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Course Syllabus

AML 4453/28681 section 1SH2 Law and American Literature

Spring 2023

MEETINGS: MWF per. 3 (9:35 am- 10:25 am) in Matherly 0115

INSTRUCTOR: Prof. Susan Hegeman (she/her), Department of English
shegeman@ufl.edu

OFFICE HOURS: Fridays, 1-3 pm or by appointment, either in person or via Zoom. Zoom meeting room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/3087752224>

Course Description

In this course, we will study works of American literature (including novels, essays, and a memoir) and films created between 1880 and 2020 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 survey American literary and cultural representations of the law, alongside some key moments in legal history. We will juxtapose two kinds of thought and writing, literary and legal, to address such questions as these: how do literary and cinematic 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? How is legal reasoning and representation similar to, and different from the strategies of reasoning and representation in literature and film?

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 skills in literary and film 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, PUDD'N'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 films outside of class. They are all available for streaming via Library West (login required, and VPN may be needed for off-campus access):

- Anatomy of a Murder, 1959, dir. Otto Preminger**
<http://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/uf1275793/watch/60646915CDCCFC8?referrer=direct>
- 12 Angry Men, 1957, dir. Sidney Lumet**
<http://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/uf1275793/watch/10B9E475475EBED6?referrer=direct>
- Judgment at Nuremberg, 1961, dir. Stanley Kramer**
<http://digitalcampus.swankmp.net/uf1275793/watch/7E8C1FC99FD44887?referrer=direct>

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.

Students are encouraged to employ critical thinking and to rely on data and verifiable sources to interrogate all assigned readings and subject matter in this course as a way of determining whether they agree with their classmates and/or their instructor. No lesson is intended to espouse, promote, advance, inculcate, or compel a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

Tech Requirements and Policies

You are required to have access to Canvas for accessing course materials and turning in assignments. For help with all tech issues, contact the UF Computing Help Desk:

- Web: <http://helpdesk.ufl.edu>
- 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.

Recording Policy

According to state law, students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Class Comportment

- Respectful interactions among students are expected. Participation grades will be negatively affected by a failure to adhere to professional, polite, scholarly, and respectful communication in all formats, both written and oral.
- 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.

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 and Participation 200 points; 20% of final grade
- Short case summary paper 200 points; 20% of final grade
- Formal Paper 1 300 points; 30% of final grade
- Formal Paper 2 300 points; 30% of final grade

Attendance and participation (20% 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, and that they come prepared to discuss the material assigned for that day. Students will be graded on their attendance and on the quality of their oral contributions to classroom discussion. 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.

University policy requires that absences be accepted with prior notice for university sponsored events (e.g., athletics) and religious holidays.

Students who are ill are expected to be considerate of yours and self-quarantine. Students' grades will not be adversely affected by this if you inform the instructor of your medical situation. Students are expected to contact the instructor if they anticipate extended absences so that we can work on a plan to keep up with the class. Documentation will be required.

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 student 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 holistically based 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 of 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/>). 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/>

- According to the Student Conduct Code, "Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:
- Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
 - Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student's own submitted work, or the stealing and submitting of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
 - Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
 - 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.ua.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.ua.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/>
- 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 full schedule of readings, assignments and discussion topics is available on Canvas at the following site: [Schedule of Readings and Discussions](#). As we go through the semester, this schedule may be modified 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 the Canvas course page.