

A black cat with glowing yellow eyes is looking down at a keyboard and a book. The scene is dimly lit, with the cat's eyes being the primary light source. The keyboard is a vintage-style keyboard with round keys. The book is titled "Black Atlantic: Making the African Diaspora" by James Warren. The book cover features a photograph of a person in a red and yellow garment. The text "Black Atlantic" is written in large, bold, white letters, and "Making the African Diaspora" is written in smaller white letters below it. The author's name "James Warren" is written in red at the bottom of the cover.

WRITING ABOUT

ATLANTIC CROSSINGS

Black Atlantic
Making the African Diaspora

James Warren

Welcome to
ENC1145

Writing About

**ATLANTIC
CROSSINGS**

This syllabus is produced in order to provide you with an overview of “Writing About the Atlantic Crossings.” We will address the syllabus together in our first session in case of lack of clarity. Besides that, whenever you feel that you have a question that the syllabus does not answer, you are welcome to get in touch with me:
armin.niknam@ufl.edu

Instructor: Armin Niknam

Office: Turlington Hall, 4317

Office Hours: Mon 10:30, Thur 3:30

E-mail: armin.niknam@ufl.edu

Section: 3312

Meetings: MWF, Period 3 (9:35-10:25)

Location: Turlington Hall, B310

English Department - University of Florida
Turlington Hall
330 Newell Dr
Gainesville FL 32611
United States
<https://english.ufl.edu/>

Welcome to Writing About The Atlantic Crossings. I am thrilled to have you in this course and I know this will be really fun!

Course Description

This course is an attempt to embark on journeys alongside some of those who crossed the Atlantic Ocean, some in the early days of *modernity* where such a journey was rendered possible and some others in our days, some voluntarily and some involuntarily, some in real life and some in fiction, some to find new homes and some to return to what they - or their ancestors - called home. Not only does more than a quarter of the world population live on the various coasts of the Atlantic Ocean, but also the Atlantic Ocean and the trajectories that crisscross it have played a crucial role in helping shape the world we inhabit today.

It was by passing through the Atlantic that the European empires expanded their territories, people settled in new geographies, and new countries and languages came into existence. However, making this New

World was not an entirely innocent undertaking; it also relied on destruction. This course seeks to understand how *mobility* across the Atlantic Ocean altered lives, communities, worldviews, languages, politics, and geography.

Through reviewing works of literature across genres, periods, and styles, this course helps you gain insight into how and why people moved across the Atlantic, and how they dealt with moving. A lot of our readings have to do with traveling, migration, settling, and returning and we will conduct our reading in specific historical and social contexts.

This course helps you develop the critical skills of analysis and textual interpretation. You will also learn how formal and stylistic elements, as well as historical context, shape the meaning and significance of literature. By gaining a deeper insight into what you read, you become better readers of the worlds (YES! WORLDS!) that literature both represents and addresses. That is, it develops your ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand your own interactions with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

Course Objectives

What are we planning to do?

You will develop a broader cultural literacy and better understand the changing definition and role of literature in society.

Therefore, by the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works as well as the structures and conventions of literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analyses, while identifying formal and genre-related elements in the texts.

3. Critically assess the roles literature has played historically and continues to play in our experience.
4. Connect literary texts to their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts.

I am also looking forward to hearing from you in our first session what you want to learn throughout this semester and incorporate ways to reach those goals in our course.

General Education Objectives

- This course confers General Education credit for Composition (C), and 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.

Furthermore, at the end of this course, you should have achieved the following learning outcomes:

1. Content: demonstrating competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used relevant to English studies.

2. Communication: communicating knowledge, ideas, and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

3. Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

What will you need for this course (besides positive vibes)?

In order to follow the course readings, you are required to purchase the following complete texts in advance. I understand that some of you might already own some of these books in different editions. However, in case you don't, please use the ISBN to purchase the correct version of them:

- *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: or, Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, Modern Library Classics, ISBN: 9780375761157
- *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison, Vintage, ISBN: 9780307276766
- *The History of Mary Prince, Narrated by Herself*

- *The Hangman's Game* by Karen King-Aribisala, Pee-Pal Tree Press, ISBN: 9781845230463

This course also includes two movies that are available through the UF library or the most common streaming platforms:

- *Amistad* by Steven Spielberg
- *Atlantique* by Matti Diop

The course includes some short essays too which you will have access to through Canvas.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

T here are a number of key elements that impact your grade. Here is a list of each and every one of the things that you have to worry about (*This is a joke!*):

- Attendance and participation (50 points)
- Weekly discussion posts (100 points)
- Five response papers to texts (500 words each, 2500 words in total, 300 points)
 - Five Perusall Annotations (100 words each, 500 words, 50 points)
 - Two reflection papers (250 words each, 500 words in total, 50 points)
 - Library Tour Report (1000 words, 150 points)
 - Final paper (1500 words, 300 points)

• Attendance & Participation (50 points)

Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by class roll or sign-up sheet. Although it is essential to keep in mind that your presence is considered meaningful when you participate in our discussions. Those who contribute to the conversations get a better share of this element of the grade.

Each session will begin with a series of basic questions on the assigned readings. If you keep up with those readings, you can easily answer these questions and usher us into the actual discussion. Needless to say, this is a crucial component in your participation grade.

You will lose 1% from your final grade for every unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.

• Discussion Posts (100 points)

Based on the readings that we have for each session, you are given a number of prompts. Your job is to pick one of them and write a short response to it on the Discussion Board on Canvas. This is a weekly assignment and I understand that you also have other courses to attend; therefore, I am not setting a word limit or textual rubric for

it. You are not being asked to write a well-organized and authoritative essay. There is no right or wrong either! However, it must be relevant to what we are reading and must include clear textual references to it. Feel free to share whatever comes to your mind with everyone else. What you post on our discussion board will be the departure point for our conversations in the class. It would be a good idea for you to take a quick look at what other people have said about the readings and come to the sessions anticipating what we will be discussing.

• Five Response Papers: 500 words each, (300 points)

As a part of this course, you are required to write five short essays during the semester, each of them a minimum of 500 words, on our reading items. We will discuss our readings in our sessions and once we are done with them, you have to submit a response to our readings. You will find the deadline to submit each of these response papers on the course schedule. (See below)

On course schedule, there are sessions marked as Writing Clinic. During these sessions, we will go through how a good piece of writing should look like. There is also a writing rubric in the next section of the syllabus.

For these writings, you will also be getting written feedback. These assignments also help you with building your Critical Analysis Essay.

There are multiple texts and movies on our reading list and you need to choose five of them. I will be very happy if

you decide to write more. I will eliminate your lowest score(s) and the other five will form your grade from this section.

Using secondary sources for your response papers is not obligatory but I encourage you to do it in order for you to obtain the skills of searching and using secondary sources. These skills will come in handy when you want to write your final paper.

- **Five Perusall Annotations: 100 words each (50 points)**

Perusall is a tool which allows you to annotate short excerpts of our texts and do a close reading analysis. You can access Perusall through Canvas. During the semester, there will be five excerpts from our readings available for you to annotate and write your reflection on them.

The purpose of this assignment is to help you focus on the form of literary texts and rely on them in your analysis of them.

P.S.: In one of our Writing Clinic sessions, together we will go through how Perusall works.

- **Two Reflection Papers: 250 words each (50 points)**

Once in the middle of the semester and once towards the end, you are expected to write your thoughts about your performance, how the course is going, and what your expectations are.

- **Map Library Tour Report: 1000 words (150 points)**

One of the sessions is dedicated to a visit to the Library of Maps and Images, located on campus, inside the Smathers Library. It is an extraordinary and - very often - overlooked resource at UF. This visit is aimed at helping you get a better sense of the geography of the areas that you encounter in our readings and comes with a lecture from librarians and experts of the field. Once this visit is complete, you need to write a report of 1000 words about it. Your report needs to include a brief summary of our visits, some investigation into one of the localities of your choice and how it frames in the text which includes it.

- **Critical Analysis Essay: 1500 words, (300 points)**

For your critical analysis paper, you will need to choose an idea based on one - or more than one -source and write an analytical essay around it. This is where you to combine close reading skills with critical concepts, historical information, and theoretical framework. You are expected to produce a strong conceptual argument that is supported by secondary sources.

These papers will be graded on a percentage scale: 90-100, excellent; 80-89, good to very good; 70-79 average to good; 60-69, below average; below 60 is not a passing grade. All students, whatever your grade be, will have the option to rewrite the essay.

Writing Rubric

What to focus on when writing

There are a number of criteria that your writings should meet in order to obtain a satisfactory grade. Here are the important items in your writing:

Coherence (25%):

Your writings should be coherent. Every time you write an essay, you have a main argument that you decide to write about and you have some supporting ideas for it. When you are writing, you should move through your ideas smoothly and logically. Your supporting ideas should not contradict with one another, and they should be at the service of your main argument.

Language and Tone (25%):

When writing your comprehensive assignments, final paper prospectus, and critical analysis essay, you should use a language that fits the academic discussions. These assignments are very different from discussion posts on Canvas, or from when you are talking about your ideas in class. Therefore, the language that you use in them has to be compatible with their nature.

For your discussions and reflections, you can write your essay without the need for a specific language.

Vocabulary and Structure (25%):

Your writings in this class are considered as professional essays in literature. Therefore, you're required to use the appropriate terms that you will learn during our discussions in your writing. Moreover, your writings should follow the appropriate structure in English language. Make sure you read, and re-read, your assignments before submitting.

Textual References (25%):

Your writings should demonstrate your familiarity with the text about which you are writing. You need to prove that you have read the text thoroughly and are able to make references to it while you write in order to make your point.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

Makeup Policy:

Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), there will be no make-up option for missed exams or late assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged by email or in person prior to the expected absence. In case of illness, student should contact the instructor on his or her return to classes.

Cell phone policy:

You are expected to turn off your cell phones or to set them to “Do Not Disturb” mode as nobody wants to be disturbed or have their speech interrupted by someone else’s cell phone.

Late Policy:

Arriving late to the class disrupts the flow of conversations and also prevents you from being a part of it. Each time you are late, you lose 0.5% of your final participation grade.

Another point that matters when it comes to punctuality is when you submit your assignments in terms of deadlines. I understand how other courses that you are taking also affect your working schedule, so I strongly recommend that if you are not making it to our assignment deadlines, you should write to me so we can figure out how to make things work for you with minimum damage to your final grade. If I do not get anything from you - neither your work nor an explanation - by the submission deadline, you will lose the grade for that assignment.

Academic Honesty:

Everyone is 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, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

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 (<https://disability.ufl.edu>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources:

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

Online Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://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://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu>.

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

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, and how letter grades are considered in your GPA calculation see:

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

<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

SCHEDULE

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

1) **Introduction**

Week 1 - 3:

Introduction, Preliminary Readings

2) **Mapping the Atlantic**

Week 4 - 8:

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano

written by himself

3) **Coercion**

Week 8:

The History of Mary Prince narrated by herself

Amistad by Steven Spielberg

4) **Unmaking & Remaking:**

Week 8 - 11:

A Mercy by Toni Morrison

Atlantique by Matti Diop

5) **Return**

Week 12 - 14:

The Hangman's Game by Karen King-Aribisala (150-180)

Introduction	Week 1	08/23	Introducing the syllabus and discussing the course objectives	
	Week 2	08/26	History of Literature Atlantic Crossings (Lecture)	
		08/28	<i>Dangers of a Single Story</i> by C. N. Adichie (Ted Talk, available through Canvas)	
		08/30	<i>In History</i> by Jamaica Kincaid (essay available through Canvas)	
	Week 3	09/02	NO LABOR! Happy Labor Day!	
		09/04	Writing Clinic (1)	
		09/06	Politics of Literature Slave Narratives (Lecture)	
	Mapping the Atlantic	Week 4	09/09	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 1)
			09/11	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapters 2)
			09/13	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapters 3)
Week 5		09/16	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 4)	
		09/18	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 5)	
		09/20	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 6)	
Week 6			Perusall Annotation (1)	
		09/23	Writing Clinic (2)	
		09/25	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 7)	
Week 7		09/27	Maps and Images Library Tour	
	09/30	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 8-9)		
	10/02	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 10)		

Coercion	Week 8	10/04	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 11) Perusal Annotation (2)
		10/07	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapters 12)
	10/09	<i>Amistad</i> by Steven Spielberg	
	10/11	<i>The History of Mary Prince</i> Response Paper (1)	
Unmaking & Remaking	Week 9	10/14	Reflection Day (1)
		10/16	<i>A Mercy</i> by Toni Morrison (1-32)
	10/18	<i>A Mercy</i> by Toni Morrison (33-63) Perusal Annotation (3)	
	Week 10	10/21	<i>A Mercy</i> by Toni Morrison (64-95)
		10/23	<i>A Mercy</i> by Toni Morrison (96-128)
		10/25	<i>A Mercy</i> by Toni Morrison (129-165) Response Paper (2)
	Week 11	10/28	<i>The Myth of Pocahontas</i> by Heike Paul (essay available through Canvas)
		10/30	<i>Atlantique</i> by Matti Diop
		11/01	<i>Cross-Country: A Documentary in Ten Jump Cuts</i> by Michelle Cliff (essay available through Canvas) Perusal Annotation (4)
	Return	Week 12	11/04
11/06			Writing Clinic (3)
11/08			Writing Day Response Paper (3)
Week 13		11/11	NO CLASS

		11/13	<i>The Hangman's Game...</i> by Karen King-Aribisala (33-69)
		11/15	<i>The Hangman's Game...</i> by Karen King-Aribisala (73-107)
	Week 14	11/18	Perusal Annotation (5) <i>The Hangman's Game...</i> by Karen King-Aribisala (108-143)
		11/20	<i>The Hangman's Game...</i> by Karen King-Aribisala (144-159)
		11/22	<i>The Hangman's Game...</i> by Karen King-Aribisala (160-171)
Wrap-Up	Week 15		Response Paper (4) NO CLASS Happy Thanksgiving!
		Week 16	12/02
		12/04	Reflection Day (2) Response Paper (5)

FINAL PAPER DUE ON DECEMBER 12th

