



LIT2000: Introduction to Literature

Fall 2023

Instructor: Maryam Khorasani

Class No.: B310

Section No.: 1A24

Meeting Time: MWF Period 3 (9:35-10:25 am)

Office Hours: Fridays 11-1 PM, or by appointment

Office Location: TUR 4351

Course Website: Canvas

Instructor Email: ma.khorasani@ufl.edu

Course Description

This course examines the unique and changing roles literature has played in individuals' lives and 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 you to a range of literary genres, from different countries and historical periods.

This course helps you develop the critical skill of textual interpretation. You will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical context shape the meaning and significance of literature. By becoming better readers of literature and its contexts, you become better readers of the worlds that literature addresses. That is, you develop your ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand your own interactions with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

Course Objectives

In addition to gaining a deeper appreciation of the expressive potential of language, you will better understand the changing roles and uses of literature in society.

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

1. Demonstrate knowledge of specific literary works as well as the structures and conventions of literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical analyses of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation, while identifying formal and genre-related elements in the texts.
3. Critically assess the roles literature has played historically and continues to play in the human experience.
4. Connect literary texts to their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts.

General Education Designation

This course fulfills three credit hours of Humanities (H) requirements. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. You will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases, and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Assignments

- Attendance and Participation (15%)
- One Brief Response Posted on Canvas (10%)
- Close Reading Assignment (25%)
- Baldwin Visit Project (25%)
- Critical Analysis Paper (25%)

Attendance and Participation

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be monitored by class roll or sign-up sheet. Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligations, and the twelve-day rule. Reasons for excused absences must be communicated with me ahead of time, or within three days afterward in case of unexpected events. After three unexcused absences, each subsequent unexcused absence will result in a letter-grade deduction from your final grade (4 absences: 5% off final course grade, 5 absences: 10% off final course grade). Six unexcused absences will result in the automatic failure of the overall course. For the official University policy on absences, please refer to:

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

Participation: You are expected to review the assigned readings before class. Each week will begin with a series of fundamental questions on the contents and the analysis of the assigned readings. The answers you give to these questions, consistent participation in class discussions, and demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will contribute to this portion of the final grade.

One Brief Response Posted on Canvas (300-500 words)

Starting from week five, each student is required to write a brief (300-500 words) response to one of the readings. These responses are due by 11:59 PM on the night before class. I will assign each student their reading on week three and will provide more instructions about expectations for the format and the content of those responses. I also highly encourage you to read your peers' responses before each class as you are expected to draw on textual evidence to support or challenge the response's main argument as part of your class participation.

Close Reading Assignment (600-750 words)

During week six I will introduce you to a method for literary text analysis known as close reading. After learning about close-reading strategies, we are going to work together to apply those methods to short fiction and poetry in the form of a brief close-reading workshop. You should then start

working on your assignments individually and turn them in by October 4th. I will go through the assignments and provide general and personalized feedback, which you should take into account as you start working on your critical analysis paper.

The Close Reading Assignment is due by 11:59 PM on October 4th.

Baldwin Visit Project

A week after studying the historical and moral significance of fables and fairy tales, we will visit [The Baldwin Library of Historical Children's Literature](#) to learn more about different versions of selected stories in *Aesop's Fables* and *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. We are going to look at different editions of the collections as well as picture books based on individual fables and fairy tales. I encourage you to write down your observations and take pictures of the book pages you find engaging as you are required to submit a report in the form of a paper or creative project after the visit. When putting together your projects, I would like you to think of them as educational tools for people who have never visited the Baldwin. Your reports should be centered on these main questions:

- What are the main differences between the earlier and the more recent versions of the fables and fairy tales?
- What has remained constant?
- Have the illustrations undergone any significant changes throughout history?
- What do the formats and the illustrations of the books tell us about the differences between fables and fairy tales?
- Are the illustrations in accord with the “spirit” of the fable/fairy tale?

Your reports should be submitted in one of the following formats:

- Paper (700-1000 words)
- Video Essay
- Podcast Episode
- Picture Book
- Comic
- Zine

If you decide to make a video essay, you can think of it as a brief virtual tour that combines images of the book pages with your commentary and analysis on them. If you are making a podcast

episode, please note that it should be more than simply recording your voice as it also needs to contain a proper introduction and conclusion, sound effects, background music, etc. Picture books should combine illustrations and text to convey what you have learned from engaging with the books in the Baldwin. For a comic, you can create an illustrated narrative in a panel format and use dialogues, captions, and information boxes to incorporate your commentary and analysis about the visit. If you decide to do a zine, you can include a mix of illustrations, pictures of the book pages, and text to highlight your observations. I will provide more detailed instructions about the projects before our visit. All projects should have a Works Cited section. For creative projects, this will be submitted as a separate Word document.

The Baldwin Visit Project is due by 11:59 PM on November 6th.

Critical Analysis Paper (1,250-1,500 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 Critical Analysis assignment is due by 11: 59 PM on December 1st.

Required Texts

Students should purchase the following texts:

- Viktor Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*. Translated by Ilse Lasch, Beacon Press, 2006.
ISBN: 978-0807014271
- Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *The Little Prince*. Translated by Irene Testot-Ferry, Wordsworth Editions, 1995.
ISBN: 978-1853261589
- Marjane Satrapi, *The Complete Persepolis: Volumes 1 and 2*. Translated by Anjali Singh, Pantheon, 2007.
ISBN: 978-0375714832

For the sake of affordability, you are allowed to use a different edition of the texts in case you already have one. But if you intend to buy a new copy, then please buy the editions listed above.

The remaining required readings will be made available through Canvas or have links provided in the syllabus schedule below.

Week	Date	Readings/Videos	Assignments Due
1 Unit 1: What is Literature?	W Aug 23	Introduction to the course and syllabus	
	F Aug 25	“Introduction: What is Literature?” by Terry Eagleton	
2 Drama	M Aug 28	1. <i>Oedipus Rex</i> by Sophocles pp. 1216-1231 2. Video: “An Introduction to Greek Tragedy”	
	W Aug 30	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> pp. 1232-1247	
	F Sep 1	<i>Oedipus Rex</i> pp. 1248-1261	
3 Epic	M Sep 4	No Class	
	W Sep 6	1. <i>Inferno</i> by Dante, Canto I 2. Video: “Why Should You Read Dante’s Divine Comedy?”	
	F Sep 8	<i>Inferno</i> , Canto XXVI	
4 Poetry	M Sep 11	Sonnet 18 by Shakespeare	
	W Sep 13	1. “My Last Duchess” by Robert Browning 2. Video: “What Makes a Poem...a Poem?”	
	F Sep 15	1. “Lady Lazarus” by Sylvia Plath	

		2. Poem Reading: Lady Lazarus by Sylvia Plath https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LkK2fwZfVjA	
5 Short Story	M Sep 18	“Introduction to Short Fiction” by Karen Palmer “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman pp. 647-551	
	W Sep 20	“The Yellow Wallpaper” pp. 652-656	
	F Sep 22	“The Mark on the Wall” by Virginia Woolf	
6 <u>Unit II: Why Do We Write?</u> Writing about Literature Self-Expression/Self Construction	M Sep 25	Writing about Literature: Close Reading Strategies	
	W Sep 27	Close Reading Workshop	
	F Sep 29	<i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> by Viktor Frankl pp. TBA	
7 Self-Expression/Self-Construction (cnt’d)	M Oct 2	1. <i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> pp. TBA 2. Interview with Frankl: “Self-Actualization is not the goal”	
	W Oct 4	<i>Man’s Search for Meaning</i> pp. TBA	Close Reading Assignment due
	F Oct 6	No Class	
8 Writing about Literature World Making (Cosmopoiesis)	M Oct 9	General Feedback on Close Reading Assignments	
	W Oct 11	1. “The Dead” by James Joyce pp. 2282-2296 2. Video: James Joyce	
	F Oct 13	“The Dead” pp. 2297-2311	

9 Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction (cnt'd)	M Oct 16	Selected pieces from <i>Aesop's Fables</i>	
	W Oct 18	"Hansel and Gretel" from <i>Grimms' Fairy Tales</i>	
	F Oct 20	<i>The Little Prince</i> Ch. I-IX	
10 Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction (cnt'd)	M Oct 23	Visit to the Baldwin Collection	
	W Oct 25	<i>The Little Prince</i> Ch. X-XX	
	F Oct 27	1. <i>The Little Prince</i> Ch. XXI-XXVII 2. Optional: Selected piece from <i>The Tale of the Rose</i> by Consuelo de Saint-Exupéry	
11 Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction (cnt'd.) Writing about Literature	M Oct 30	1. <i>The Little Prince</i> (2015 film) 2. Video: "Linda Hutcheon on Adaptation and Remakes"	
	W Nov 1	Writing about Literature: Structuring a Critical Essay	
	F Nov 3	Writing about Literature: Research Strategies	
12 <u>Unit III: Why Do We Read?</u> Exploration and Discovery	M Nov 6	Selected piece from Montesquieu's <i>Persian Letters</i>	Baldwin Visit Project due
	W Nov 8	Selected letters by Lady Mary Montague	
	F Nov 10	No Class	
13 Moving Beyond the Self	M Nov 13	"To a Skylark" by Percy Bysshe Shelley	
	W Nov 15	"Ode to a Nightingale" by John Keats	

	F Nov 17	“Roosters” by Elizabeth Bishop	
14 Finding New Selves	M Nov 20	“The Pomegranate Lady and Her Sons” by Goli Taraghi	
	W Nov 22	No Class	
	F Nov 24	No Class	
15 New Ways of Seeing	M Nov 27	<i>Persepolis</i> Ch. “The Veil” – “The F-14s”	
	W Nov 29	<i>Persepolis</i> Ch. “The Jewels – “Tyrol”	
	F. Dec 1	<i>Persepolis</i> Ch. “Pasta” – “The Return”	Critical Analysis Paper due
16 New Ways of Seeing (ctn’d.) Conclusion: Where to now?	M. Dec . 4	<i>Persepolis</i> Ch. “The Joke” – “The End” Video: Interview with Marjane Satrapi	
	W. Dec . 6	Article: “Does Great Literature Make Us Better People?” by Gregory Currie	

Important: I reserve the right to adjust the schedule/assignments as needed to accommodate course goals and to better meet student needs.

Classroom Policies

Late Policy: Class roll will be called at the beginning of class. Frequent lateness distracts other students and the instructor and will affect the student’s final participation grade. Three lates constitute one absence.

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

dismissal, and accordingly, being marked “absent” from the class.

UF’s Policy on 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 toward all members of the community:

<https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>

Paper Format and Submission: All essays must be formatted in MLA style. This means that your paper must meet the following guidelines:

- Double-spaced
- 12 point, Times New Roman font
- MLA (8th edition) style citations

All papers must be submitted on Canvas as .doc or .docx files. All UF students have access to free copies of Office 365 ProPlus. This can be downloaded at:

<https://it.ufl.edu/services/gatorcloud-microsoft-office-online>

Late Papers/Assignments: If you need an extension for an appropriate reason, please talk to me at least two days in advance of the due date. A late paper without a valid excuse will result in losing a portion of the assignment’s grade.

Academic Honesty: Students are 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 the 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/>).

UF COVID-19 Response: 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.ufl.edu 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.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

Grading Policies

Grading Scale and GPA Equivalent

A (4.0) 100-93	C (2.0) 76-73
A- (3.67) 92-90	C- (1.67) 72-70
B+ (3.33) 89-87	D+ (1.33) 69-67
B (3.0) 86-83	D (1.0) 63-66
B- (2.67) 82-80	D- (0.67) 62-60
C+ (2.33) 79-77	E (0) 59-

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, see:

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

<http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Grading Method: The writing assignments in this course will be graded holistically, and I will provide feedback for each paper. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this

course. A general rubric for course assessments is included below.

Letter Grade	Assessment
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course content and skills applied in the essay are well-developed • the argument is persuasive with detailed reasoning and thorough evidence • organization includes an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, and easy-to-follow paragraphs • writing style is coherent, clear, and appropriate for the assignment • little to no mechanical errors
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course content or skills applied in the essay need development • argument is persuasive, but further reasoning or evidence is needed • organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, or easy-to-follow paragraphs • writing style is coherent overall but unclear or inappropriate at times • few mechanical errors
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course content or skills applied in the essay need significant development • additional reasoning and evidence are needed to improve persuasiveness • organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement or topic and concluding sentences and easy-to-follow paragraphs • writing style is coherent overall but unclear and inappropriate at times • some mechanical errors
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course content and skills applied in the essay need significant development • argument is not persuasive; reasoning and evidence are lacking • organization is missing an identifiable thesis statement, topic and concluding sentences, and easy-to-follow paragraphs • writing style struggles with logic, clarity, and appropriateness • frequent mechanical errors
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • course content and skills are not applied in the paper • reasoning for argument is unclear and evidence is missing • lack of organization causes difficulty following the argument • writing style is incoherent and inappropriate for the assignment • mechanical errors limit the ability to read the paper