

IDS 2935: 1950s Domesticity and UF Life

Professor M. Bryant

Class #12854

Section 1IB1

(Spring 2025)

Our class meets on Tuesdays per. 4 and Thursdays per. 4-5 in TUR 2305

*If unforeseen circumstances require a remote meeting, use the Zoom Link on Canvas.

Office Hours: Thursdays 1:30-3:00 in TUR 4221 + by individual appointment (office or Zoom)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

How would your life change if you lived during the American 1950s, and how would that shape your UF experience? Our interdisciplinary course will explore this question through a lively sampling from literary and popular culture, along with archival material of UF student life in the 1950s. The course draws perspectives from the fields of cultural studies, film studies, gender studies, history, and literary studies. We will consider key cultural dynamics through which domesticity shaped American life, including consumerism, gender roles, the nuclear family, the rise of suburbia, the Civil Rights movement, and the Cold War. Our writers will include John Cheever, Sloan Wilson, Flannery O'Connor, Gwendolyn Brooks, James Baldwin, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell, Anne Sexton, and Sylvia Plath. We'll look at 1950s print advertising, classic family sitcoms (*Ozzie and Harriet*, *Father Knows Best*, *Leave It to Beaver*), and the iconic teen rebellion film *Rebel Without a Cause*. In the University Archives we'll explore student magazines, yearbooks, and other materials to get a sense of how your UF predecessors experienced our campus in the 1950s. Our course fits the Quest theme *Identities* by exploring how new understandings of domesticity shaped individual, household, and national identities in postwar America.

This course neither promotes nor compels a particular feeling, perception, viewpoint, or belief.

Instructional materials for this course consist of only those materials specifically reviewed, selected, and assigned by the instructor. The instructor is only responsible for these instructional materials.

QUEST & GENERAL EDUCATION CREDITS

- Quest 1
- Humanities
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

QUEST 1 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Quest 1 courses are multidisciplinary explorations of essential questions about the human condition that are not easy to answer, but also not easy to ignore: What makes life worth living? What makes a society a fair one? How do we manage conflicts? Who are we in relation to other people or to the natural world? Quest 1 students grapple with the kinds of open-ended, and complex intellectual challenges they will face as critical, creative, and self-reflective adults navigating a complex and interconnected world. They apply approaches from the humanities to mine works for evidence, create arguments, and articulate ideas.

COURSE GOALS

- Students will be able to identify key cultural factors that shaped U.S. domesticity in the 1950s.
- Students will be able to compare their UF experience to campus culture in the 1950s.
- Students will develop hands-on research skills through engaging materials from University Archives that depict campus life in the 1950s.
- Students will hone close reading strategies for interpreting fiction, poetry, advertising, film, television, and critical essays.
- Students will improve their argumentative writing skills in response to instructor feedback.

QUEST & GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) learning outcomes as follows:

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyze information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond.*

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS

Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (novel; New York: Da Capo, 2002)

Sylvia Plath, *The Bell Jar* (novel; New York: Harper Perennial, 2005)

- All other readings/viewings are linked to Canvas (essays, films, poems, short stories, television shows)

WHAT DETERMINES YOUR COURSE GRADE

Class Participation - 100 pts.

4 Discussion Posts - 10 pts. each

6 Perusall Annotations - 10 pts. each

2 Worksheets - 50 pts. each

1 750-word WR Paper (Ad Analysis) - 225 pts.

1 1250-word WR Paper (Reflection & Synthesis) – 300 pts.

Group Work on UF Archive Materials (Worksheet, Presentation) - 175 pts.

Total: 1000 pts.

- Assignment details + Rubrics in Canvas

POLICIES

1. You must *complete all assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Like all lecture-discussion courses, this one needs you. Life happens, so everyone has 2 allotted absences this semester without penalty. Use them wisely (for emergencies, illness). You will earn a lowered course grade if you accrue 4 unexcused absences, and you will fail the course if you accrue 6 unexcused absences (3 weeks of the semester). If you have a medical condition/emergency that will use up more than your allotted absences, you should contact me about a possible accommodation. Providing *documentation* will protect you should you need a long extension, a medical withdrawal or equivalent. For other circumstances, this course follows [UF Attendance Policies](#).
3. Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center](#). It is important that students share their accommodation letter with their instructors and discuss accessibility issues as early in the semester as possible. DRC phone # is 352-392-8565. Note that I have an ADA accommodation for no hybrid teaching.
4. *Latecomers* receive partial absences.
5. *Class Participation*: Learning to participate effectively and to move our conversation forward will help you understand the material and develop professional communication skills. If you're shy about offering opinions, try asking questions. Remember that if you are confused about a text, others are, too. (Note that our course also includes credit for Digital Participation.)
6. *Netiquette*. While our course communications needn't be formal, *they must always be professional*. This includes respecting diversity in race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, sexuality, and ability. Inappropriate communications in class, office hours, on email or in digital assignments (Annotations, Discussion Posts). violate this rule. Remember: your emails and other communications through UF are public records.
7. *Social Media Policy*. Let us be respectful of one another on social media as well as in our course communications. I often post about my teaching, and it's always something positive. I never describe or name my students on social media. On my blog I only share (and credit) student's work by permission. Whether in person or online, we are a community.
8. *Paper Format for Canvas submissions*: Please put your name & email address on the front page of your paper and number your pages. Use a 12 point font, 1-inch margins, and double spacing. Grammatical errors will cost you, so proofread (good practice for preparing job market materials).
9. *Late Paper Submission*. Late papers and other assignments earn grade reductions. Work submitted over a week late will earn an E *unless* you have an extension. (Note Canvas will be Canvas and late-stamp submissions even if I've given you an extension. Just ignore that.)
10. *Save That Assignment!* Always make backup copies of your work for your records.
11. *UF's policy on Harassment*: UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. Read the policy [here](#).
12. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*. Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the [Student Honor Code](#). Plagiarism and other violations of academic integrity outlined in *The Orange Book* will be penalized, and may involve failure of an assignment or the course. (see also AI statement below)

13. *The Writing Studio* is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.
14. Students who face difficulties completing the course and need counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus [Counseling and Wellness Center](#): (352) 392-1575. Other useful numbers: University Police Department (392-1111) or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
15. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
16. *Course Evaluations*. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course through GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>.

About In-Class Recordings

Note that this course format includes discussion and student presentations; it is not a lecture course.

Student participation in discussion counts toward the course grade.

UF 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 does not include academic exercises involving student participation.* 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 such as uploading or posting, 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.

About AI and Course Assignments

Note that UF’s definition of plagiarism now includes Entities (such as AI) on p. 14, #5. *If detection software picks up AI-generated or AI-assisted sentences in your Papers, I will consult with you about the findings. You may need to rewrite all or part of that assignment.*

What If You’re Sick?

In response to COVID-19, UF made these recommendations 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. This class continues these general campus guidelines:

- 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.
- 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 SCHEDULE OVERVIEW (see Canvas Modules for details)

Dates	Mod.	Topic	Due
1.14 & 1.16	1	<i>Fifties Frameworks</i> chapter from <i>Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era</i> ; episode of <i>Leave It to Beaver</i>	Syllabus Quiz Discussion Post 1
1.21 & 1.23	2	<i>Nuclear Family Fictions</i> stories by John Cheever	Annotation 1
1.28 & 1.30	3	<i>Sitcom Families</i> chapter from <i>Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era</i> ; episodes of <i>Ozzie & Harriet</i> , <i>Father Knows Best</i> & <i>Leave It to Beaver</i>	Sitcom Worksheet
2.4 & 2.6	4	<i>Organization Men</i> begin Sloan Wilson's novel <i>The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit</i>	Annotation 2
2.11 & 2.13	5	<i>Organization Men 2</i> continue & wrap <i>The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit</i>	Discussion Post 2
2.18 & 2.20	6	<i>Rural Domesticity</i> stories by Flannery O'Connor (Digital Tuesday, F2F Thursday)	Discussion Post 3
2.25 & 2.27	7	<i>Segregation & Resistance</i> essay by James Baldwin; poems by Gwendolyn Brooks	Annotation 3 Ad Analysis Paper
3.4 & 3.6	8	<i>Campus Coeds</i> 1955 digital UF Yearbook; Library visit to explore University Archives	Annotation 4
3.11 & 3.13	9	<i>Campus Coeds 2</i> <i>Ozzie & Harriet</i> episode + educational film on teen culture; Library visit to explore University Archives	Archive Worksheet
3.17-21	10	<i>Spring Break!</i>	
3.25 & 3.27	11	<i>Family Secrets</i> Poems by Allen Ginsberg, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath & Anne Sexton; <i>Rebel Without a Cause</i>	Annotation 5
4.1 & 4.3	12	<i>Campus Coeds 3</i> begin Sylvia Plath's novel <i>The Bell Jar</i> ; Library visit to work with your Presentation Groups	Annotation 6
4.8 & 4.10	13	<i>Feminine Mystiques</i> <i>The Bell Jar</i> ; educational film on childbirth	Discussion Post 4 Submit Group Presentation Worksheet & Slides
4.15 & 4.17	14	<i>Presenting 1950s UF Life</i>	Group Presentations
4.22	15	<i>Reframing the Fifties</i>	Group Presentations Course Wrap & Cookies

Writing Assessment Rubric and Statements (*Rubrics for individual Assignments on Canvas*)

- The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.
- The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback before the end of the course on all of the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.
- WR course grades have two components. 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.