

# Special Topics in American Literature: A Haunting This Way Comes

Instructor Name: Kaylee Lamb (she/her/hers)

Course meeting times & locations: **AML 2070 - Survey of Am Lit** Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM) located in NRN 1001

Office Location and Hours: Monday & Wednesday 3-4pm or by appointment in Turlington 4415

Course website: Canvas

Instructor Email: [Kaylee.lamb@ufl.edu](mailto:Kaylee.lamb@ufl.edu)

*“These specters or ghosts appear when the trouble they represent and symptomize is no longer being contained or repressed or blocked from view. The ghost, as I understand it, is not the invisible or some ineffable excess... Haunting and the appearance of specters or ghosts is one way, I tried to suggest, we are notified that what's been concealed is very much alive and present, interfering precisely with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression ceaselessly directed toward us”—Ghostly Matters by Avery Gordon (pg. xvi)*

What does it mean to be haunted? While many individuals would consider it to be part of a supernatural experience riddled with ghosts, monsters, and the paranormal...is it something more? Can being haunted equate to something far more complex than our society has accredited it, like the persistence of the past, cultural memory, and even retrofuturism (looking back to see how yesterday viewed tomorrow)? This literature course will consider the multifaceted definitions of what a “haunting” can entail. Our semester will be divided into three separate units, the first surrounding the “traditional” definition of haunting: a visitation or inhabitation by a ghost. The second unit will revolve around the classic “persons haunted by the past” plot and will include in-depth analyses of cultural trauma and collective identity and key moments of mass genocide. Finally, the third unit will consider how “hauntings” influence our future and consider the common “ghost in the machine” theme. In other words, how have our computational systems, networks, and social media platforms become embroiled with ghostly presences and how do they present our political, cultural, and/or social biases?

**Our major works will consist of:** *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs, *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones,

excerpts from *Ghostly Matters* by Avery Gordon, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* by Jesmyn Ward, and *I am Legend* by Richard Matheson.

For class assignments and activities, students can expect reading quizzes as well as three 500-word blog/reflection posts of their own choosing. For major writing assignments, students will write a 1000-word literary analysis, a 1500-word literature review with annotated bibliography, and a final 2000-word research paper with an oral component.

### **General Education Objectives:**

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirements (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 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.

### **Course Policies Participation and Attendance**

In this course, we will follow a strict attendance policy. If you miss more than six periods during the term, you will fail the entire course. The university exempts from this policy only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored and religious holiday events must be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. Absences, even for extraordinary reasons will result in missing work that cannot be made up; therefore, you can expect absences to have a negative impact on grades.

**Please Note:** If you are absent, it is your responsibility to make yourself aware of all due dates and required work. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

**Tardiness:** Being late is disruptive, so try to always be on time. Three incidents of tardiness will count as one absence.

#### **1. Participation and in-class discussion (daily)**

Students are expected to read/view the assigned texts before class. Consistent participation in class discussions and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade. This course thrives on class discussion, so please be prepared to share your thoughts with the class every period (be it in small groups or full-class discussions). Rather than engaging in lectures, studies show that one of the best proponents for learning of a subject is active and collaborative engagement. You all have a voice in this class and how it operates, thus sharing your thoughts, opinions, analyses, and questions is deeply critical for this class's success ☺

## 2. Break Down of Assignments:

### **Blog Posts (three)**

Three times over the course of the semester students are required to write a brief (500-750 word) response to the day's text(s). These responses must be uploaded to our course blog **BEFORE** class the day on which they are due (so: by 11:59 pm Sunday for a Monday class and 11:59 pm Tuesday for Wednesday's class, or 11:59 pm Thursday for a Friday class). These responses should be practice for your longer-form analysis and research papers, though these do not have to incorporate outside sources. This post should comment on a social issue, theme/motif, character development, or setting of the text and goes beyond just a summary; instead, your post should enrich our class's understanding of the text in some way. This is also the opportunity for you to present what YOU find interesting, note-worthy, or even complex concerning your chosen text. Ideally, you will present this analysis during class time and can provide a visual aid of your choosing.

The goal is to help each other learn more about these texts and think deeply and critically as we engage with them. These three posts should be spaced out throughout the semester so that you can comment on a variety of texts and continuously engage with the course themes; you will be allowed to present only one blog a week thus you should plan accordingly and space them out evenly. Ideally, you'll submit one in January or February, one in March, and one in April.

- Due by 11:59pm the day before the class where we examine the text you comment on
- 500 words commenting on a social issue, theme/motif, character development, or setting of the text
- Ideal schedule: first post in February, second post in March, third post in April.

### **Literary analysis (1000-1500 words)**

This essay is 1,000 words minimum and is meant to test close-reading skills, particularly its relation to one of our texts in our course. Students will be expected to analyze an assigned text carefully and develop an original argument regarding the whole of the text through close reading. The argument should center on the theme of the class, which is haunting, trauma, and/or prevalence of the past, and how the author unveils these theme(s). Since this is an original argument, no outside sources should be used. You should make an argument about the text and use the text as evidence versus performing a summary of the text. Quotes and passages from the text itself will be used as evidentiary support.

### **Literature Review with Annotated Bibliography (1500-2000 words)**

This is meant to substantiate your first writing assignment, but rather than a literary analysis, this works more or less like a book report. You will utilize outside scholarly sources primarily from the UF database to help clarify the main arguments about your text. The inclusion of 5-8 sources is recommended for this paper and you will work to unveil scholars' arguments/analyses/and ideas surrounding the text you've originally written on.

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### **Research Paper (2000-2500 words)**

As the culmination of the course, your final paper will engage with one of the main texts we have read in class as well as some of the major issues and themes we have discussed. The paper should make a clear and thoughtful argument about the text(s) (articulated in a clear thesis statement) and should be informed by at least 3 outside critical sources. To ensure you are well prepared, you will write a detailed outline before starting the paper. The research paper will allow you to put into practice the skills you have refined over the course of the semester (close reading, analysis, and synthesis). See Canvas for more detailed instructions (2000-2500 words). There will also be a brief oral component wherein you will share your research with the class via a presentation (7-9) minutes.

### **Week 1 (Jan 8, 10, 12)**

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Syllabus/Icebreakers

Collage Assignment/ Writing in Literary Analyses 101 tutorial

Intro to American Haunting

Homework: *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs pg. 1-89 (Preface –A Perilous Passage)

<https://english.hku.hk/staff/kjohnson/PDF/JacobsINCIDENTS1861.pdf>Links to an external site.

### **Week 2 (Jan 17, 19)**

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No class (15)

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Discussion *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs  
Homework: pg. 90-149 (A New Tie to Life –The Flight)

Discussion *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Homework: pg. 150-216 (Months of Peril—New Destination for the Children)

### **Week 3 (Jan 22, Jan 24, Jan 26)**

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Discussion *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Homework: pg. 217-249 (Aunt Nancy—Incidents in Philadelphia)

Discussion *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Homework: Finish Novel pg. 249-303

Discussion *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Homework: "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" by Ambrose Bierce  
[An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge \(xtec.cat\)Links to an external site.](#)

### **Week 4 (Jan 29, 30, Feb 2)**

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Discussion [An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge \(xtec.cat\)Links to an external site.](#)  
Essay 1 Introduction  
Homework: "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe  
[The Black Cat by Edgar Allan Poe \(poestories.com\)Links to an external site.](#)

Discussion "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe

*Homework: Beloved* by Tony Morrison Ch. 1-4

Discussion *Beloved*

*Homework: Beloved* by Tony Morrison Ch. 5-10

**Week 5 (Feb 5, 7, 9)**

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Discussion *Beloved*

*Homework: Beloved* by Tony Morrison Ch. 11-15

Discussion *Beloved*

*Homework: Beloved* by Tony Morrison Ch. 16-21

Discussion *Beloved*

*Homework: 22-25*

**Week 6 (Feb 12, 14, 16)**

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Examples of Essay 1

Homework: Finish *Beloved* by Tony Morrison (26-28)

Discussion *Beloved*

Homework: Excerpts *from Ghostly Matters*

- Online version 138-142 (The Failure of the Explanation); 164-169 (Bumping into a Rememory); 175-179 (An Engraving) [Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination \(centerforethnography.org\)](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

Discussion

Homework: *Essay 1 Due Feb 19*

**Week 7 (Feb 20, 22, 24)**

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Essay 1 Due

Archival Research Assignment

Meet at Smathers Library **Feb 22**

Homework: *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson Ch. 1-5

[Richard Matheson - I Am Legend \(weebly.com\)](#)Links to an external site.

Introduction to Essay 2

Homework: *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson Ch. 6-10

**Week 8 (Feb 27, March 1, 3)**

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Discussion *I Am Legend*

Homework: *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson Ch. 11-16

Discussion *I Am Legend*

Homework: *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson Ch. 16-21 (Finish)

Discussion *I Am Legend*

Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 1-52

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**Week 9 (March 6, 8, 10)**

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Discussion *The Only Good Indians*



Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 53-94

Discussion *The Only Good Indians*

Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 95-137

Discussion *The Only Good Indians*

Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 138-200

Work on Essay 2

**Week 10 Spring Break!**

NO CLASS

**Week 11 (March 20, 22, 24)**

Discussion *The Only Good Indians*

Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 201-251

Work on Essay 2

Discussion *The Only Good Indians*

Homework: *The Only Good Indians* by Stephen Graham Jones pg. 255-305 Finish Novel

Discussion *The Only Good Indians*

Intro to Final Essay

Homework: Essay 2 Due March 27

**Week 12 (March 27, 29, 31)**

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Essay 2 Due

Discussion

*Homework: Compiling Sources and Sing Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward pg. 1-57 (C. 1-2)*

Discussion *Sing Unburied Sing*

*Homework: Sing Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward pg. 59-105 (C. 3-4)*

Discussion *Sing Unburied Sing*

*Homework: Sing Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward pg. 107-167 (C. 5-7)*

**Week 13 (April 3, 5, 7)**

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Discussion *Sing Unburied Sing*

*Homework: Sing Unburied Sing by Jesmyn Ward pg. 169-238 (C. 8-11)*

Discussion *Sing Unburied Sing*

Intro to Essay 3

Homework: Finish *Sing Unburied Sing* by Jesmyn Ward

Film TBA

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**Week 14 (April 10, 12, 14)**

Film TBA

Film TBA

Discussion

Homework: Essay 3

**Week 15 (April 17, 19, 21)**

Discussion

Homework: Article "Seeing is Digesting"

[Seeing is digesting: labyrinths of historical ruin in Stanley Kubrick's The Shining - Document - Gale Academic OneFile \(ufl.edu\)](#)Links to an external site.

Final Discussion

Presentations

Presentations

**Week 16 (April 24, 26)**

Presentations

Finish Presentations (Last Day of Class!)

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**Late Work Policy and Mode of Submission**

I do not accept late work. All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) to E-learning/Canvas before class on the designated due date. I may consider extenuating circumstances, but you must contact me at least twenty-four hours before the assignment is due. All assignments and postings should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and numbered pages.

**Final Grade Appeals**

Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant in Department of English. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

**University Policies General Education**

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information,

see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>Links to an external site.

### **Statement of Composition (C) and Humanities (H) Credit**

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-education-requirement.aspx>Links to an external site.

### **Statement of Writing Requirement**

This course can provide 6000 words toward fulfillment of the UF requirement for writing. For more information, see <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/writing-and-mathrequirement.aspx>

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>Links to an external site..

The office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation.

### **Statement Concerning Sexual Harassment**

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>Links to an external site.

### **Statement Concerning Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>Links to an external site..

### **Statement Concerning Academic Honesty**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows: A student shall 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.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007) All students must

abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php> Links to an external site.