

AML 4453/10434

Law and American Literature

Fall 2020



This course is a synchronous class, with live meetings, Tuesdays 10:40 to 11:30 and Thursdays 10:40 to 12:35 pm via Zoom. It carries 3 credits and entails 3 contact hours.

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Susan Hegeman, Department of English (pronouns: she/her/hers)

EMAIL: Canvas email, or shegeman@ufl.edu. The best way to reach me is by email. I will answer your email within 24 hours, if not sooner.

OFFICE HOURS: Office hours will be conducted remotely, Friday afternoons 1-3 pm or email to arrange an appointment. You can sign up to meet me via Zoom on the Canvas calendar. If you can't meet at any of the free times, email me and we will find another time to meet.

Zoom link to my private meeting room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3087752224>; ([Links to an external site.](#))

+16465588656,,3087752224# US (New York)

+13017158592,,3087752224# US (Germantown)

Course Description

In this course, we will study works of American literature written between 1880 and 2014 -- mostly novels, but also a memoir and one film -- that substantially engage with some aspect of our legal system. We will also read some trial summaries, works of legal theory and analysis, and some literary criticism. The goal of the course is to juxtapose two kinds of thought and writing, literary and legal, to address such questions as these: how do literary works about the law represent, and help us to better understand, concepts such as justice, crime, punishment, evidence, the power of the state, and equality under the law? How does

the law consider issues such as freedom of speech, parody, and property, in regard to works of literature? We will also engage in a kind of survey of American literature pertaining to the law, and survey some key moments in legal history. Issues of racial justice will be foregrounded this semester.

Course Objectives

Through genuine and persistent engagement with course materials, activities, and discussions, you will:

- gain detailed knowledge and appreciation of some classic works of American literature and film that substantially engage with some aspect of the US legal system
- gain knowledge of the American legal system and exemplary moments in American legal history
- develop their skills in literary interpretation, including close reading and contextual analysis
- develop advanced skills in reading and interpreting works of literary criticism, literary theory, and legal theory
- develop advanced skills in critical thinking, analysis, and argumentation
- develop skills in oral communication, interpretation, and argumentation in a small group setting
- develop advanced critical writing skills through the completion of research papers

Required Course Materials

The following books are required for the course. They are listed in the order in which we will read them. Other editions, including e-books, are acceptable.

- Herman Melville, *BILLY BUDD, BARTLEBY, AND OTHER STORIES* (0143107607 PENGUIN)
- Mark Twain, *PUDDN'HEAD WILSON* (0140430407 PENGUIN)
- Richard Wright, *NATIVE SON* (006083756X HARPER)
- Bryan Stevenson, *JUST MERCY* (9780812984965 RANDOM)
- Louise Erdrich, *THE ROUND HOUSE* (0062065254 HARPER)

Students are also required to screen the following film: *Anatomy of a Murder*, 1959, dir. Otto Preminger. It is on reserve for this course in Library West. It can also be viewed via streaming services such as Amazon for about \$3.

All other course materials—other required and supplementary readings, syllabus, documents, assignments, course calendar and discussions—are posted on the course’s Canvas e-learning website.

Course Content Note

The course materials describe, and we will discuss, potentially disturbing topics, including violence and sexual abuse. If you ever feel the need to leave a class discussion, either for a short time or for the rest of the class session, you may do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please get notes from another student or contact me individually. You are welcome to discuss your personal reactions to the course material with me in office hours. If you or a friend are in distress, please contact *U Matter, We Care* or the Counseling and Wellness Center at 352 392-1575.

Canvas and Zoom

You are required to have access to Canvas for accessing course materials and turning in assignments, and Zoom for participating in class discussions and meeting your instructor in office hours. There is a link to Zoom Conferences on the navigation menu of the Canvas course page. Zoom login information will also be given on the course calendar.

You will get the most out of Zoom discussions if you have a good internet connection that allows you to participate in class using both video and audio. If you are having trouble with your connection, you can log into the session using your phone, for the audio portion, and internet for the video. [Click here for tips on how to manage Zoom settings and communicate effectively on the platform. \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

Our class sessions may be audio-visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to 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 verbally 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.

For help with Canvas or Zoom, 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

Any requests for accommodations (e.g. credit for overdue work) due to technical issues must be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem.

Class Comportment

Even though we are not meeting face to face, you are expected to comport yourself and communicate in the same way as you would in any other classroom. Respectful interactions among students are expected. Participation grades will be negatively affected by a failure to adhere to professional, polite, scholarly, and respectful communication.

Course Requirements and Grading

GRADING SCALE

A	4.0	94-100	940-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-93	900-939	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

BREAKDOWN OF FINAL GRADE

Attendance	100 points; 10% of final grade
Classroom participation	100 points; 10% of final grade
case summary	200 points; 20% of final grade
Paper 1	300 points; 30% of final grade
Paper 2	300 points; 30% of final grade

Attendance (100 points; 10% of final grade)

Students are expected to attend Zoom meetings. Exceptions to this will be made if students notify me that they are having connectivity issues.

University policy requires that absences be accepted with prior notice for university sponsored events (e.g., athletics) and religious holidays. I will also accept medical excuses with a doctor's note. 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.

Your attendance grade will be determined as follows:

- 0-2 absences: 100 points (A)
- 3 absences: 93 points (A-)
- 4 absences: 89 points (B+)
- 5 absences: 86 points (B)
- 6 absences: 82 points (B-)
- 7 absences: 79 points (C+)
- 8 absences: 76 points (C)
- 9 absences: 72 points (C-)
- 10 or more absences: automatic failure of the course

Classroom Participation (100 points; 10% of final grade)

In this class, we will all learn by respectfully listening to, reading, and engaging with each others' ideas. It is therefore expected that students come to class prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day. Students will be graded on the quality of their oral and written contributions to classroom discussion. Participation includes oral and chat contributions to class discussions via Zoom and comments on the class discussion board. The best grades will be given to those who offer informed, incisive, and relevant comments regarding the course readings and related discussions. Poor attendance will adversely effect students' participation grade.

Case summary (200 points; 20% of final grade)

Students will write a 1000-1500 word summary of a significant legal case or trial related to one or more of the literary works assigned for the class. The summary should explain the facts of the case, describe the decision and any significant dissenting opinions, and the historical significance of the case, including any important precedents it may have set. The assignment is due on September 25.

Papers (300 points; 30% of final grade, each)

Students will write two formal academic papers, of 1800-2400 words each. The papers will substantially address a work of literature assigned for the class. Full details on the paper assignments, including topics and guidelines, will be announced on Canvas well in advance of the due dates of October 30 and December 11, respectively.

Papers will be graded wholistically on the following criteria, in general order of emphasis:

- Argumentation: clear thesis, logical sequence of argument, logical conclusions
- Use of appropriate evidence from the texts
- Demonstrated understanding of contextual issues in relation to works discussed (accurate explication of concepts and arguments; accurate use of terminology and historical information; accurate application to texts)
- Mechanics: punctuation, spelling, word choice and usage, sentence construction, paragraphing
- Proofreading and citations

Accommodations for Disabilities

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor. Students needing accommodations should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty Policy

Students are required to review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> (Links to an external site.)). Plagiarism or any other violation of the Student Honor and Conduct Code will result in an automatic failure of the assignment. A report will be filed with the Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution Office. <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-honor-code/> (Links to an external site.)

According to the Student Conduct Code,

"Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. 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.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. 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."

Course Evaluation

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/>

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

U Matter, We Care: If you or a friend are in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.

Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS): Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.

University Police Department at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/>

Academic Resources

E-learning technical support: 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu / <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

Career Resource Center: Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.)

Library Support: <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>

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

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>

Writing Studio: 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help with brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>

Schedule of Readings and Discussions

The Course Summary below lists the dates and times of class Zoom meetings and assignment due dates. For a complete summary of discussion topics and reading assignments, broken down by weeks, go to the Modules navigation tab. This represents my current plans for readings and discussions. As we go through the semester, these plans may need to change based on the interests and needs of the class as a whole. Any such changes will be communicated early, in class and via Canvas. Students are responsible for staying informed about any changes in the class schedule by regularly consulting e-learning.

Course Summary:

Date	Details	
Tue Sep 1, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Sep 3, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Fri Sep 4, 2020	Calendar Event office hours	1pm to 3pm
Tue Sep 8, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Sep 10, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Fri Sep 11, 2020	Calendar Event office hours	1pm to Dec 11 at 3pm
Tue Sep 15, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Sep 17, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Sep 22, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Sep 24, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm

Date	Details	
Fri Sep 25, 2020	Assignment Case Summary/Brief	due by 11:59pm
Tue Sep 29, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Oct 1, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Oct 6, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Oct 8, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Oct 13, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Oct 15, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Oct 20, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Oct 22, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Oct 27, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Oct 29, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Fri Oct 30, 2020	Assignment First paper	due by 11:59pm
Tue Nov 3, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Nov 5, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Nov 10, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Nov 12, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Nov 17, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm

Date	Details	
Thu Nov 19, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Nov 24, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Dec 1, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Thu Dec 3, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Tue Dec 8, 2020	Calendar Event AML4453-Law and American Lit	10:40am to 12:25pm
Fri Dec 11, 2020	Assignment 2nd paper	due by 11:59pm