

ENC 1145: Writing About the American South

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Course Description

From discussions of voting rights in Georgia to Twitter maps of the United States that categorize the boundaries of “The Deep South,” “The South,” and “Sorta The South”—the South is a topic of constant debate. Culturally idealized images of the South have permeated the American conscience through films like *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Gone With the Wind* (1939). As a result, the South is perceived by most Americans as politically conservative, still perpetuating rhetoric from the Civil War even in the 21st century. But what is the South?

This course will attempt to explore what exactly the South is. We will start geographically, by considering which states count as the South and—perhaps more importantly—which don’t. Throughout the course, we will explore historical understandings of the South by analyzing the Mason-Dixon survey, studying the institution of slavery, learning about southern industry and the economy of the South, and tracing the legacy of the Civil War. The course will also examine Florida’s unique position in the South.

We will then move on to define a cultural understanding of the South for ourselves by answering the questions “what unites the southern states?” and “what does it mean to be a southerner?” This section of our semester will be the primary focus of the course—investigating race, religion, addiction, environment, music, and all the ways in which these categories intersect to understand the South.

Our goal here is to walk away with a better (though perhaps messier) understanding of what the American South.

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.
- 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.

- Apply research and use writing to achieve a variety of purposes in a variety of disciplinary contexts.
- Demonstrate accurate and responsible cite and incorporate primary and secondary materials.
- Participate in groups with emphasis on listening, critical and reflective thinking, and responding to group members' writing and ideas.
- Present an effective academic writing style.

Course 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 (AKA texts that I will not provide for you)

Please get hard copies rather than Ebooks or audio books if possible

Bayou Vol. 1 by Jeremy Love, ISBN: 978-1401223823

Wise Blood by Flannery O'Connor, ISBN: 978-0374530631

Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones by Micah Dean Hicks, ISBN: 978-1328566454

Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston, ISBN: 978-0061120060

All other readings will be made available on Canvas

Grading & Course Credit Policies

The writing assignments for this course are designed to meet the minimum requirements of the University Writing Requirement credit. To satisfy this requirement, **every** assignment's word count must be fulfilled.

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. You must pass this course with a "C" or better to satisfy the General Education requirement for Composition (C) and to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). **A grade of "C-" will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

Grading Scale

A	4.0	94-100	940-1000	C	2.0	74-76	740-769
A-	3.67	90-93	900-939	C-	1.67	70-73	700-739
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	84-86	840-869	D	1.0	64-66	640-669
B-	2.67	80-83	800-839	D-	0.67	60-63	600-639
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

"A"- Excellent. A paper that demonstrates a clear understanding of critical concepts, addresses the subject matter, and exceeds expectations of critical analysis. A paper with this grade will also be free of grammatical errors.

"B"- Good. A paper that has met the standards of the assignment at a high level. It may need revision after receiving feedback but is a logical and solid piece of work. It may have a few grammatical errors but still readable.

"C"- Satisfactory/passing. A paper that has done the absolute minimum required. It likely needs revision in terms of critical analysis, conceptual engagement, etc.

"D"- Weak. This paper does not adequately fulfill the assignment to a satisfactory degree. One portion of an assignment may be missing or there may be a misused critical element. Papers with this grade tend to be disorganized and contain many grammatical errors.

"E"- Failing. This paper does not address the assignment prompt or is unreadable/incomplete.

Assignment Descriptions (Total Points Possible: 1000)

Reading Response (250 words each; 5 total; 200 points)

Students will be expected to write 5 reading responses on the assigned texts this semester. Students may choose which texts they would like to write on. A reading response attempts to tackle a “big idea” or theme of the chosen text and connect it to a wider context. While you should remain close to the text and cite specific textual evidence, these responses can be more personal and casual than other written assignments. A text may remind you of something else you’ve read or seen, something you’ve experienced, etc., and you are welcome to talk about those things in these responses.

Close Readings (250 words each; 5 total; 200 points)

Students will be expected to write 5 close readings on the assigned texts this semester. In contrast to the reading responses, these should be strictly academic. For this assignment, you will pick a specific passage/line/scene from one of our texts that you would like to close read. You will make an argument based on that passage and should be **hyper-specific** in terms of what you are looking at. More details will be available on Canvas.

Critical Thesis Proposals (500 words each; 3 total; 300 points)

Students will have 3 thesis proposals this semester following each unit—with the exception of the last unit. You will pick one text and form an argument. Rather than write a traditional paper, a thesis proposal is essentially the bare bones of a paper. It will have a thesis statement, topic sentences, passages used for evidence, and a conclusion. This process will help you recognize the key elements of a paper and learn how to write step by step.

Southern Culture Blogpost (500 words; 100 points)

Students will pick one element of Southern culture to write a short blogpost on. These posts can be on ANYTHING—swamp monsters, cornbread, Carrie Underwood, Budweiser commercials, college football, etc.—as long as it has to do with the South. The blogpost will help students write for a different kind of audience: the public. Blogs will be more casual in tone and utilize pictures.

Presentation (50 points)

After finishing the blogpost, students will give a short, 5-minute presentation on the topic of interest they chose.

Participation (100 points)

Participation is **crucial** to this course. Students are expected to complete the readings, show up to class, and contribute to conversation. Our class will be primarily discussion based, so please participate!

Final Literary Analysis Paper (1500 words, 250 points)

This assignment will ask students to combine close reading skills with critical concepts and academic research introduced in class or from the students' own research. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence. In addition to using the primary text as evidence, you will also use secondary, scholarly sources to help support your argument. Two scholarly sources are required. More details will be provided later in the semester.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

This schedule is only a guide and is subject to change.

Week 1	Unit 1: Getting started	Assignments
8/23	Syllabus and course overview	
8/25	Lecture: State Debates and Criteria	
Week 2	Unit 2: Race and the South	
8/28	Read before class: "On the Unbearable Whiteness of Mainstream, Canonical Southern Literature" Lecture: Slavery and the South	
8/30	*No class due to Hurricane	
9/1	Read before class: Folktales "Flowers" by Alice Walker"	
Week 3		
9/4	NO CLASS	Close reading/

		response due 9/5 at 11:59PM (either option)
9/6	Read before class: “A Red Record” by Ida B. Wells <i>Bayou Vol. 1</i> (up until “Tragedy on the Bayou” section)	
9/8	Read before class: “‘Impassioned,’ Coons, and Civic Ideals: A Black Comics Aesthetic” excerpt Finish <i>Bayou Vol. 1</i>	Close reading/ response due at 11:59PM
Week 4		
9/11	Read before class: Booker T. Washington’s 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech	
9/13	Read before class: Excerpt from Ralph Ellison’s <i>Invisible Man</i>	
9/15	Read before class: “A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, A Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon” by Gwendolyn Brooks”	Close reading/ response due at 11:59PM
Week 5		
9/18	Read before class: “Urban Themes in the American South” & “How Atlanta Became a City I Barely Recognize”	
9/20	Watch before class: <i>Hip-Hop Evolution</i> S3EP4: “The Dirty South” In class: “I’ll Be Around” by Cee-Lo Green and “Try That In A Small Town” by Jason Aldean	
9/22	Watch before class: Tyler Childers’ Message on Racism Listen before class: “Long Violent History” by Tyler Childers	Close reading/ response due at 11:59PM
Week 6		
Unit 3: Religion and the South		
9/25	Peer review day	Critical Thesis Proposal 1 due @ 11:59PM
9/27	Listen before class: Hymns, spirituals, Southern gospel songs Read before class: “Goat Hour Gospel (Such Salvage)”	
9/29	Read before class: “Religion and the US South” & “SNAKE HANDLING, STIGMATA AND TESTING GOD” & “The Snake Handler”	
Week 7		
10/2	Read before class: <i>Wise Blood</i> , ch. 1-3	
10/4	Read before class: <i>Wise Blood</i> , ch. 4-7	
10/6	NO CLASS	
Week 8		
10/9	NO CLASS	
10/11	Read before class: <i>Wise Blood</i> , ch. 8-END	
10/13	Read before class: “A Fondness for Supermarkets: <i>Wise Blood</i> and	Close reading/

	Consumer Culture” by Michael Kreyling	response due at 11:59PM
Week 9	Unit 4: The Industrial Ghost Towns of the Rural South	
10/16	Peer review day	
10/18	Read before class: check out theforgottensouth.com “F*ckface” by Leah Hampton	
10/20	NO CLASS – Mr. Jacob is at a conference (again)	Critical Thesis Proposal 2 due at 11:59PM Close reading/response due at 11:59PM
Week 10		
10/23	Read before class: <i>Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones</i> pt. 1 (ch. 1-11)	
10/25	Read before class: <i>Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones</i> ch. 12-16	
10/27	Read before class: <i>Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones</i> ch. 17-21	
Week 11		
10/30	Read before class: <i>Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones</i> ch. 22-29	
11/1	Read before class: <i>Break the Bodies, Haunt the Bones</i> ch. 30-END	Close reading/response due at 11:59PM
11/3	Peer review day	Critical Thesis Proposal 3 due 11/5 at 11:59PM
Week 12	Unit 4: Florida	
11/6	Read before class: “At the Round Earth’s Imagined Corners” by Lauren Groff & “The Alligator’s Gods” by Micah Dean Hicks	
11/8	Read before class: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> ch. 1-3	
11/10	NO CLASS	Close reading/response due at 11:59PM (either option)
Week 13		
11/13	Read before class: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> ch. 4-10	
11/15	Read before class: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> ch. 11-16	
11/17	Watch before class: <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> ch. 17-20	Close reading/response due at 11:59PM

		Southern Culture Blogpost due 11/21 at 11:59PM
Week 14	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS	
Week 15		
11/27	<i>Song of the South</i>	Close reading/ response due at 11:59PM
11/29	Presentations	
11/30	Presentations	
Week 16		
12/4	Peer review	
12/6	Last day of class – we will do something fun	Final Paper due 12/9 at 11:59PM

Course Policies

Attendance

Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you! Use your allotted absences wisely (for emergencies, major illnesses) as you would for any job. You will fail the course if you accrue **six** 50-minute absences. You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue **four** absences. Note that missing a double session counts as 2 absences.

Find a list of UF-approved excuses, and certified illnesses here for which alone a make-up option will be applicable (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>)

Please note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

Plagiarism. 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:

1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
2. 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 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/>.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location from which it came.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

We will be tackling some tough topics—please treat them with sensitivity.

In-Class Work

Active participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Writing workshops require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

Paper Maintenance Responsibilities

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

Mode of Submission

Papers and drafts are due at the beginning of class or online at the assigned deadline. Late papers will not be accepted. Failure of technology is not an excuse.

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents to Canvas. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.

Course Evaluations

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.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Writing Studio

The University Writing Studio is located in Turlington 2215 and is available to all UF students. Free appointments can be made up to twice a week. They are currently offering online appointments. See <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> to learn more.

Recording Policy

Class lectures may only be recorded for purposes defined by House Bill 233/Section 1004.097. A class lecture does not include academic exercises involving 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.

A recording of a class lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer. Publish is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing 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. A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet. 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.

Students with Disabilities

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 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: <http://umatter.ufl.edu>, umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273 (CARE)
Dean of Students: <https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall, (352) 392-1261
Counseling and Wellness Center: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 3190 Radio Road, (352) 392-1575
Field and Fork Pantry: <https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>, located near McCarty B, 352-294-2208
Student Health Care Center: <http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, multiple locations, (352) 392-1161