

**AML2410: Issues in American Literature and Culture**  
*Exploring American Identities in 20th Century Women's Literature*  
Spring 2024 Section 9132

**Instructor:** Judy Colindres

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**Office Hours:** T R 2-3PM ([TUR 4307](#))

**Class Meetings**

T (11:45 AM - 1:40 PM) [MAT 0014](#)

R (12:50 PM - 1:40 PM) [MAT 0118](#)

### Course Description

Throughout the 20th century, women writers contributed significantly to the growing American literary canon. This course aims to center the literary works of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) women authors to both broaden and nuance our understanding of American women's identities across the 20th century. Our course will address the following questions: *How does American literature narrativize identity?* and *What connections does women's literature make among gender, race, class, and national identity?*

Students will become familiar with 20th century American literature and encounter many perspectives on identity in America. We will read novels by women writers who grapple with Blackness in America, including Nella Larsen and Toni Morrison. We will read literary works that focus on immigrant American identities by authors such as Amy Tan and Judith Ortiz Cofer.

Students will read novels and short stories. Through discussion, they will hone their textual analysis skills. Assignments will include in-class activities and reading responses. Written assignments will let students expand on their analysis, incorporate textual evidence, and develop an argumentative writing style.

### 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 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. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.
- 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. Course grades have two components.
- 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

Students will need the following complete texts:

- *Passing* (1929) – Nella Larsen
- *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) – Lorraine Hansberry
- *Beloved* (1987) – Toni Morrison
- *The House on Mango Street* (1991) – Sandra Cisneros

Shorter texts and excerpts will be provided to students via Canvas.

## Grade Distribution

### Reflection (500 words, 50 points)

Students will respond to the following prompt:

*Reflect on your reading experiences from childhood to young adulthood. When have you enjoyed reading, if at all? What kinds of texts (genres, forms, etc.) have you read? Describe how your reading experiences have and/or have not reflected your own life.*

### Reading Responses (2,000 words, 200 points)

Before each class, students will propose and briefly respond to an *interpretive question* based on the assigned readings. Students will post their question and response on Canvas by 8:00AM the day of the scheduled class session. Each post must be **at least 100 words** and will be worth **10 points**. The assignment deadline allows the instructor to read the questions and finalize the day's lesson plans. Therefore, students **will not receive credit for responses submitted late**.

*Interpretive questions* are open-ended and are concerned with textual meaning. They ask for your analysis of themes, figurative language, and symbolism within the narrative. They also call for discussion regarding the period, history, politics, and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of interpretive questions—which often use phrases such as "why do you think" or "how did you interpret"—indicates that there may well be neither simply "right" nor simply "wrong" answers.

### **Close Reading Assignment (1,000 words; 150 points)**

At the semester's midterm, students will select one reading response to develop into a close reading essay. Students will analyze a course text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through close reading. Limited outside sources may be used for this assignment.

### **Project Prospectus (500 words, 50 points)**

Students will address the following prompt to complete the prospectus:

*Submit a prospectus that summarizes the topic for your final project. Proposals must identify the course texts that you will discuss and describe your idea for media component of the project. Consider the following questions:*

*What is the topic for your project? How do your selected course texts relate to this topic? What is your thesis statement? What secondary sources will you utilize? How will the secondary sources support, expand, or nuance your claims?*

*Project changes may be made between the midterm and prospectus, but this proposal will finalize the plan for your project.*

### **Final Project (1,500 words, 200 points)**

Students will address the following prompt to complete their final project:

*For the final project, you will respond to one of the course questions: How does American literature narrativize identity? or What connections does women's literature make among gender, race, class, and national identity? The project will have three components:*

*Essay: Write a **1200-word** essay that answers the assignment question. Essays should incorporate evidence for your claims from **at least two** texts from the course syllabus and utilize **at least three** secondary sources.*

*Media: Create a short-form media to accompany your essay. This piece should reflect the ideas in your essay from a creative lens. Forms might include but are not limited to a TikTok, music playlist, collage, drawing, and more.*

*Artist Statement: Include a **300-word** artist statement that explains how your visual addresses the assignment question. This portion should be concise and thoughtful but can also be reflective of your creative process.*

### **Self-Evaluation (500 words, 50 points)**

Students will respond to the following prompt:

*Write about your experiences in this class. What was your biggest challenge? What was your biggest triumph? What are your key takeaways from this course? What did you learn about American literature? What, if anything, has changed about how you think about literature, or yourself as a writer?*

### **Participation (100 points)**

Students are expected to review the assigned readings before class. Consistent participation in class discussions demonstrating knowledge of the assigned readings will contribute to this portion of the final grade. If students are unable to answer questions about the content of an assigned text, it will be assumed that they have not prepared and will lose 1%. In-class activities will also be assigned via Canvas for participation points.

## Grading Policies

### Grading Scale & GPA Equivalent

<b>A</b> (4.0) 100-93	<b>C</b> (2.0) 76-73
<b>A-</b> (3.67) 92-90	<b>C-</b> (1.67) 72-70
<b>B+</b> (3.33) 89-87	<b>D+</b> (1.33) 69-67
<b>B</b> (3.0) 86-83	<b>D</b> (1.0) 63-66
<b>B-</b> (2.67) 82-80	<b>D-</b> (0.67) 62-60
<b>C+</b> (2.33) 79-77	<b>E</b> (0) 59-

**Note:** A grade of C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

**Grading Method:** The writing assignments in this course will be graded holistically, and the instructor will provide written feedback for each paper. A general rubric for course assessments is included below. More specific guidelines may be included in Canvas.

Letter Grade	Assessment
<b>A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course content and skills applied in the essay are well-developed</li> <li>• argument is persuasive with detailed reasoning and thorough evidence</li> <li>• organization includes an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, and easy to follow paragraphs</li> <li>• writing style is coherent, clear, and appropriate for the assignment</li> <li>• little to no mechanical errors</li> </ul>

<b>B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course content or skills applied in the essay need development</li> <li>• argument is persuasive, but further reasoning or evidence is needed</li> <li>• organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, or easy to follow paragraphs</li> <li>• writing style is coherent overall but unclear or inappropriate at times</li> <li>• few mechanical errors</li> </ul>
<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course content or skills applied in the essay need significant development</li> <li>• additional reasoning and evidence are needed improve persuasiveness</li> <li>• organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement or topic and concluding sentences and easy to follow paragraphs</li> <li>• writing style is coherent overall but unclear and inappropriate at times</li> <li>• some mechanical errors</li> </ul>
<b>D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course content and skills applied in the essay need significant development</li> <li>• argument is not persuasive; reasoning and evidence are lacking</li> <li>• organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, and easy to follow paragraphs</li> <li>• writing style struggles with logic, clarity, and appropriateness</li> <li>• frequent mechanical errors</li> </ul>
<b>E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• course content and skills are not applied in the paper</li> <li>• reasoning for argument is unclear and evidence is missing</li> <li>• lack of organization causes difficulty following the argument</li> <li>• writing style is incoherent and inappropriate for the assignment</li> <li>• mechanical errors limit the ability to read the paper</li> </ul>

## Course Policies

**Communication:** Communication is key when it comes to any issues or challenges that prevent students from participating in class, turning in an assignment on time, or impact their overall performance in our course. Communicating as early as possible when experiencing a challenge will ensure that the student and instructor can work together to maximize success in the course.

**Email:** Emails will be addressed within 48 hours. Please be aware that the instructor responds to emails on weekdays during business hours. Therefore, students should not expect quick responses after 5PM on a weekday or during the weekend.

**Attendance:** This is a discussion-based course. Attendance is mandatory. If a student misses class for any reason, they are responsible for informing themselves as to what was covered. Absences are counted by **class periods**:

- Students will earn a lowered course grade after **three** unexcused 50-minute absences.

- Students will automatically fail the course if they miss more than **two weeks** of class (failure *at* the **seventh** 50-minute absence).
- Students late to class by more than 10 minutes will be marked tardy. **Three** tardies will count as one absence.

Excused absences include university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, quarantine, illness, or serious family emergencies. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed.

**Make-up Work:** *All assignments must be completed to receive credit for this course.*

Making up missed work due to documented illness or emergency is at the discretion of the instructor on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the instructor or, when applicable, the [Dean of Students Office](#) as soon as you can to make them aware of the documented illness emergency.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this class are consistent with [university policies](#).

**Classroom Behavior:** Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Effective course discussion requires that students demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from their own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

**Paper Submissions:** All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents to Canvas at the assigned deadline. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. MLA formatting is required.

Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.

**Late Assignments:** Unexcused late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse. Assignments that are submitted late will lose **10%** off their final grade for each day that they are late. **After three days, late assignments will not be accepted.** Any assignments that require peer interaction (i.e. discussion post responses) may not be submitted late.

**Academic Honesty:** Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism:

“Plagiarism. 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:

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” (13).

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code, which can be found at <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/students/student-conduct-code/>.

**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.

**Course Evaluations.** Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. 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/>.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting: <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs as early as possible in the semester.

**Students in Distress:** For guidance during distressing situations, please contact **U Matter We Care**, the **Counseling and Wellness Center**, or the **Dean of Students Office**. They can help students navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

[U Matter, We Care](#): (352) 294-2273

[Counseling and Wellness Center](#): (352) 392-1575

[Dean of Students \(CARE\)](#): (352) 392-1261 or [Peabody Hall](#) (Second Floor)

[Student Health Care Center](#): (352) 392-1161

[Field & Fork Pantry](#): 352-294-2208 (located [near McCarty B](#))

**UF Statement on 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/about/title-ix-rights/>

**UF COVID-19 Response:** In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones:

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl.edu](https://one.ufl.edu/screening/) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.

- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

## Class Schedule

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change.

Week	Reading(s)
Week 1: Syllabus Week	Course Overview & Introduction
Week 2: Zora Neale Hurston	<a href="#">Sweat</a> (1926) <a href="#">How it Feels to Be Colored Me</a> (1928) <a href="#">Gilded Six Bits</a> (1933) <a href="#">In Search of Zora Neale Hurston</a> (1975)
Week 3: Nella Larsen	<i>Passing</i> (1929)
Week 4: Gwendolyn Brooks and Nikki Giovanni	<a href="#">the mother</a> (1963) <a href="#">kitchenette building</a> (1963) <a href="#">Mothers</a> (1972) <a href="#">Nikki-Rosa</a> (1968)
Week 5: Lorraine Hansberry	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (1959)
Week 6: Alice Walker and Audre Lorde	Selections from <i>In Love and Trouble</i> * <a href="#">In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens</a> (1972) <a href="#">The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House</a> (1984)
Week 7: Toni Morrison	<i>Beloved</i> (1987)
Week 8: Toni Morrison	<i>Beloved</i> (1987) cont. <a href="#">Playing in the Dark</a> (1992) excerpts
Week 9: Midterm	Workshops
Week 10: Spring Break	N/A
Week 11: Amy Tan and Leslie Marmon Silko	<a href="#">Language and Literature from a Pueblo Indian Perspective</a> (1979) Lullaby* (1981) Two Kinds (1989)* Mother Tongue (1990)*
Week 12: Judith Ortiz Cofer	Selections from <i>The Latin Deli: Prose and Poetry</i> (1993)*
Week 13: Gloria Anzaldúa and Sandra Cisneros	La Prieta (1981)* <a href="#">To live in the borderlands means you</a> (1987) <a href="#">My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn</a> (1991) Woman Hollering Creek (1991)*



Week 14: Sandra Cisneros	<i>The House on Mango Street</i> (1991)
Week 15: Final Project	Workshops & Conferences
Week 16: Last Class	N/A

\*PDF in Canvas