

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
LIT 2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE
SYLLABUS
SECTION 17B8

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION:

Instructor	Abra Gibson
Office	TUR 4321
Phone	352.392.6650
Office Hours	11:45-12:45 Fridays – book here
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COURSE INFORMATION

Time	MWF Period 4: 10:40 – 11:30
Location	1315 Turlington http://campusmap.ufl.edu/#/index/0267

COURSE PRE-REQUISITE ENC 1101

QUICK LINKS TO SECTIONS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines literature's unique and changing role in individuals' lives and in society. It focuses on three deceptively simple questions: What is literature? Why do we write literature? Finally, why do we read literature?

One fundamental goal of this course is to help students develop critical analytical and interpretive skills, primarily by introducing students to a range of literary genres from different countries and historical periods. Students will also learn how formal and stylistic elements as well as historical context shape the meaning and significance of literature.

Becoming more skillful readers of literature and its contexts will help students better read the worlds that literature addresses, develop their ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand and shape their own relationships with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Successful completion of this 3-credit course is indicated by a grade of C or better, and provides Gen Ed H(umanities) credit. By the conclusion of the course, successful students must 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 historical and cultural contexts of authorship and reading.

Students who wish to excel in this course should ensure that they understand these objectives early in the semester, and refer back to them and work with the instructor to monitor their progress throughout the term. The last weeks of the term are not the appropriate time to express concern about progress, and do not provide enough time to build up these skills.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

The texts in black can be purchased at the University Bookstore using our course AND section numbers: LIT2000, 17B8.

- Alice Munro, “The Moons of Jupiter”
- Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*
- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*
- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*
- Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*

In lieu of a coursepack, our other, shorter texts are available online and are linked below in the schedule. This page contains a complete list of those short texts, including links. The short texts are all free.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Assessments and Points Possible

- Attendance (40 pts)
- In-class discussion contributions (60 pts; 2 per day)
- In-class writing (150 points; 10 days, 15 points per day)
- Participation in Course Wiki (150 pts – 75 at midterm and 75 at term's end)
- Close Reading of a literary text or passage (150 pts)
- Proposal for Critical Analysis paper (50)
- Outline for Critical Analysis paper (50)
- Critical Analysis paper (250 pts)
- Group panel discussion (100 pts)

ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

Attendance (40 points)

Attendance is mandatory. Students receive 1 point for each day they are present (not including the first day of class and their scheduled panel date). Students will lose 1 point for every unexcused absence. UF policies permit illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule. See [here](#) for further details.

Lateness: Students who are late to class will receive .5 pt. for that day.

Absence: Students who miss class for any reason are responsible for materials covered in class, and should consult the course Canvas materials and fellow classmates for assistance rather than the instructor. Any assignments due during an absence are still due on that date, and will be subject to late penalties, as described in [ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES](#)

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES

below.

Participation: (60 points)

Participation will be assessed in real time using the free Class Dojo app. Students can receive up to 2 points per day for the following criteria:

- Basic observation or fact about the reading or its plot
- Persistence – asking constructive follow-up clarifications about concepts or assignments
- Assists – responding productively to a classmate's question or comment
- Balanced assessment – presenting observations that challenge or contradict each other (for instance, commenting that the *Twilight* franchise does not present a healthy relationship or central character, but that it does a great job of appealing to its target audience)

- Great insight – going beyond basic facts and concepts to broader theoretical or philosophical ideas that deepen class discussion (a great insight following up on the *Twilight* example might be what strategies or features it contains that appeal to that audience).

Students who are unable to answer basic questions or contribute to discussion will lose up to 2 points for that day as follows:

- Unprepared or uninvolved in discussion
- Rude comment or interrupting others
- Distracting others – often by using phone or laptop for non-class-related activities

For information about attendance and participation procedures and requirements, see CLASSROOM POLICIES below.

In-Class Writing (150 points – 15 each for days marked (W))

On days marked (W), we will spend 20 minutes of classtime writing – by hand. Students should bring in paper and pens or pencils. Students will keep their hard copies, but will scan (free scanning software such as Genius Scan and Tiny Scan are two great options) and upload them to the Canvas assignment submission box.

Participation in Course Wiki (150 points: 75 at midterm; 75 at term's end)

Students will contribute several elements to create a course wiki. Different elements including texts, theoretical schools, themes, and rhetorical strategies, will be worth between 10 and 2 points each.

Close Reading Assignment (150 points, 750 words)

due during week 8

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.

Proposal and Outline for Critical Analysis paper (50 points)

due during week 9; returned during week 10

Students will complete a two- to three-paragraph proposal for the CA paper, indicating the text or texts you plan to discuss, and the research question you hope to answer. The more information you provide, the more useful my feedback to you will be, so feel free to explore your thoughts a bit – but keep to a single double-spaced page.

Outline for Critical Analysis paper (50 points)

due during week 12

After your proposal is approved, you will conduct preliminary research, and submit an outline of your paper. It will include your main idea (thesis), the evidence you will use

(critical sources and close reading), and how that evidence relates to the text(s). I will provide a sample outline in Canvas files and go over it in class to help you get started.

Critical Analysis Paper: (250 points, 1,500 words)

due during week 15

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.

Panel Discussion (100 points)

as shown in Schedule below

Panels will consist of 5 students. I will post the list of panels and members in Canvas after drop/add. Panelists will lead class with a 10-15 minute discussion of the reading before bringing the rest of the class into the discussion through open-ended questions.

CLASSROOM POLICIES

- **Attendance:** The instructor will take attendance at the start of class.
Absences: Aside from [UF-approved activities](#), students may miss up to 5 absences. Students with over 5 unexcused absences will not pass the course.
Late Policy: Late students should enter and be seated quietly, and are responsible for contacting the instructor about changing their Absence to a Tardy (.5 pt) after class. Lateness distracts other students and the instructor, and thus will affect the student's final participation grade.
Make-up Policy: Except in the case of documented illness or [UF accepted](#) activities, students may not make up missed exams or submit late assignments.
 - Whenever possible, students should contact the instructor about absences in advance by email or in person.
 - After an absence, students should consult classmates with any inquiries about missed material.
- **Comportment:** This refers to classroom contributions, which affect participation grades. I firmly believe that the only stupid questions are those that go unasked and maintain, rather than end, ignorance. However, students should not make any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity, either in class discussion or in written assignments. Simply put, think about how your words might be perceived before you speak, and consciously change potentially offensive language to terminology that is more neutral.

Students who are going to be late or absent are advised to inform the instructor ahead of time whenever possible. A brief, well-formatted email is fine. In general, keeping in contact with your instructors about your progress and concerns is always a good idea.

Participation: This is not a lecture, so students must complete readings and contribute to our discussions, whether with questions or ideas.

Phones, laptops, tablets, headphones:

These rules are in place to maintain a positive and productive classroom environment. Students in this class will be treated as adults and are free to make their own choices and mistakes. Of course, some of those choices and mistakes will have consequences. Be sure you understand and abide by the following classroom policies. Related point deductions are outlined above in the [GRADE DISTRIBUTION](#)

section.

- Students must silence phones before coming to class. Sometimes we will use our cellphones during class activities, but otherwise, students should store phones in bags or pockets during class.
- Students who are expecting emergent calls/texts should notify the instructor before class, and should then take those calls into the hall.
- If you choose to use your laptop for non-class related activities, please sit in the back of the class so that your screen does not distract other students.
- Unauthorized phone use is prohibited, as it distracts the instructor, and may distract other students. The second time a student uses a phone or table for non-class activities, that student will be asked to leave for the day and will be considered absent.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES

Most assignments will be submitted to Canvas as .doc or .docx files – other file types cannot be graded in Canvas. Most word processing software provides a ‘save as .doc(x)’ option.

Students are responsible for ensuring their work is submitted on time, and correctly. I strongly advise that students open your document after submitting, and verifying that you have submitted the correct file, and the document appears properly formatted.

Students are permitted **one** late submission per term. Each day the assignment is late causes a grade scale deduction (so, from an A to an A-, for example).

GRADING SCALE (& GPA EQUIVALENT)

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

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:

[General Grading Regulations](#)

[Minus Grading Policies](#)

UF POLICIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic Honesty

Students are required to be honest in their coursework. Students may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for any research projects. Students should know that using their own work from other papers or classes is considered plagiarism, as well as any source material that is not cited. 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. You can read University of Florida's honor code [here](#).

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](#) for information about available resources for students with disabilities. Accommodations cannot be provided until the instructor receives DRC documentation, so if you qualify, please get this process started immediately.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should visit or call (352.392.1575) the on-campus [Counseling and Wellness Center](#). Students who find certain topics triggering or upsetting may wish to use the CWC to develop coping strategies in case such topics arise in coursework.

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 [here](#). You will be notified when they are open, usually in the last two weeks of class. Summary results of these assessments are also available to students after the term is complete.

A NOTE ON COURSE CONTENT

Our discussions will often be philosophical and theoretical in nature. We will discuss literary works and theories that challenge not only each other, but also our own personal beliefs and opinions. When you are tempted to reject our discussions because they do not fit into your mindset or beliefs, remember that the goal of education is not to create or

destroy beliefs, but to increase your awareness of the context from which those beliefs arose.

While we may spend a few minutes in class discussing first impressions and personal reactions to materials, the bulk of our discussions will focus on developing analytical skills that depart from opinion and belief. Students (and instructors) rarely love every single text in a course, so if you find yourself resisting a text, start questioning, why would somebody write this? What might have caused it? What problem is the text trying to show or solve? A goal for this course is to shift from simply reading as escapism to reading as an unlimited resource to help negotiate society and the world.

If you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to this material in more depth than we are able to do in class, I welcome such discussion as an appropriate part of our coursework, and am happy to discuss this further in office hours.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change. Students are responsible for all changes made to the syllabus and all changes announced in class, even if they are absent on the day of the announcement. Each student is responsible to keep up with the readings and all assignments.

Students will be expected to have read all the texts listed for each day **prior** to that day's discussion.

UNIT I **WHAT IS LITERATURE?**

WEEK 1 **The Boundaries of Literature?**

- 1/6 Syllabus and schedule (W)
- 1/8 Sartre, *What is literature?*, “[What is Writing?](#)” pp. 7-11 up to “On the other hand”; Foucault, “[What is an Author?](#)”; Martin Luther King, “[I have a dream](#)” text and audio (W)

WEEK 2 **Drama**

- 1/11 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex* up to “He is too cunning to commit himself, And makes a mouthpiece of a knavish seer.”
- 1/13 Sophocles, *Oedipus Rex*, finish
- 1/15 Sylvia Plath, “[Electra on Azalea Path](#)” (W)

WEEK 3 **Epic**

- 1/20 Homer, *Odysseus*, Book XIX
- 1/22 *the memory palace*, “[no. 116,824](#)”; Loreena McKennitt, “[Penelope’s Song](#)”; Dorothy Parker, “[Penelope](#)” (W)

WEEK 4 **Short Fiction**

- 1/25 Jorge Luis Borges, “[The Aleph](#)”
- 1/27 Alice Munro, “The Moons of Jupiter”
- 1/29 Virginia Woolf, “[The Legacy](#)” (W)

WEEK 5 **Poetry**

- 2/1 Walt Whitman, “[Song of Myself, III](#)”; Robert Browning, “[My Last Duchess](#)”
- 2/3 Angela Carter, “The Bloody Chamber”
<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Literature/Bluebeard>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bluebeard#In_other_media (W)
- 2/5 Status check and catch up

WEEK 6 **Self-Expression/Self-Construction:**

- 2/8 Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, chapters 1-9
- 2/10 Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, finish; Allie Brosh, *Hyperbole and a Half*, “[Adventures in Depression](#)” and “[Depression Part Two](#)” (W)

2/12 Panel 1 – How can writing be therapeutic?

UNIT II WHY DO WE WRITE?

WEEK 7 **World Making (Cosmopoiesis)**

2/15 Marcel Proust, *Swann's Way*, "Overture"

2/17 James Joyce, "The Dead" (W)

2/19 Panel 2 – How can writing shape our relationship with the world?

WEEK 8 **Midterm**

2/22 *Invisibilia* episode "Entanglement," part 1, "Mirror Touch" audio
Forward look to Critical Analysis paper

2/24 Midterm review

2/26 Panel 3 – Evaluate Wiki and identify areas for further development
Close Reading due by midnight

WEEK 9 ⚙️ **Spring Break** ⚙️

WEEK 10 **Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction**

3/7 Albert Camus, *The Stranger*

3/9 Albert Camus, *The Stranger*; The Cure, "Killing an Arab"; Flannery O'Connor, "A Good Man is Hard to Find"

3/11 Panel 4 – How do writing and literature help us work through moral and social problems?
Proposal and Outline for Critical Analysis paper due by midnight

UNIT III WHY DO WE READ?

WEEK 11 **Exploration & Discovery:**

3/14 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

3/16 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

3/18 Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities* and H. G. Wells, "The Country of the Blind"
You'll receive your Proposal and Outline feedback by this date

WEEK 12 **Transcending the Self**

3/21 D. H. Lawrence, "Fish"; Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish"; Marianne Moore, "The Fish"

3/23 Marianne Moore, "An Octopus" (W); Allie Brosh, *Hyperbole and a Half*
"Dogs Don't Understand Basic Concepts Like Moving"

3/25 Panel 5 – How does reading transport us from **Anthropocentrism**? And why is this a valuable practice?

WEEK 13 **Crafting New Selves**

3/28 *Our Sister Killjoy*, 1-83

3/30 Our Sister Killjoy, 84-108
4/1 Our Sister Killjoy, finish; Joss Whedon “[Who are You?](#)”

WEEK 14 **New Ways of Seeing**

4/4 Fun Home 1-54
4/6 Fun Home 55-120
4/8 Fun Home, finish (W)

WEEK 15 **Critical Analysis**

4/11 Review Wiki and perform final edits
4/13 Final questions about Critical Analysis paper
4/15 *Critical Analysis Paper due Friday by midnight*

WEEK 16 **Looking Ahead**

4/18 Gregory Currie [Does Great Literature Make Us Better?](#)
4/20 Progress check, applying critical analysis (W)