

AML2410: Special Topics in American Literature

Gender Norms and Nonconformity in American Literature

Spring 2023

Course Information

Course Number	Section	Location	Meeting Times
19482	9132	MAT 0118	T Per. 5 - 6 (11:45 am - 1:40 pm) R Per. 6 (12:50 am - 1:40 am)

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Karen Libby	kmlibby97@ufl.edu	TUR4405 T 10:40 - 11:30 am R 11:45 am - 12:50 pm or alternate appointment

General Information

Description

This class will interrogate the ways that femininity and masculinity have been represented, created, and challenged in American literature. Through works of literature, we will explore how norms of masculinity and femininity are experienced by people of various genders. How have we decided which traits and behaviors are masculine and which are feminine? What happens to people who cannot or will not adopt the expected traits of their assigned gender?

Rather than structuring the class in a binary of units on masculinity and femininity, we will, much like the literatures on hand, blend explorations of masculinity and femininity by theme. We will give emphasis to queer and trans expressions of gender and discuss how sexuality and gender expression connect.

Possible readings include Leslie Feinberg's *Stone Butch Blues* (1993), Ann Bannon's *Beebo Brinker* (1962), Maia Kobabe's *Gender Queer: A Memoir* (2019), and Randall Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits* (1989), among others. Course assignments will consist of class discussion prep, short response papers, a creative project, and a longer analytical research paper that connects a chosen text to the social systems that develop and enforce gender roles. Students will develop close reading and analysis skills in this class and develop a framework for reading the ways in which literature interacts with the cultures that it emerges from.

This class is open to all students, regardless of prior knowledge of gender and queer theories. We will open the semester by building a foundation of knowledge on gender and gender roles to ensure that each student has the foundations necessary to interrogate the literature and theories at hand.

Course Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- ❖ Plan, develop, and polish insightful analytical writing of various forms
- ❖ Identify and analyze the interactions between literature and American constructions of gender norms

- ❖ Incorporate (and cite) secondary texts to support arguments

General Education Objectives

Composition or Humanities and Writing Requirement

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. 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 Educated 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.

Materials

Required Texts

Starred texts have at least one freely available copy through the UF library or the Alachua County Public Library. You are encouraged to purchase or rent, when possible, to give those unable to purchase access to library copies. Any editions of the texts listed are acceptable.

Thomas and Beulah, also included in the *Selected or Collected Poems of Rita Dove*, Rita Dove *

A Visitation of Spirits, Randall Kenan *

Transposes, Dylan Edwards ([e-book, available for purchase here, \\$6.99](#))

Gender Queer: A Memoir, Maia Kobabe *

Femme in Public, Alok Vaid-Menon ([e-book, available for purchase here, \\$8](#))

Beebo Brinker, Ann Bannon

Secondary Readings

Smaller readings, such as stories, excerpts, or individual poems not included in the above list will be uploaded to the Canvas site.

Assignments and Grade Distribution

Introduction (300 words) (50 points)

Students will introduce their understanding of gender norms in literature by writing a short, informal essay in which they introduce themselves and their reading habits and explain how, if at all, they have noticed and engaged with themes of gender in literature prior to this class.

Short Analytical Responses (4 @ 600 words, 2400 words total) (200 points total)

Students will submit 4 short response papers throughout the semester, responding to texts of their choosing. Response papers must cite one scholarly, secondary source. Response papers are due by the Friday of the week we are discussing the chosen text (for texts that we spend two weeks on, papers are due by the Friday of the second week) and should **not** simply rehash class discussions. Two response papers must be submitted by Week 9 and 2 must be submitted after Week 9.

Advertisement Project + Reflection (800 words) (150 points)

After an interlude unit of gendering in American commercial products and advertisements, students will design an advertisement for a hypothetical product that is either unnecessarily gendered or unnecessarily gender neutral, where the de-/gendering of the product is part of its main appeal. Advertisements will be paired with a reflection paper discussing rhetorical tactics used to gender or de-gender the product.

Zine + Artist Statement (700 words) (150 points)

After the zine unit week, students will create a zine in which they discuss an issue related to gender and gender norms. Zines will be paired with artist statements discussing the rhetorical choices the students made to communicate their intent.

Final Paper Abstract (300 words) (50 points)

Students will propose the text choice and argument of their final papers.

Final Paper Drafts and Peer Review (100 points)

Students will submit drafts of their final papers, exchange drafts with a peer, and provide constructive feedback on improving the peer's paper. While the points are broken up into two halves, students **must** submit a review to earn any points. Students who submit a draft but do not review a peer's paper will earn zero points.

Final Paper (1500 words) (200 points)

Students will develop a unique analysis of a chosen text and write an analytical paper supporting their argument.

Engagement (100 pts)

This will not be a lecture-heavy class. Literature education requires active discussion and idea-sharing. I will do my best to foster a welcoming, positive environment. However, I recognize that participation in a class discussion, especially with topics close to the heart, can be difficult or intimidating for some students. Thus, I use "engagement" criteria instead of simple "participation." The engagement grade will be determined holistically, considering contributions to in-class discussions and asynchronous discussions, engagement with readings, small-group activities, completion rate of assignments and in-class activities, attendance, and other factors. Students will have two opportunities in the semester to reflect on and self-evaluate their participation and engagement.

ASSIGNMENT	WORDS	POINTS
INTRO ESSAY	300	50
4 SHORT REPSONSES	2400	200
AD PROJECT	800	150
ZINE	700	150
FINAL PAPER PROPOSAL	300	50
DRAFTS/PEER REVIEW		100
FINAL PAPER	1500	200
ENGAGEMENT		100
TOTAL	6000	1000

GRADING

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

GRADING RUBRIC

A	An “A” grade indicates that the project showcases insightful thought through complex analysis backed up by textual evidence, clear thesis, smooth integration of evidence through quoting/paraphrasing of primary and secondary texts, consistent use of clear language (transitions, diction, spelling, grammar). The project generates interest and shows commitment on the part of the writer. The organization of the project supports it argument. If materials are referenced, proper MLA citation style is used. There is a strong, argumentative conclusion. “A” papers are outstanding.
B	A “B” grade paper has many of the qualities of an “A” grade but needs polishing to get it to an “A.” The thesis and argument are clear but may be less complex. Textual evidence is used to support the argument but is not always well-integrated or fitting with the thesis. Language may have lapses in clarity but is still understandable. The project attempts to generate interest and commitment. Organization is clear but may have lapses. If materials are referenced, MLA citation is attempted, but there may be some errors. Conclusion may rely on summary. “B” papers are papers that express a solid argument but do so less consistently than those awarded an “A.”
C	A “C” paper is satisfactory. The project has a thesis and argument, but they are unclear and/or less developed. Thesis may also be stating a fact rather than positioning an argument. Evidence is insufficient or does not support the thesis. There are major lapses in clarity that begin to impact the understandability of the paper. Papers may rely on summary rather than analysis. Conclusion is unclear and relies on summary. Organization may be confusing. Paper may have insufficient citation practices. “C” papers are satisfactory but need further polishing to make their arguments persuasive.
D	A “D” paper is unsatisfactory. Thesis and argument, if present, are weak, unargumentative, and unsupported. There is little evidence to support the thesis, and citation practices are unsatisfactory. Paper is significantly unclear and/or difficult to follow. “D” papers fail to fulfill a major component of the assignment.
E	An “E” paper is significantly unsatisfactory. Project is incomplete, plagiarized, and/or does not meet the requirements of the assignment. The word minimum is not met.

Course Policies

COVID-19

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 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.
- Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.

Attendance

In a course with discussion-style instruction, your presence is necessary! Students who miss six or more classes cannot pass the class. Excused reasons for absence include illness, religious holiday, university-sponsored sport or related travel, Title IX-related incident, legal obligations, and personal or familial emergency, [and other situations noted here](#). For planned absences (university-sponsored activities and religious holidays), inform me at the beginning of the semester. For surprise circumstances, inform me ASAP, before the absence if possible, and within a few days if not. Documentation for absences may, but will not always, be requested. Note that missing a *double* session (Tuesdays) counts as 2 absences.

Tardiness

Arriving late to class disrupts the discussion. If you arrive after attendance is taken, see me after class to confirm your attendance. 3 tardies equals 1 absence.

Late Assignments

If you are unable to meet a deadline, request an extension from me **by five p.m. the DAY BEFORE the assignment is due**. Early notice for extensions allows me to adjust my grading schedule appropriately. Late papers without an agreed extension will be deducted points for each day late. All late work must be submitted within two weeks of the original deadline, or by the last day of class, whichever comes first. **No work will be accepted after May 1st.**

Environmental Sustainability

Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

University Policies

Academic Honesty

Students are required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. For University of Florida's honor code, [click here](#).

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted [online here](#). 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 online.

Sexual Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. [Full policy can be found here](#).

Student and Crisis Resources

University Writing Studio

The [UF Writing Studio](#) offers tutoring appointments for UF undergraduate and graduate students. Students bring writing drafts to their appointments and receive constructive feedback and tutoring from trained studio tutors, usually other undergraduate students. Students may make up to two appointments per week.

Disability Accommodations

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the [Disability Resources Center](#) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

I strive to create an equitable, welcoming class environment. While I must receive a documented DRC accommodation to make major changes to the class, I encourage students to come talk to me about *any* access needs, even ones without associated diagnoses. I will do what I can to best ensure all students have the resources necessary to thrive in my class.

Hitchcock Field & Fork Food Pantry

[The Hitchcock Field & Fork Pantry](#) offers free grocery staples and fresh produce to all UF students, faculty, and staff experiencing food insecurity. Field & Fork defines food insecurity as “A person experiences food insecurity when they can't access food in either the *amount* or *nutritional quality* that meets their needs.” No proof of insecurity is required to receive resources. No questions are asked. Gator1 ID cards are needed.

Counseling and Wellness Center

[The Counseling and Wellness Center](#) offers mental health support and resources to students, including support with college-related struggles and general mental health services. More info at (352)392-1575.

Office of Victim Services

Students who have experienced a crime, assault, or harassment are invited to contact the [UFPD Office of Victim Services](#), a free and confidential service that provides victim-survivors with emotional support, counselling referrals, victim advocacy, accompaniment to criminal justice processes, and more. Victim-survivors are not required to make a police report or press charges to access OVS resources.

Alachua County Crisis Center

[The Alachua County Crisis Center](#) is a non-UF-associated, non-GDP-associated help center for Alachua County residents experiencing traumatic events or crisis. ACCC services include: 24/7 crisis phone line at (352) 264-6789; appointment, walk-in, and group crisis counselling; on-demand crisis intervention; national suicide hotlines; local disaster information; community education; and more.

Course Schedule

NOTE: course schedule is subject to change

Week	Topic	Reading/Topic	Due
Week 1	Foundations	T: Syllabus, keywords, and key concepts TH: “Gender” by Jules Gill-Peterson	
Week 2		T: “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid	

		TH: "If" by Rudyard Kipling	
Week 3	Gender and the Nuclear Family	T: <i>Thomas and Beulah</i> TH: <i>Thomas and Beulah</i>	Intro Essay
Week 4		T: <i>Thomas and Beulah</i> TH: "Black Masculinity and Queer Gendering in Rita Dove's 'Thomas and Beulah'"	
Week 5	Gender and Consumerism	T: Selection of advertisements (TBD) TH: Secondary readings on advertising	
Week 6	Gender & the U.S. South	T: <i>A Visitation of Spirits</i> TH: <i>A Visitation of Spirits</i>	
Week 7		T: <i>A Visitation of Spirits; The Will to Change</i> ch. # TH: <i>A Visitation of Spirits</i>	Ad Project
Week 8	Finish Gender & the U.S. South, begin Zines	T: Secondary reading on <i>Visitation</i> TH: <i>Collection A Girl's Guide to Taking over the World: Writings from the Girl Zine Revolution</i> ch.#	Engagement 1
Week 9		T: Selection of zines from <i>The Riot Grrrl</i> TH: Zine workshop day	
Week 10	Trans Comics	T: Queer & trans foundations; <i>Transposes</i> ch. # TH: <i>Transposes</i> ch. #; <i>Understanding Comics</i> ch. #	Zine
Week 11	Trans Comics 2 (Electric Boogaloo) Restrictions and Freedoms	T: <i>Gender Queer: A Memoir</i> TH: <i>Gender Queer: A Memoir</i>	
Week 12	Poetry: Restrictions and Freedoms	T: <i>Femme in Public</i> TH: <i>Ezili's Mirrors</i> ch. #	
Week 13	Butch Expression	T: <i>Beebo Brinker and Female Masculinity</i> ch.# TH: <i>Beebo Brinker</i>	Final Paper Proposals
Week 14		T: <i>Beebo Brinker</i> TH: <i>Beebo Brinker</i>	
Week 15	Where do We Go from Here?	T: My Shadow is Pink and "What is the Future of Gender?"	Peer Reviews of final papers Engagement 2

Final papers due May 1st. NO WORK WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER MAY 1ST