



**Instructor:** Kaylee Lamb

**Time/Place:** 11:45-12:35 MATT 0113 Section 3318

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**Office hours:** Monday and Wednesday in Turlington 4415 (10:30-11:30 am)

ENC 1145: CONTAGION

*Only one form of contagion travels faster than a virus. And that's fear. —Dan Brown (Inferno)*

What does it mean to live in a society rife with “contagion?” How do our fears, whether they be real or imagined, influence our understanding of “contagion?” How do we define “social contagion” and what are its implications? These are just a few questions we will consider throughout our semester.

In today's day and age, the word “contagion” has more social and political meaning than ever before as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it remains imperative to understand how our conceptions of contagion have evolved over time, which can be seen through historical moments like the Black Death, the AIDS crisis, the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters, and COVID-19. Yet our understanding of contagion can also be seen through forms of pop culture, as illustrated by the rise in zombie and post-apocalypse films/books and our society's usage of the common phrase “going viral.” This course aims to explore our conceptions of contagion and unveil it as a deeply social phenomenon.

As this is a writing course, our goals will be to engage with both texts and film to aid in our understanding of “contagion.” Such works will include: excerpts from Daniel Defoe's *A Journal*

of *the Plague Year*, “The Masque of the Red Death,” by Edgar Allan Poe, *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy, *Severance* by Ling Ma, and *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline. Alongside these major works, we will do a film analysis of the movie *Contagion* and engage with 2-3 scholarly research articles.

For this course, students can expect three papers (‘Coming-To’ Paper, Film Analysis, Critical Research Paper), one 8–10-minute presentation, 6 discussion posts posted on Canvas of one’s choosing, and reading quizzes over our primary texts. We will engage in seminar-style discussions and group work throughout the course to foster engagement and active learning. Students will be expected to participate in in-class discussions and come to class having read the material beforehand.



### COVID Statement

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.uf](http://one.uf) 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.

### 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 requirements (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 Education 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.



**HB7:** 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.

**Required Texts:** *Severance* by Ling Ma, *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline (**All other texts indicated in the course description will be provided via Canvas Shell**)

**Assignments** (see below for Grading Rubric): 6,000-word requirement

#### **Essay 1: Coming-to Story**

After having read the novel, *The Marrow Thieves*, and critically analyzed many of the characters' 'Coming-to Story,' students will engage in their own 500-word 'Coming-to Story.' In our class discussions, we will have broken down the character's origins, struggles/traumas, turning points, and finally what has served as their anchor of hope in the apocalyptic world they live in. For this paper, students are asked to write a personal narrative that unveils their origins, their own struggles and/or turning point, how they came to UF/program, and lastly, what gives them hope for the future after having endured the Covid pandemic.

#### **Essay 2: Film Analysis**

Having watched the movie *Contagion* students will be required to write a 1,500-word film analysis. This is NOT a plot summary but is rather a critical piece of writing that chooses one type of film analysis (Semiotic, Narrative, Historical/Cultural, Mise-en-scène) to analyze the film through. The primary goal for this paper is to unveil the films hidden and overt meanings

through symbols, narrative structure, history, or compositional elements thus granting readers a deeper level of understanding for a film they may have watched passively from time to time.

### **Essay 3: Proposal and Critical Research Paper**

This will be a 2,500-word assignment. Before beginning the research paper, students will write a 500-word research proposal to better prepare them for the final paper and avoid something we are all guilty of—procrastination!



The critical research paper is 2,000 words and uses 5-6 scholarly sources from the UF database to unveil a topic surrounding contagion. A student's topic is not limited to medical illness/disease, pandemics, plagues, and other subjects commonly associated with contagion. Rather students are encouraged to consider social contagion (behavioral synchrony) and its interpersonal processes of imitation, conformity, universality, and mimicry. Potential topics surrounding social contagion can include: consumerist behavior, teenage pregnancy pacts, gang behavior, false confessions and accusations,

cyberbullying, fast fashion (Shein, Miss Guided, Romwe, Amazon), STAN accounts, Antifa, cults etc. This is an opportunity for students to critically engage with a topic they are interested in or have some knowledge about.

For this last assignment, there will also be an 8-10 minute presentation to introduce your classmates to your topic and research. Students will be able to use any platform they wish (Powerpoint, Google Slides, Visme, Prezi, Keynote etc.)

**DUE DATES:** OCT 3 (ESSAY 1), NOVEMBER 7 (ESSAY 2), NOVEMBER 28 (PAPER PROPOSAL), DECEMBER 10 (ESSAY 3)

### **Discussion Posts on Canvas (10%)**

Participation can be an easy way to maintain and/or advance your grade. Over the semester, students are required to submit **six** 250-word discussion posts with two questions over the reading material **the day before** the discussion. These will be submitted on Canvas so other students can view them before discussion and have ample time to think critically about what is being discussed and asked.

**Further Description and Example:** These discussion posts will begin with critical thinking (not reiterating the plot of the novel/story!). Students will likely focus on themes, figurative language, symbolism, how the piece connects with them currently, character development, the importance of setting or lack thereof, etc. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers, rather this will help open discussions for the class and allow for students to voice their own opinions in a safe setting. A



successful discussion post is reflective and analytical and incorporates direct quotes to substantiate one's opinion and analysis.

Example from Richard Matheson's *I Am Legend*: "The story of *I Am Legend* is highly unlikely, yet Matheson uses his tacit understanding of human nature to craft a psychologically realistic protagonist. It is striking that in the face of fierce attacks from the walking undead, Neville (the main protagonist) listens to music, puts works of art on his walls, and watches motion pictures on his home projector. As an author, Matheson no doubt intuitively understands the deep psychological need for art that probably everybody experiences: art is a human universal, essential to human nature. After a particularly violent attack on his house, Neville sets about fixing the broken generator and, significantly, putting up a mural on his living room wall, and then, when the mural is done, sits down to listen to Mozart...*I Am Legend* obviously extrapolates from the kind of anxieties that grow particularly well in the shadow of a mushroom cloud. The fear of nuclear and biological warfare looms over much of Matheson's nineteen-fifties work, and in *I Am Legend*, Neville and his wife speculate in a flashback on a possible relationship between nuclear bombings and the vampire virus, or rather, mutated insects as disease carriers.

**Questions:** What makes art, literature, and the humanities so essential to human nature? Does Neville's engagement with art keep him human? Why or why not?"

### Course Policies:

1. You **must** complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.  
*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/>)
2. Latecomers receive partial absences and must see me after class so I know you attended.
3. *Classroom behavior and etiquette:* Enrolling in this topics course you likely understand that many of the social/political issues that have arisen during Covid-19 will be areas of discussion, thus I require everyone to respect their peers' experiences while being attentive to them. Actively listening to one another and building off each other's ideas will help promote our classroom as a safe space.
4. *UF's policy on Sexual Harassment:* The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
5. *Paper Format & Submission:* All major essays must be written with MLA 8 formatting and will be submitted via Canvas shell.
6. *Late Papers/Assignments:* If an emergency/illness arises (whether for you or your family) notify me immediately. I can only give an extension 24 hrs. in advance, however, if no communication is given an automatic letter grade will be deducted daily until the paper is

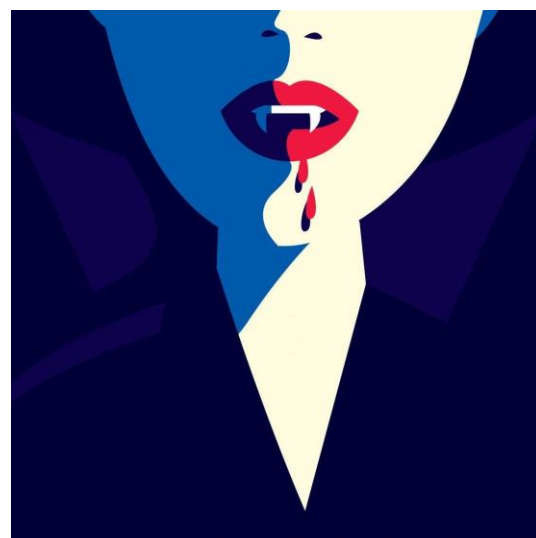
turned in. Above all, communicating with me is essential for any problems you may be having with the course.

7. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
8. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: “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.’”

What is plagiarism? Definitions are included below:

A Student must not represent as the Student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
  - b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
  - c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
  - d. 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.>
9. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/> ), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.
  10. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF’s Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
  11. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
  12. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Please contact Ms. Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu) Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
  13. *Course Evaluations.* Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the



semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online:  
<https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>

14. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. 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.)

Assignments	Words	Percentages
Attendance, Participation, Free Writing	NA	15%
6 Discussion Posts	1,500 (250 WORDS EACH)	10%
Essay 1	500	15%
Essay 2	1,500	20%
Essay 3	2,000	20%
Purpose Statement	500	10%
Presentation	NA	10%

## SYLLABUS (Tentative)

### Week 1

Wednesday, August 24

Syllabus

Homework: Collage Assignment

Friday, August 26

Homework: “Mask of the Red Death” Edgar Allan Poe

PDF: [The Masque of the Red Death.pdf \(asu.edu\)](#) (6pgs)

### Week 2

Monday, August 29

Free-Writing and Discussion

MLA 8 session

Homework: [Sick Party! - JSTOR Daily](#)

Wednesday, August 31

[Mentor passages | College Writing Clinic](#) / Design Your Contagion Party

Friday, September 2

[2020: The Year That Revealed Us \(Documentary\) | USA TODAY - YouTube](#)

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline Ch. 1-3 (41 pgs)

### Week 3

September 5 NO CLASS

Wednesday, September 7

Free Writing 5 minutes

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 4-6 (42-79)

Friday, September 9

Discussion

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 7- 10 (80-107)

#### **Week 4**

Monday, September 12

Intro to Researching and Discussion

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 11-13 (108-129)

Wednesday, September 14

Discussion

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 14-17 (130-160)

Friday, September 16

Discussion

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 18-20 (161-183)

#### **Week 5**

Monday, September 19

Discussion

Homework: *The Marrow Thieves* Ch. 21-23 (184-211)

Wednesday, September 21

Discussion / Intro Essay 1

Homework: Finish *The Marrow Thieves* and Drafting

Friday, September 23

Free Writing 5 min

Discussion

Homework: Drafting

#### **Week 6**



Monday, September 26  
Example Activity (Hamlet Student Paper)

Wednesday, September 28  
Peer Review

Friday, September 30  
In-class Workshopping  
Homework: Finish Essay

### **Week 7**

Monday, October 3 **Essay 1 Due**  
Free Writing (5 minutes)  
Homework: *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (1-15 pgs)  
[the road - text.pdf \(weebly.com\)](#)

Wednesday, October 5  
Discussion  
Homework: *The Road* by Cormac McCarthy (16-51 pgs)

Friday, October 7 NO CLASS

### **Week 8**

Monday, October 10  
Discussion  
Homework: *The Road* (52- 65 pgs)

Wednesday, October 12  
Discussion  
Homework: *The Road* (66-80)

Friday, October 14  
Discussion  
Introduction to Essay 2: Film Analysis  
Homework: Finish *The Road*

### **Week 9**

Monday, October 17  
Free Writing (5 min)  
Examples of Film Analysis and Intro to Essay 2

Wednesday, October 19  
*Contagion*

Friday, October 21  
*Contagion*



**Week 10**

Monday, October 24

*Contagion* (Finish Film)

Discussion

Free Writing

Wednesday, October 26

[Recognizing awkward sentences | College Writing Clinic](#)

Friday, October 28

[Active vs. Passive Voice | Grammar Lessons - YouTube](#)

Zombie Lesson

**Week 11**Monday, October 31 **Halloween!**

In-class workshop



Wednesday, November 2

Peer Review

Homework: Begin Completing Essay 2

Friday, November 4

[Commas: when to use them and where to put them | College Writing Clinic](#)

Homework: Essay 2 Due Nov 7

**Week 12**

Monday, November 7

Essay 2 DUE

Free Writing

Homework: *Severance* by La Ming Chapters 1-3 (57 pgs)

Wednesday, November 9

Discussion

Intro to Essay 3 and Paper Proposal

Homework: *Severance* Chapters 4-7 (58-98 pgs) Begin Researching Topic

Friday, November 11 NO CLASS

**Week 13**

Monday, November 14

Discussion and Research Tips and Tricks

Homework: *Severance* Chapters 8-12 (99-147)

Wednesday, November 16  
 Discussion and Paper Proposal Examples  
 Homework: *Severance* Chapters 13-16 (148-190)

Friday, November 18  
 Discussion and Research Clarity  
 Homework: *Severance* Chapters 17-19 (191-231)

### **Week 14**

Monday, November 21  
 Discussion and Presentation Sign-up  
 Homework: Finish *Severance* and Begin Paper Proposal **DUE 28**

November 23 NO CLASS  
 November 25 NO CLASS

### **Week 15**

Monday, November 28  
 Due Paper Proposal  
 Workshopping

Wednesday, November 30  
 Presentations  
 Peer Review

Friday, December 2  
 Presentations  
 Course Evals

### **Week 16**

Monday, December 5  
 Presentations

Wednesday, December 7  
 Free Writing  
 Contagion Jeopardy Extra Credit  
 Last Day! Essay 3 Due December 10

### Grading Rubric

A+ to A (100 to 94): **Excellent**

The paper that receives an A+ or A combines a solid grasp of the material with a spark of originality, thereby offering a unique insight into the materials of the course.

A paper receiving one of these grades not only has no defects in grammar and punctuation—it "sings." It is a pleasure to read. The paper makes an original contribution to the subject matter

that is substantive and thoughtful. The thesis is clearly stated, and the supporting evidence is presented logically and coherently with the writer's own voice remaining at the forefront throughout.

#### A- to B+ (93-89): Very Good

The paper that receives an A- or B+ gives evidence of a strong grasp of the material of the course. A paper receiving this grade has almost no defects in grammar or punctuation; the thesis is written well, and the supporting evidence is presented in a logical, coherent manner. It has all of the virtues of the A or A+ paper, but may have awkward transitional statements and/or wonky paragraph structure.

#### B to B- (88-80): Good

The paper that receives a B or B- indicates a good grasp of the material of the course. A paper receiving this grade has few defects in grammar or punctuation; those few that do appear are not major, but they are significant enough to indicate a certain lack of care or ability. The paper does have a recognizable thesis, but it lacks distinction or comprehensiveness. Frequently the problem lies in a failure to recognize the full implications of the thesis. Often there are related difficulties in arranging and presenting evidence; however, these problems are not severe enough to undermine the argument of the paper. Transitional statements and paragraph structure could be improved to help with clarity.

#### C+ to C- (79-70): Satisfactory

The paper that receives a grade in this range demonstrates an understanding of the coursework but fails to present the larger meanings of the material. Papers receiving a C-range grade usually have an incomplete thesis in which important complicating factors have not been acknowledged or have been inadequately discussed. The paper has clear defects in grammar and punctuation, some serious, but not so severe as to hinder communication. Evidence is presented in a basic manner, but with not enough engagement; transitions are frequently pro forma (or incomplete); the failure to recognize the implications of some statements may lead to contradictory assertions. (These problems are more severe in the C- paper than in the C+ paper.) The ratio between plot summary and analysis sometimes tips threateningly toward plot summary, but not so completely as to give the impression that the writer is avoiding real thought.

#### D+ to D- (69-60): Poor

The paper that receives a D-range grade barely rises to a basic grasp of course material. A paper receiving such a grade often reproduces the "highlights" of class discussion without demonstrating a clear understanding of what makes the material important; a frequent result of this problem is the "non-thesis thesis"—otherwise stating the obvious to the point of bordering on a summary. There are significant and/or repetitive defects in grammar and punctuation, some serious enough to render passages incomprehensible. Plot summary prevails over-analysis and the writer's own voice is lost in the material. Transitions are absent or inadequate.

#### F (0): Failing

A paper will receive a failing grade if: 1) it has no thesis; 2) its thesis results from a misreading of the topic; 3) it contains serious misinterpretations or misrepresentations of textual fact; 4) it

has significant and persistent errors in grammar and punctuation. The paper does not fulfill any of the standard requirements as indicated in the paper rubrics (below word requirement, no sources, no works cited page, no MLA 8 formatting, etc.) Other circumstances warranting an F: failing to hand in an assignment; handing in an assignment one week past the due date without having arranged in advance for an extension; not having the correct word count.

