as transcribed by Silas Tertius Rand, "Dream of the White Robe and the Floating Island" ([link to pdf](#))
- Mayan Account of Spanish Conquest, excerpt from Chilam Balam of Chumayel (1540-1546), the sacred text of the Yucatan Maya ([link to link to pdf](#))

First **Homework** due Monday: introduce yourself (see "Assignments")

Tues 1/16

- **"America" in the European Imagination:** Christopher Columbus, from *Journal of the First Voyage to America, 1492-1493*; from *Narrative of the Third Voyage, 1498-1500*, edited and translated by J.M. Cohen, in *The Four Voyages of Christopher Columbus*. [pdf](#)

Thurs 1/18

- John Donne, Elegy XIX, [To His Mistress going to Bed](#) [Links to an external site.](#) (1580s); Michael Drayton, [Ode to the Virginian Voyage](#) [Links to an external site.](#) (1606)

- **Brainstorm** (bring to class for discussion) Neither of these men ever stepped in the American territories: use this to reflect a bit more about the rhetorical use to which America is put in British verse of the era.

Tues 1/23

- John Winthrop, *A Modell of Christian Charity* (1630), pdf. This sermon, delivered before a group of Puritan separatist dissenters as they set sail from England to Massachusetts Bay, has emerged as a cultural touchstone and lightning rod, although it was not published in its day. Even notable queer theorists have argued for the sermon's importance. We will explore why, to what effects, to promote what, to mediate or assure what doubts or fears.

Thurs 1/25

- Continue *Modell*. Bring laptop or tablet. During period 2, I will guide you through some of the features on the "City on a Hill" Digital Humanities Project. In collaborative groups, you will identify three things that you find notable about what the data reveals about how this sermon is invoked,

Pages and links will be added :

Week 4, 1/30 & 2/1

- William Bradford, from *Of Plymouth Plantation*, CHIX, "Of their Voyage, and How they Passed the Sea..". and other selections. For class, pay special attention to how Bradford navigates hard to comprehend circumstances the settlers encounter, from natural disasters to sex scandals
- **Reflection Due** (Canvas), 2/2 by 10pm

Week 5, 2/6 & 2/8:

- Richard Frethorne, Letter to his Parents (Virginia, 1623)
- Anne Bradstreet, select poems.

Week 6, 2/13 & 2/15

Mary Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration*

Week 7, 2/20 & 22

Finish Rowlandson, *Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration*

Cotton Mather, from *Decennium Luctuosum: A Notable Exploit: [Hannah Dustin's Captivity]*.

Unit 1 Peer Workshop Thursday

Week 8, 2/27 & 2/29

Unit 1 Essay Due 2/27 by 10pm

Cotton Mather, *Wonders of the Invisible World* [The Devil Attacks the People of God, the Trial of Martha Carrier).

Week 9, 3/5 & 3/7

To be determined: (I want to leave some flexibility to adjust pace, address your larger questions about your interest and role as scholars working in these early archives, etc.)

SPRING BREAK (week 10)

Unit 2: Writing from the Margins

In this section of the course, we will ask larger questions about methods, approaches, and texts that are pushing the field of Early American Studies in new directions,

Week 11: 3/19 & 3/21

Introduction and Part 1, *The Earliest African American Literatures* (Toward a Theory of Black African Mediation, Authorship, and the Early American Literary Archives, Spiritual Accounts)

Week 12: 3/26 & 28

Selections from Part 2 & 3, *The Earliest African American Literatures* (Legal Records, Runaway Slaves)

Reflection Due, 2/29 by 10pm: What can and can't the collections archives tell us? What claims from the Hutchins's and Smith's *Introduction* give you a tool for thinking through the collection's primary sources in new ways?

Week 13: 4/2 & 4/4

Democracy and Sentiment: Hannah Webster Foster, *The Coquette*

Week 14: 4/9 & 4/11

The Coquette, cont'd

Week 15, 4/16 & 4/18

Phyllis Wheatley, select poems and letters, and correspondents (Jupiter Hammon, Samson Occum);

Peer Work on Essay 2

Week 16

4/23 Unit 2 Essay Due by 10pm. Course Wrap