



LIT2000

Introduction to Literature

Fall 2023
Section 1A42
MWF, Period 3

Welcome to
LIT2000

Introduction to Literature

Instructor: Armin Niknam

Office: Turlington Hall, 4351

Office Hours: Monday 11-12 , Friday 11-12

E-mail: armin.niknam@ufl.edu

Section: 1A42

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

Location: Benton Hall, 0328

This syllabus is produced in order to provide you with an overview of your Introduction to Literature course. 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

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

Welcome to Introduction to Literature 2000.
I am thrilled to have you in this course and I
know this will be really fun!

Course Description

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

This course helps you develop the critical skill 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 becoming better readers of literature and its contexts, you become better readers of the worlds (YES! WORLDS!) that literature 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.

We will conduct much of our reading in specific historical and social contexts. A lot of our readings have to do with traveling, migration, settling, and returning. Therefore, it is going to be essential for us to understand why people go through such processes and how they deal with them.

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 between 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 Outcomes

What does the university want you to learn?

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:

- Twelve Years a Slave by Solomon Northup, Penguin Books, ISBN: 9780143125419
- The Farming of Bones by Edwidge Danticat, Soho Press, ISBN: 9781616953492

- Season of Migration to the North by Tayeb Salih, Penguin Classics, ISBN: 9780141187204
- Othello by William Shakespeare, Simon and Schuster, ISBN: 9780743477550

The course includes other readings too which you will have access to through Canvas:

- Why Read Multicultural Literature? An Arnoldian Perspective by Reed Way Dasenbrock
- Aeneid (Book 1) by Virgil
- Refugee Blues by W. H. Auden
- Eastern War Time by Adrienne Rich
- Everyone is an Immigrant by Eliza Griswold
- Black-Eyed Woman by Viet-Thanh Nguyen
- In the Penal Colony by Franz Kafka
- “I Was Born” by James Olney
- Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage by G. W. F. Hegel
- Culture and Imperialism by Edward W. Said
- Does Great Literature Make Us Better? by Gregory Currie

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

How will you be graded in this course?

There 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 & participation/in-class discussion (15%)
- Participation in the discussion board (15%)
- 1 Close Reading of a literary text or passage (20%)
- 1 Unessay project (20%)
- 1 Critical Analysis essay (30%)

1. Attendance & Participation (15%)

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.

2. Participation in the discussion board (15%)

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. 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-structured essay. There is no right or wrong either! So, 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.

3. Close Reading Assignment: 750 words, 20%

As a part of this course, we will be learning how to perform a close analysis of a work of poetry or short fiction. You will then be expected to analyze a text carefully and develop an argument regarding the whole of the text through a close reading. You will not need any outside sources for this assignment. The Close Reading assignment is due during the 8th week of the semester.

4. Unessay Project, 20%

For your unessay project, you are expected to create a video, a podcast episode, a blog post, a drawing or a painting, a website, or a piece of creative writing based on one of the texts we discuss during our sessions. Your project can focus on one of the themes, events, or characters - major or minor - in the text that you choose. It could be an alternative ending, a different unfolding, or a spin-off. As open-ended as it might sound, you can feel free to discuss what you want your project to be with me anytime during the semester in my office hours.

I am also cognizant that some of you might not feel ready for a creative project and would rather work on a critical assignment, in addition to your Critical Analysis Essay (see below). This option is available to everyone but you absolutely need to seek approval during my office hours by the end of week 5 of the course.

5. Critical Analysis Essay: 1,500 words, 30%

For your critical analysis paper, you will need to step beyond your close reading assignment. Critical analysis paper is for 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 your secondary sources.

These papers will be graded on a point scale of 1 to 10: 9-10, excellent; 8-8.9, good to very good; 7-7.9 average to good; 6-6.9, below average; below 6 is not a passing grade. All students, whatever your grade be, will have the option to rewrite the essay.

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

Introduction	Week 1	08/23	Introducing the syllabus and discussing the course objectives
		08/25	Why Read Multicultural Literature? An Arnoldian Perspective Author: Reed Way Dasenbrock (available through Canvas)
Epic	Week 2	08/28	Aeneid (Book I: pages 3-13) Author: Virgil (available through Canvas)
		08/30	Aeneid (Book I: pages 14- 27)
		09/01	Echoes of Virgil's Aeneid Author: Peter E. Knox (available through Canvas)
	Week 3	09/04	HAPPY LABOR DAY! NO CLASS!
Drama		09/06	Othello (Act I) Author: William Shakespeare

		09/08	Othello (Act II)
	Week 4	09/11	Othello (Act III)
		09/13	Othello (Act IV and V)
		09/15	Town Hall A space for students to raise the points and issues that they have faced in the readings so far and believe were not addressed adequately during the sessions
Poetry	Week 5	09/18	Refugee Blues Author: W. H. Auden (available through Canvas)
		09/20	Eastern War Time Author: Adrienne Rich (available through Canvas)
		09/22	Everyone is an Immigrant Author: Eliza Griswold (available through Canvas)
Short story	Week 6	09/25	Black-Eyed Woman Author: Viet Thanh Nguyen (available through Canvas)
		09/27	In the Penal Colony Author: Franz Kafka (available through Canvas)

		09/29	Writing Clinic: How to write a good literary essay? Getting you boosted for your Close Reading Assignment
Novel	Week 7	10/02	Season of Migration to the North (pages: 1-60) Author: Tayeb Salih
		10/04	Season of Migration to the North (pages: 61-115)
		10/06	HOME COMING! NO CLASS!
	Week 8	10/09	Season of Migration to the North (pages: 116-169)
		10/11	Town Hall
		10/13	Close Reading Assignment Due on Friday
Autobiography	Week 9	10/16	'I was born': Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature Author: James Olney (available through Canvas)
		10/18	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters I - IV) Author: Solomon Northup

		10/20	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters V - VIII)
	Week 10	10/23	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters IX - XI)
		10/25	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters XII - XVI)
		10/27	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters XVII- XX)
		10/30	Twelve Years a Slave (Chapters XXI- end)
	Week 11	11/01	Continued Discussion on Twelve Years a Slave
		11/03	Movie Screening Revisiting some segments of Twelve Years a Slave by Steve McQueen
		11/06	Independence and Dependence of Self- Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage Author: G. W. F. Hegel (available through Canvas)
Beyond Literature	Week 12	11/08	Culture and Imperialism, Introduction Author: Edward W. Said (available through Canvas)

		11/10	HAPPY VETERANS DAY! NO CLASS!
Homecoming	Week 13	11/13	Selections of history of Hispaniola Various authors (available through Canvas)
		11/15	The Farming of Bones (1-56) Author: Edwidge Danticat
		11/17	The Farming of Bones (56-115)
	Week 14	11/20	The Farming of Bones (116-176)
		11/22	HAPPY THANKSGIVING! NO CLASS!
		11/24	
	Week 15	11/27	The Farming of Bones (177-223)
		11/29	The Farming of Bones (224-264)
		12/01	The Farming of Bones (265-end)

Conclusion	Week 16	12/04	Does Great Literature Make Us Better? Author: Gregory Currie (available through Canvas) Plus: Town Hall
		12/06	Critical Analysis Paper Due on Wednesday

