

LIT2000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Fall 2025

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Office Hours: TBD

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Course Time: MWF Period 8 (3:00-3:50)

Course Location: <http://campusmap.ufl.edu/?loc=0406>

Course Pre-requisite: ENC 1101

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

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.

In this course, students will be assigned readings representative of a broad range of literary genres and cultures. These readings will cover a variety of literary movements and historical eras. The readings will include selections from the Western canon. Written analysis of literary works may be required. Students will be provided with opportunities to practice critical interpretation.

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.
5. Identify a variety of literary movements, historical eras, and/or cultural contexts.
 6. Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skills.

REQUIRED MATERIALS:

The following texts should be purchased at the University Bookstore:

1. Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*
2. Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
3. V.S. Naipaul, *Miguel Street*
4. Camara Laye, *The Dark Child*
5. Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*
6. Jennine Capó Crucet, *How to Leave Hialeah*
7. Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

A course pack is also required. This should be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional readings will be provided as links or downloads on Canvas.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION:

Summary of grading

- Attendance & participation/in-class discussion (10%)
- Participation in Course Wiki, blog, or discussion board (20%)
- 1 Close Reading of a literary text or passage (15%)
- 1 Critical Analysis paper (25%)
- 2 take-home exams (15% each—30%)

1. Attendance & Participation (10%)

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by class roll or sign-up sheet. Students will lose 1% from their 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.

Participation: Students are expected to review the assigned readings before class. Each week will begin with a series of basic questions on the contents of the assigned readings. If students are unable to answer these questions, it will be assumed that they have not prepared the homework and will lose 1%. Consistent participation in class discussions, demonstrated knowledge of the assigned readings will also contribute to this portion of the final grade.

2. Participation in Course Wiki, blog, or discussion board (20%)

Before each discussion section, students are required to contribute a question or an answer to on an online discussion forum.

Description of assignment: *Interpretive* (or *Critical*) questions are open-ended and are concerned with textual meaning. They ask for opinions on themes, figurative

language and symbolism within the narrative. They also ask for judgments regarding the period, history, politics and ethical questions that are relevant to the text. The open-endedness of Interpretive and Critical questions—which often use phrases such as "do you think" or "why do you suppose"—indicates that there may well be neither simply "right" nor simply "wrong" answers; the success of a response is based on the evidence and reasoning students employ to support their analysis and judgment.

3. Close Reading Assignment: 750 words, 15%

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 Close Reading assignment is due during the 6th week of the semester

4. Critical Analysis Paper: 1,500 words, 25%

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 during the 8th week of the semester.

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 their grade, will have the option to rewrite the essay.

5. 2 take-home exams (15% each—30%)

Method of assessment will be 2 on-line take-home exams (each exam is worth 15%, or together, 30% of the total grade). Take-home exams will be distributed via Canvas and will be two hours in length. The exams will be comprised of short answer *and short essay* questions based on readings, lectures and discussion sections.

Submitted exams will be assessed for evidence of collusion.

CLASSROOM POLICIES:

- **Makeup Policy:** Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>), 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 instructor on his or her return to classes.
- **Late Policy:** A class roll will be passed around at the beginning of class. If a student is late, he or she will have to sign the roll after class. Such lateness distracts other students and the instructor and will affect the student's final participation grade. Students will lose 0.5% from their final grade each time they arrive late.
- **Cell phone policy:** Students must turn cell phones to silent before coming to

class. Each time a student's cell phone rings or each time that a student texts during class, 1% will be deducted from that student's final grade.

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:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

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 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; <https://counseling.ufl.edu>).

Online Course Evaluation: Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing end-of-semester course evaluations via GatorEvals (<https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu>). You will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email received from GatorEvals or in the Canvas course menu under GatorEvals.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change.

UNIT I – WHAT IS LITERATURE?

WEEK 1 (8/21—8/22): INTRODUCTION: The Borders of Literature?

Reading: King, “I have a dream” speech Text and audio:

<http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>

“Introduction: What is literature?” Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983), pp. 1-15.

WEEK 2 (8/25—8/29): **Drama**

Reading: Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

WEEK 3 (9/1—9/5): **Epic**

Reading: Virgil, *Aeneid*, Book I

WEEK 4 (9/8—9/12): **Poetry**

Readings: Emily Dickinson, “Essential oils are wrung”
Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”

WEEK 5 (9/15—9/19): **Short Story:**

Readings: Flannery O’Connor, “A Good Man is Hard to Find”
Franz Kafka, “The Penal Colony”

WEEK 6 (9/22—9/26): **WRITING & REVIEW**

CLOSE READING EXERCISE DUE ON WEDNESDAY

TEST 1 WILL TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY

UNIT II – WHY DO WE WRITE?

WEEK 7 (9/29—10/3): **Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction**

Reading: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

WEEK 8 (10/6—10/10): **Shaping Citizens: Moral Instruction**

Reading: Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

N.B. CLOSE READING EXERCISE DUE ON WEDNESDAY

WEEK 9 (10/13—10/17): **World Making (Cosmopoiesis)**

Reading: V.S. Naipaul, *Miguel Street*

WEEK 10 (10/20—10/24): **Self-Expression/Self-Construction:**
Reading: Camara Laye, *The Dark Child*

REVIEW TEST 2 WILL TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY

UNIT III WHY DO WE READ?

WEEK 11(10/27—10/31): **Exploration & Discovery:**
Reading: Montesquieu, *Persian Letters*

WEEK 12 (11/3—11/14): **Moving Beyond the Self**
Readings: D. H. Lawrence, "Fish"
Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish," "Roosters," and "Pink Dog"

WEEK 13 (11/10—11/14): **Finding New Selves**
Reading: Jennine Capó Crucet, *How to Leave Hialeah*

WEEK 14 (11/17—11/21): **New Ways of Seeing**
Reading: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

WEEK 15 (11/24—28): **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

WEEK 16 **Conclusion: Where to now?**
Reading: Does Great Literature Make Us Better? Gregory Currie.
http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/01/does-great-literature-make-us-better/?_r=0