



AML 4311: Major Authors: Herman Melville

Fall 2022/Class # 10351; Section #19CG

100% online MWF Period 4 (10:40-11:30)

Professor Stephanie A. Smith

Office: 4324 TUR (but I will be using Zoom).

Office hours: Zoom hours reserved at Weds. 2-4 and by individual appointment

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Famously, Herman Melville wrote to his close friend Nathaniel Hawthorne in 1851: “What I feel most moved to write, that is banned-- it will not pay. Yet, altogether, write the other way I cannot. So the product is a final hash, and all my books are botches.” Yet this is the same author whose works are now held in such high esteem he is often regarded as a giant of American letters, with *Moby Dick* being acclaimed as the American novel—although also probably the least-read novel in America today, even if references to Captain Ahab and the White Whale show up frequently in popular culture—especially in all the various permutations of *Star Trek*. In this seminar we will re-examine the literary legacy of Herman Melville, with an eye to why his work is still relevant (or ought to be) to readers of the 21st century.

Required Readings: first, a word about these texts: given that most students now use Kindles and such, I’ve given up trying to get us all “on the same page” even if I still think this is the most effective way of reading in a classroom. So, I will be using the editions listed below, if you want to follow my readings.

Melville, Herman, ed. Peter M. Coviello. *Billy Budd, Bartleby, and Other Stories* (NY: Penguin, 2016 ISBN 13: 9780143107606).

_____, *Moby Dick* (NY: Penguin, almost any Penguin version will do; there are several available).

_____, ed. John Bryant. *Typee: A Peep At Polynesian Life* (NY: Penguin, 1996 ISBN 13: 9780140434880).

A Few Recommended Secondary Materials:

A brief, online biography of Melville at

<https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/whaling-biography-herman-melville/>

Philbrick, Nathaniel. *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* (NY: Penguin, ISBN: 0-14-100182-8)

_____. *Why Read Moby-Dick?* (NY: Viking, ISBN: 9780670022991)

Requirements: Final grades will be assigned according to the following numerical breakdown: Attendance/class participation 40%; mid-term paper 30% and a final paper 30%.

1. Class participation: This online class should belong to you as much as possible by which I mean active, responsible engagement. I expect you to talk in this class and I expect that you will bring your own questions into the classroom—on occasion, I may ask you what *you* want to discuss. You will agree to work during the class, with due respect to your classmates. I know this is difficult for some of us, who may be shy. I ask for a good faith effort. Good class participation includes:

- a. **Attendance.** This should probably go without saying but you will agree to be in class, promptly, at the opening of the class period with the reading assignment. If you are 15 minutes late, you will be marked late; twenty, you are absent. You have three (3) periods of grace to be absent. Only illness or injury will be allowed as exceptions. In such cases, talk to me *as soon* as possible. If you know that you have a chronic condition, and are likely to miss class periods, please avail yourself of the Disability Resource Center.
- b. **Preparation.** You will agree to have **prepared** whatever the day's assignment is. Just showing up does not constitute good class participation.
- c. **Participation.** By taking this class, you are agreeing to making your voice heard in the discussions we shall be having. Again, just being in the Zoom room doesn't constitute "A" work, with respect to participation.

2. Mid-Term: When we start reading *Moby Dick*, choose a character you want to think more deeply about across our discussions--but this excludes Ishmael and Captain Ahab. You need to choose a more minor character and follow them throughout the novel. For your mid-term, write a critical paper that proposes an answer to the question: what function does my character perform in the novel and why is he (mostly 'he') a vital part of the novel? What type of role is this character's role, and how does that character shape or steer the novel's course, even in a minor way? (6 pages) We all know from the outset of this book that everyone perishes at the end, except for Ishmael. What difference do you think your character's death makes? Why shall that character be missed and by whom? (due Oct. 14).

3. Final: *Billy Budd* ends in four different ways: with Billy's actual death, with Captain Vere's death, with the official naval newspaper's account of the crisis aboard the *Bellipotent* and with the ballad, *Billy in the Darbies*. Using the ballad as your guide, write a paper in which you examine how the ballad intervenes in all four endings, either revising that ending or account, adding to it, subtracting from it, and then argue critically as to why *you think* Melville chose to use the ballad as the final word in this tale. You may use any outside work to support your argument, although it is not required (10 pages, due last day of class).

And now for the obligatory UF materials:

Academic Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge that 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 Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of

behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor of this class.

Plagiarism: I regret having to remind you that plagiarism is a serious offense. All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines, which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1_4.017). For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>

Civility: Please turn off or put cell-phones on vibrate during class time; if you need to leave the room during class, please be sure to and leave with discretion. You will be marked absent if you are gone more than 10 minutes; if you need sleep, please stay home and sleep; and please do not be rude, either to me, or to your fellow students—by which I also mean, don't deliberately waste anyone's time. It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff, and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php> and policies regarding harassment at <http://wwwhr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.html>

The Disability Resource Center: The Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs. For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>

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. As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://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/>.

Final Grade Appeals: If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Kenneth Kidd Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

Grading Scale A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>



Schedule of Classes

The following schedule of readings is a working plan. If it becomes necessary to alter the schedule for whatever reason, I will give ample warning.

Week 1 _____ I: _____ Celebrity Author _____

W Aug. 24—Introductory matters and getting the rusty wheels turning again, w/poetry

F Aug. 26—Biographical matters (an introduction to our author and his times)

HW: Begin reading *Typee* (first two chapters).

Week 2 _____

M Aug. 29—*Typee*

HW: Read to Chapter 4

RR#1 due by 5:00 today

W Aug. 31—*Typee*

HW: Read to Chapter 6

F Sept. 2—*Typee*

HW: Over the long weekend, finish the novel.

Week 3 _____

M Sept. 5—**LABOR DAY OFF**

W Sept. 7—*Typee*

F Sept. 9—*Typee*

HW: start reading the *Moby* (up to and including Chpt. 18 “His Mark.”)

Week 4 _____ II: _____ Moby Dick _____

M Sept. 12—The 19th C. and the Sea

W Sept. 14—Etymologies and Terminologies

F Sept. 16—Asynchronous **RR#2 due by the end of the day**

HW: Read MD to Chapter 53 “The Gam”

Week 5 _____

M Sept. 19—MD, con’t

W Sept. 21—MD, con’t

F. Sept. 23—MD, con’t

HW: Read MD to Chapter 96 “The Try-Works”

Week 6 _____

M Sept. 26—MD, con’t

W Sept. 28—MD, con’t

F Sept. 30—MD, con’t

HW: Finish Reading MD

Week 7 _____

M Oct. 3—MD, con’t

W Oct. 5—MD, con’t

F Oct. 7—**HOMECOMING DAY OFF**

Week 8 (mid-term)

M Oct. 10—Tidying Up

W Oct. 12—*Moby-Dick*: An Afterword

F Oct. 14—Mid-term Due **DAY OFF**

HMW: Read “Bartleby the Scrivener”

Week 9 III: Struggling and Posthumous Author

M Oct. 17—Bartleby

W Oct. 19—con’t

F Oct. 21—con’t

HMW: Read “Benito Cereno”

Week 10

M Oct. 24—BC

W Oct. 26—BC

F Oct. 29—BC

Week 11

M Oct. 31—Boo! BC con’t

W Nov. 2—con’t

F Nov. 4—Asynchronous: your job today is to do **RR#3 and hand it in by the end of the day.**

HMW: Start Reading *Billy Budd*

Week 12

M Nov. 7—BB

W Nov. 9—BB

F Nov. 11—**VETERAN’S DAY OFF**

HMW: Over the long holiday, finish reading BB.

Week 13

M Nov. 14—BB

W Nov. 16—BB

F Nov. 18—BB

Week 14

M Nov. 21—Asynchronous: do **RR#4 and hand it in by the end of the day.**

W Nov. 23—**THANKSGIVING OFF**

F Nov. 25—**THANKSGIVING OFF**

Week 15

M Nov. 28—BB

W Nov. 30—BB

F Dec. 2—The Afterlife of *Budd*

Week 16

M Dec. 5—Wrapping up

W Dec. 7—**Last day of classes: final paper due**

Shiloh: A Requiem (April, 1862)

BY HERMAN MELVILLE

Skimming lightly, wheeling still,

The swallows fly low

Over the field in clouded days,

The forest-field of Shiloh—

Over the field where April rain

Solaced the parched ones stretched in pain Through the pause of night

That followed the Sunday fight

Around the church of Shiloh— The church so lone, the log-built one,

That echoed to many a parting groan

And natural prayer

Of dying foemen mingled there—

Foemen at morn, but friends at eve—

Fame or country least their care: (What like a bullet can undeceive!)

But now they lie low,

While over them the swallows skim,

And all is hushed at Shiloh.