

LIT 2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE, FALL 2020

LIT 2000: Introduction to Literature (Class #16566, Section #19CC)

Instructor: Megan Fowler
Email: mjfowler@ufl.edu
University of Florida

MWF Period 5
Office: Zoom
Office hours: MW Period 6 and by
appointment

This course examines the unique and changing role literature has played in individuals' lives and in society. It is centered on three deceptively simple questions: What is literature? Why do we write literature? And why do we read literature? It introduces students to a range of literary genres, from different countries and historical periods.

Among the primary aims of this course is to help students develop the critical skill of analysis and interpretation. Students will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical context shape the meaning and significance of literature. By becoming more skillful readers of literature and its contexts, students become better readers of the worlds that literature addresses, develop their ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand their own interactions with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

COVID-19 Statement: In light of the continuing impacts of COVID-19, this course will be offered entirely through online course sessions. This class will include a combination of synchronous and asynchronous sessions, which are specified on the schedule below. Synchronous meetings will be held on Zoom. We will meet synchronously on Zoom every Friday, during periods 3-5. Outside of class time, you are responsible for completing readings, responses, and your own creative work. Our classes will rely heavily on discussion which, I hope, will help to bridge some of the gap between our computer screens. Please be sure to download Zoom on your personal computer before the start of the class and familiarize yourself with how it works. I will send instructions to the class via email about how to join our Zoom meetings.

If you as an individual have any COVID-related hardships which may obstruct your performance in this class, please communicate with me as well as making use of all UF resources available to you. We can then assemble a plan to help you complete the class and fulfill all requirements in the way most beneficial for you.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

In addition to gaining a deeper appreciation of the expressive potential of language and the varieties of literature, students will develop a broader cultural literacy and an understanding of

the changing definition and role of literature in society.

Therefore, by the conclusion of the course it is expected that students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works and the structures and conventions of different literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analysis, while identifying and interpreting formal and genre-related elements in the texts.
3. Critically assess the variety of roles that literature has played historically and continues to play in the human experience.
4. Draw connections between literary texts and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and reading.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Students should purchase the following texts

- Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*
- Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
- Gene Luen Yang, *American-Born Chinese*
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

The following texts will be available through Canvas

- Homer, *Iliad*, Book XVI and XXIV
- Seamus Heaney, "Digging," "Punishment," "Blackberry Picking," and "Death of a Naturalist"
- Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself"
- Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"
- James Baldwin, *Notes from a Native Son* (selections)
- Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (selections)
- Salman Rushdie, *East, West: Stories* (selections)

ASSIGNMENTS

Brief Responses (200 points; 20% of grade; 1500+ words total)

Analytical responses to class materials. Students will write **5** posts of **300+ words each** to be uploaded to Canvas. Responses should thoroughly analyze the reading materials and make an argumentative claim with supporting evidence. Though short, these assignments should show the same detail of thought and professional tone demonstrated throughout the course.

Close Reading Assignment (150 points; 15% of grade; 750+ words)

This assignment will test student skills in close reading, especially as that skill pertains to works of poetry and short fiction. Students will be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through a close reading. No outside sources may be used for this assignment. The final close reading must be **750+ words**.

Critical Analysis Essay (250 points; 25% of grade; 1000+words)

This assignment asks students to combine close reading skills with critical concepts or historical information introduced in one of the supplemental readings. The goal is for students to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence. The final critical analysis essay must be **1000+ words**.

Comparative Essay (300 points; 30% of grade; 1500+ words)

To practice their synthesizing skills, students will analyze and compare two or more of the texts examined in class, bringing them into conversation with each other. Essays should include an innovative thesis which makes unique connections between the given texts. Papers should include close readings and textual evidence to support the student's claims. The final comparative essay must be **1500+ words**.

Attendance and Participation (100 points; 10% of grade)

This will include attendance, class discussion, in class activities, peer reviews/beta responses, etc.

COURSE POLICIES

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance*: Missing six or more classes will result in automatic failure of the course.

Exemptions from this policy include:

- University-sponsored events, such as athletics and band
- Religious holidays
- Medical or family emergencies

In each of these instances, students must provide appropriate documentation. In addition, three tardies (of five or more minutes late) will result in one absence. For information on UF attendance policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

3. *Paper Format & Submission*: All assignments must be MLA style and will be submitted to Canvas (or otherwise specified platform) by 11:59 pm on the due date.
4. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Late papers and assignments will not be accepted for credit. If a student finds that they will not be able to complete an assignment on time, they should consult with the instructor BEFORE that assignment is due.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*: Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over. No late work will be accepted.
6. *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: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.

7. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
8. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
9. *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 (cblount@ufl.edu). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
10. *Course Evaluations*: Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
11. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>
12. *Classroom Conduct*: Students come from diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. All class participants will be required to treat differing ideas with respect. Disrespectful behavior toward the instructor or peers may result in dismissal from class and an absence for the day.
13. *Tech Policy*: Recreational use of cell phones, computers, and other devices (including texting, posting to social media, or web surfing) will not be permitted. Use of technology will be permitted for classroom activities only. Failure to comply may result in dismissal from class and a subsequent absence for the day.
14. *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: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>
15. Policy on environmental sustainability. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing electronic editions of assigned texts when they are available or used copies of print texts. 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.)

COURSE SCHEDULE

*This schedule is subject to change throughout the semester. Please be sure to regularly consult the syllabus posted on Canvas.

Date	Reading Material	Due
UNIT 1: WHAT IS LITERATURE?		

Week 1-Introduction/Drama		
M 8/31	Introduction to Course	
W 9/2	“Introduction: What is literature?,” Terry Eagleton, <i>Literary Theory: An Introduction</i> (1983), pp. 1-15 King, “I have a dream” speech Text and audio: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihaveadream.htm	
F 9/4	Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	
Week 2-Epic		
M 9/7	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY	
W 9/9	Shakespeare, <i>The Merchant of Venice</i>	
F 9/11	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> Book XVI	
Week 3-Poetry		
M 9/14	Homer, <i>Iliad</i> Book XXIV	
W 9/16	NO ZOOM Seamus Heaney, "Digging" and "Punishment"	Brief Response #1
F 9/18	Seamus Heaney, "Blueberry Picking" and "Death of a Naturalist"	
Week 4-Short Story		
M 9/21	Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (excerpts)	
W 9/23	NO ZOOM Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”	
F 9/25	Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”	
Week 5-Short Story		
M 9/28	Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”	

W 9/30	Close Reading Peer Review	Close Reading Assignment
F 10/2	NO CLASS: HOMECOMING	
UNIT 2: WHY DO WE WRITE?		
Week 6-Self-Expression/Self-Construction		
M 10/5	Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>	
W 10/7	NO ZOOM Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>	
F 10/9	Primo Levi, <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>	
Week 7-Worldmaking (Cosmopoeisis)		
M 10/12	NO ZOOM James Baldwin, <i>Notes of a Native Son</i>	
W 10/14	James Baldwin, <i>Notes of a Native Son</i>	Brief Response #2
F 10/16	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
Week 8-Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction		
M 10/19	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
W 10/21	NO ZOOM Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
F 10/23	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
Week 9-Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction		
M 10/26	NO ZOOM Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
W 10/28	Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i>	
F 10/30	Critical Analysis Essay Peer Review	Critical Analysis Essay
UNIT 3: WHY DO WE READ?		
Week 10-Exploration & Discovery		
M 11/2	NO ZOOM Cervantes, <i>Don Quijote</i>	

W 11/4	Cervantes, <i>Don Quijote</i>	
F 11/6	Scott McCloud, <i>Understanding Comics</i> (excerpts)	
Week 11-Moving Beyond the Self		
M 11/9	Gene Luen Yang, <i>American-Born Chinese</i>	
W 11/11	NO CLASS: VETERAN'S DAY	
F 11/13	Gene Luen Yang, <i>American-Born Chinese</i>	
Week 12-Finding New Selves		
M 11/16	Gene Luen Yang, <i>American-Born Chinese</i>	
W 11/18	NO ZOOM Salman Rushdie, <i>East, West: Stories</i>	Brief Response #3
F 11/20	Salman Rushdie, <i>East, West: Stories</i>	
Week 13-Finding New Selves		
M 11/23	Salman Rushdie, <i>East, West: Stories</i>	
11/25-27	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 14-New Ways of Seeing		
M 11/30	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>	
W 12/2	NO ZOOM Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>	Brief Response #4
F 12/4	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>	
Week 15		
M 12/7	Does Great Literature Make Us Better? Gregory Currie. http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/?_r=0	
W 12/9	Comparative Essay Peer Review	

GRADING

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	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

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found here:

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

Rubric

An “A” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a high quality level and demonstrates creativity and innovation. Work is complete and well organized, and moves beyond the expectations of the assignment. Work displays a thorough understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment critically engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates a clear and logical rationality. Work is relatively free of error.

A “B” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet at a proficient level. Work is complete and reasonably organized. Work displays an adequate understanding of the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment engages with the concepts of the course and demonstrates some logical rationale. Work may contain a few errors or require minor revisions.

A “C” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. Work is complete, but somewhat disorganized. Work attempts to engage with the stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment attempts to engage with the concepts of the course but fails to demonstrate a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant revisions.

A “D” assignment satisfies the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet a poor quality level. Work is disorganized to the point of feeling incomplete. Work fails to engage with the

stylistic conventions of its genre. Assignment fails to engage with concepts of the course and lacks a clear rationale. Work contains errors and requires significant and even complete revision.

An “E” is primarily reserved for work that is incomplete or has not been turned in on time. Assignments at this level fail to meet the requirements laid out by the assignment sheet. However, work that is incoherent, shoddy, or shows a lack of understanding of the assignment may also receive a failing grade.