



AML 2410 - Issues in American Literature and Culture: Southern Gothic

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Hours: TBA

Fall 2018 Class #10559
Classroom: MAT 115
Tu 3:00 – 4:55 PM
Thur 3:00 – 3:50 PM

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Anything that comes out of the South is going to be called grotesque by the Northern reader, unless it is grotesque, in which case it is going to be called realistic.” – Flannery O’Connor

Merging elements of mystery, dread, and the supernatural from the Gothic traditions of Europe with the strange and turbulent landscape of the American South, Southern Gothic writers of the early 20th century crafted a world of crumbling plantations, looming church steeples, urban decay, and treacherous swamps that is all too familiar to anyone who has ever called the South home. Re-scripting romanticized depictions of the antebellum South, Southern Gothic uses both magic and mayhem to focus in on the South’s systemic poverty, violence, racism, and ostracizing of any and all who do not easily fit into traditional Southern culture.

Through reading a selection of Southern Gothic texts, this course will interrogate the ghosts that occupy the swamps and cotton fields of the American South, from the specter of slavery to its morally-bankrupt aristocracy to the darker aspects of the religious oppression that led O’Connor to deem the South “Christ-haunted.” By the end of this course, students will arrive at a better understanding and appreciation of the sociopolitical work that Southern Gothic performs by engaging with Southern Gothic texts from both Southern and Northern perspectives. Readings will include works by Edgar Allan Poe, Zora Neale Hurston, Flannery O’Connor, William Faulkner, Harriet Jacobs, Truman Capote, Eudora Welty, Toni Morrison, and Karen Russell. Further, we will examine representations of the South as Gothic in film (*Gone With The Wind*; *Vernon, Florida*, etc.) and engage with documentaries, photographs, and music that invoke Southern Gothicism.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Recognize the literary significance of Southern Gothic fiction
- Express critical viewpoints and engage in scholarly conversation about American literature, American culture, and Gothic fiction, especially that of the American South
- Produce writing that is coherent, focused, and well-organized
- Display a command of grammar, punctuation, spelling, MLA citation, and research skills

GENERAL EDUCATION OBJECTIVES

- This course confers Gen Ed credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.



REQUIRED TEXTS

Required Texts to Purchase:

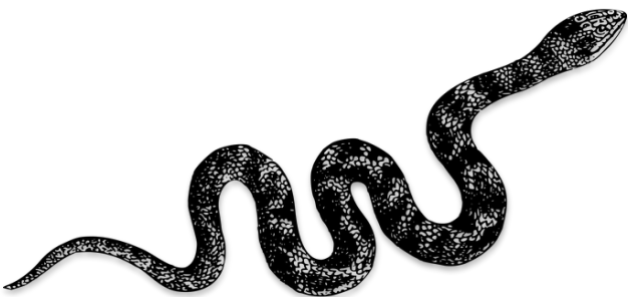
Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Vintage. ISBN: 978-1400033416
Capote, Truman. *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. Vintage. ISBN: 978-0679745648
Welty, Eudora. *The Robber Bridegroom*. Harvest. ISBN: 978-0156768078

Readings Available Online/On Canvas:

- The British Library's webpage on "[Gothic Motifs](#)"
- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces"
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Gold-Bug," "The Black Cat"
- Morrison, Toni. From *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*
- Chestnutt, Charles W. "The Wife of His Youth"
- Chopin, Kate. "Désirée's Baby"
- Jacobs, Harriet. From *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
- Hurston, Zora Neale. "Sweat"
- Bierce, Ambrose. "The Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"
- Faulkner, William. "Mountain Victory," "Dry September," "A Rose for Emily"
- O'Connor, Flannery. "Some Elements of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction," "A Good Man is Hard to Find," "Good Country People"
- Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. "The Robber Bridegroom"
- The Toast. "Every Southern Gothic Novel Ever"
- Salinger, J.D. "A Perfect Day for Bananafish"
- Russell, Karen. "Ava Wrestles the Alligator"; "St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised By Wolves"
- Grunwald, Michael. "[A Requiem for Florida, the Paradise That Should Never Have Been](#)"
- Arnett, Kristen. "The Problem With Writing About Florida"

Required Films and Audio*:

["Southern Gothic"](#) Perf. Tyminski (2017)
Buzzfeed Unsolved "[The Mysterious Disappearance of Roanoke Colony](#)" (2017)
Buzzfeed Unsolved "[The Strangest Disappearances In the Bermuda Triangle](#)" (2017)
["Formation"](#) Perf. Beyoncé (2016)
["This is America"](#) Perf. Childish Gambino (2018)
Gone With the Wind (1939) [Amazon Prime]
["Strange Fruit"](#) Perf. Billie Holiday (1939)
Vernon, Florida (1981) [Netflix]
Interview With The Vampire (1994) [Netflix]
Lore Ep. 40 "[Everything Floats](#)" (2016)
Lore Ep. 47 "[Missing the Point](#)" (2016)
Lore Ep. 56 "[Going Viral](#)" (2017)
Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island (1998)
Buzzfeed Unsolved "[The Search for the Mysterious Mothman](#)" (2018)
Selection of vintage Florida tourism ads and home movies



* Some films are available on DVD through the UF library system. Happily, all of these films are also widely available and may be rented or purchased on Amazon, iTunes, or on DVD for only a few dollars (a fraction the cost of a textbook). Most are either on Netflix or Amazon Prime. Videos originally published on Youtube will be linked.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participation (250 points; 25% of grade): Students are expected to come to class prepared and willing to participate in in-class activities, including writing exercises, quizzes, discussions, group work, peer reviews, workshops, and more. Students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session, especially in class discussions.

Peer Reviews (50 points; 5% of grade): For peer reviews, you will bring three (3) printed copies of your paper to class with you on specified days. I will divide the class into small groups and you will give each other feedback on your drafts. **NOTE:** You **MUST** attend the class period and participate in peer review in order to earn the 25 points for each peer review. Barring extreme extenuating circumstances, if you are absent on this day you will receive 0 points for the assignment. **There is no way to make it up later.**

Note: Drafts must conform to MLA and other formatting guidelines and show the development of a sophisticated argument that is supported by evidence from primary and secondary sources.

Crash Course Southern Gothic Lecture/Bibliography (150 points; 15% of grade): For this research project, students will get together in small groups and choose an aspect of/medium for Southern Gothic to explore further in depth: African American horror, Southern Gothic in Film, Southern Gothic in Music, Southern Gothic in Documentary/Photography, Louisiana Voodoo, Southern Urban Legends, etc. This assignment will have two parts:

- 1) On a prescribed date during the semester, your group will present your crash course history on your chosen topic as a 10-minute lecture to the rest of class. Powerpoint/Prezi presentations with visuals are strongly recommended.
- 2) Your group will together produce an annotated bibliography detailing your research. This bibliography should include annotated secondary sources that your group used to construct your presentation, as well as a Recommended Reading/Viewing list of works of Southern Gothic fiction, film, TV, music, etc. relevant to your topic. Each member of your group is responsible for 500 words of this bibliography, not including the citations.

Deliverable: 500 words per group member of a Microsoft Word document uploaded onto Canvas + an in-class lecture

Close-reading Analysis (100 points; 10% of grade):

Students will choose either a passage from a text we have read in Unit 1 and analyze it closely. Close reading may include analysis of a passage's syntax, rhyme, rhythm, meter, imagery or a specific element of the text such as characters, setting, or motif. Students should not cite outside sources, but instead focus on supporting evidence in the text. Strong theses will consider how the chosen element of the work contributes to the major themes or effect of the work as a whole. Your argument and analysis should be narrow in scope – really focus on one or two chosen aspects of the text and dig deep! Remember the analysis is NOT summary.

Deliverable: **900 - 1100 word** Microsoft Word document on Canvas

Comparative Analysis (150 points; 15% of grade; graded):

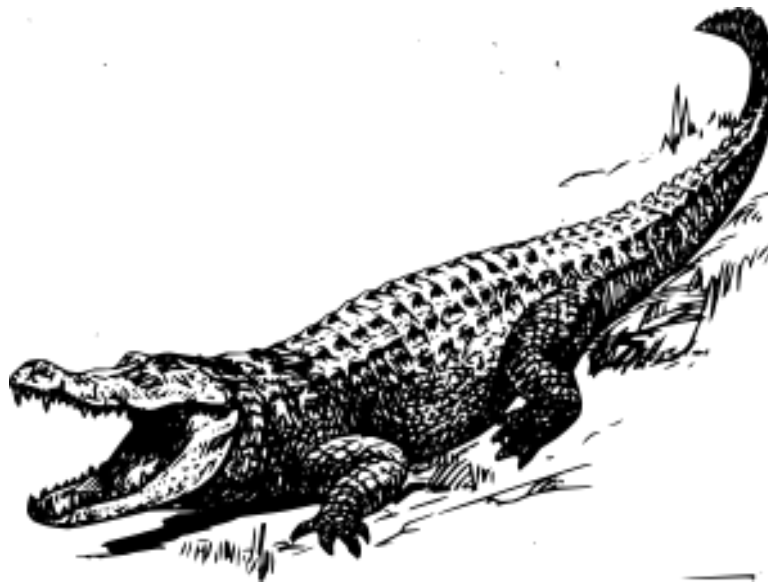
For this comparative analysis, students will analyze two texts we read together in Units 1 or 2, bringing them into conversation with each other to demonstrate how they have reached an enlarged perspective on their chosen synthesis question. Students should engage with similar/contrasting elements from both works, including themes, motifs, symbolism, structure, and characters, but focus their comparison to the most notable point or points to craft a strong, specific thesis and provide textual evidence. Students must clear their text pairing with me before proceeding.

Deliverable: **1800 - 2000 word** Microsoft Word document on Canvas

Final Paper (300 points; 30% of grade; graded):

The final paper for this course will be a research paper related to one or more of the themes and texts that have been discussed throughout the semester. In this paper, students will make a clear, specific argument about a topic of their choosing that relates to the theme of the course. In order to write a research paper that offers a valuable contribution to its respective field of research you will need to critically engage with your sources, identifying the connection among them and coming up with an argument that is informed by the scholarly work of others. A good paper will advance a clear, strong argument in which you clearly choose a side and attempt to persuade the audience that your reading/analysis is correct. You will engage in original research and should enter into a conversation with those texts in order to reach new and original conclusions. The argument must be supported with evidence from both the texts we shall read together in class and from outside academic/critical sources (8 – 10 sources in an MLA-styled works cited page). **You must clear your essay topic with me via email or office hours before proceeding.**

Deliverable: **2800+ word** draft of essay in a Microsoft Word document uploaded onto Canvas



COURSE POLICIES

1. **You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.**
2. *Attendance:* Attendance and participation in this class is required. **You are permitted up to 6 absences in this class throughout the semester.** Bear in mind that in-class work may be excused/made up only under the following circumstances:
 - Student is absent for a religious holiday
 - Student is absent for an athletic or other university-sponsored event (student athletes/students in band, theater, etc.) – documentation required
 - Medical reasons - documentation required

For any of these instances, you are required to contact me and provide documentation as noted. In-class work missed for any other reason cannot be made up. Any blog post or paper due on a day you are absent is still due.

Tardiness: If a student enters after roll has been called, they are late, which disrupts class. **Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.** Leaving class before dismissal will also count as tardiness. Latecomers must see me after class so I know you attended.

3. *Paper Format & Submission:* All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) documents to Canvas, unless otherwise noted (blog posts, etc.). Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. **All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered.** Please do not email your paper to your instructor. When submitting digital papers, please also include your last name in the file name. (Example: ElliottPaper1.doc).
4. *Late Papers/Assignments:* All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day indicated, unless otherwise noted on the syllabus. **Late assignments will not be accepted.** If you find yourself in a situation that requires an extension, you must contact me **before the due date** to discuss it.
5. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
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/>.

Plagiarism: A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b. Submitting a document or assignment, which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 Aug. 2007)

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. Please schedule a meeting with me to discuss accommodations within the first week of class.
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, in the Department office (4008 TUR). 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 behavior and netiquette*: Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions, so please keep in mind that a) students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds and b) it is vital that you demonstrate respect for ideas that differ from your own (with the exception of systemic forms of bigotry). In addition, students will refrain from texting and other behaviors that distract classmates. **Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal from the class and will count as an absence from class.** Disrespectful behaviors include: Phone calls, texting, checking Facebook, leaving class repeatedly, sleeping, failure to bring texts, disrespectful language, etc.



13. *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/>

14. *Policy on environmental sustainability*. Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials and have minimized the number of hard-copy texts you are required to purchase. 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.)

15. *University Writing Center*: If you ever need help with any of your written assignments, tutors are available at the University Writing Center in 302 Tigert Hall. You can schedule an appointment ahead by calling (352) 846-1138 or by visiting <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-center/>

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

Course grades will be determined based on the following point system:

<u>Final Grade</u>	<u>1000 points</u>
Attendance and Participation	250 points
In-class Peer Reviews	50 points
Crash Course Lecture/Anno Bib	150 points
Close Reading Analysis Paper	100 points
Comparative Analysis Paper	150 points
Final Paper	300 points



GRADING RUBRIC

Grade	
A work	You have completed the assignment at a very high quality level. Content is complete, well-organized, pays special attention to genre and style, and is free of typos and grammatical errors. Work in this range demonstrates a high level of critical engagement. You have gone above and beyond what was expected of you.
B work	The assignment has been completed at a satisfactory level, but may still be in need of minor revisions. Content is complete and well-organized with special attention paid to style, genre, audience, grammar, and mechanics.
C work	The assignment is complete and logically organized, but is notably in need of revision. It may include multiple typos or grammatical errors that suggest a lack of proofreading. Additionally, style and level of critical engagement may be lacking. The bare minimum of what was required of you.
D work	You have mostly done what was asked of you, but at a very poor quality level. Little to no attention has been paid to style, grammar, and mechanics; the work is in need of significant revision. The work may also be missing some of the requirements of the assignment, incomplete, or poorly organized.
E work	An “E” is usually reserved for students who have failed to complete the assignment or have failed to meet the minimum word requirement for the assignment. However, an “E” may be given if the work in question blatantly fails to meet the aforementioned criteria for evaluation.

SCHEDULE

This schedule may be subject to change according to the needs of the course.

Unit 1: American Gothic and the South		
Day	Reading/Viewing Material + Class Plans	Due
Week 1: Welcome		
R 8/23	Welcome and introductions Go over syllabus	
Week 2: What is Southern Gothic?		
T 8/28	Read British Library's "Gothic Motifs" webpage and Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" What is The Gothic? What is Gothic about the American South? In-class visual analysis of Tyminski's "Southern Gothic"	
R 8/30	View Buzzfeed Unsolved's "The Mysterious Disappearance of Roanoke Colony" and "The Strangest Disappearances In the Bermuda Triangle" Read Foucault's "Of Other Spaces" America/n South as a Gothic heterotopia	
Unit 2: Screams From Shadowed Places		
Week 3: The Specters of Slavery		
9/4	Read Poe's "The Gold-Bug," "The Black Cat," and excerpt of Morrison's "Black Matters" from <i>Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination</i> In-class rhetorical analysis	
9/6	Read Chestnut's "The Wife of His Youth" and Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" Discuss the specter of miscegenation and racial haunting	
Week 4: The Chokecherry Tree		
9/11	Read excerpts of Jacob's <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> and Hurston's "Sweat"	
9/13	Read Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> Chaps. 1 – 5	Essay 1 Due
Week 5: Nothing Ever Dies		
9/18	Read Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> Chaps. 6 - 18	
9/20	Read Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> Chaps. 19 - 23	
Week 6: Sixty Million and More		
9/25	Read Morrison's <i>Beloved</i> Chaps. 24 – end and in-class visual analysis of Beyoncé's "Formation"	African American horror presentation
9/27	In-class visual analysis of Childish Gambino's "This is America" Discuss Jim Crow and the persistence of African-American Gothic in the 21 st Century	

Unit 3: The Wind Done Gone		
Day	Reading/Viewing Material + Class Plans	Due
Week 7: No More Than a “Dream” Remembered		
10/2	Watch <i>Gone With the Wind</i> Discuss the death, decay, and romanticizing of the Antebellum South	SG in film presentation
10/4	Read Bierce’s “Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge” and Faulkner’s “Mountain Victory”	
Week 8: Full of Sound and Fury		
10/9	Read Faulkner’s “Dry September” Listen to Billie Holiday’s “Strange Fruit”	SG in music presentation
10/11	Read O’Connor’s “Some Elements of the Grotesque in Southern Fiction” and Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily”	
Unit 4: You’re Not From Around Here, Are You?		
Week 9: Southern Grotesqueries		
10/16	Read O’Connor’s “Good Country People” Watch <i>Vernon, Florida</i> (1981) Discuss construction of Southerners from non-Southern perspectives	SG in documentary and photography presentation
10/18	Read Capote’s <i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chaps. 1 – 5	
Week 10: The Queer Lady in the Window		
10/23	Read Capote’s <i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chaps. 6 – 9 Discuss queer Gothic	Essay 2 Due
10/25	Read Capote’s <i>Other Voices, Other Rooms</i> Chaps. 10 – 12	
Unit 5: Stranger Than Fiction		
Week 11: On the Bayou		
10/30	Watch <i>Interview With The Vampire</i> (1994) and listen to <i>Lore</i> , Ep 40 “Everything Floats” Discuss voodoo, vampires, and Louisiana in the cultural imagination	Voodoo presentation
11/1	Watch <i>Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island</i> (1998) Cont. discussion of Louisiana and voodoo Discuss myth, empiricism, and the skepticism of the “outsider”	
Week 12: Southern Legends		
11/6	Listen to <i>Lore</i> Ep 47 “Missing the Point” and Ep 56 “Going Viral” and watch Buzzfeed Unsolved “ The Search for the Mysterious Mothman ” Discuss Southern urban legends Discuss folk tales, hysteria, and the strange	Southern urban legends presentation
11/8	Read Grimms’ “The Robber Bridegroom” and Welty’s <i>The Robber Bridegroom</i>	

Day	Reading/Viewing Material + Class Plans	Due
Week 13: A Southern Fairy Tale		
11/13	Read Welty's <i>The Robber Bridegroom</i>	
11/15	Read Welty's <i>The Robber Bridegroom</i> and The Toast's " Every Southern Gothic Novel Ever "	
Unit 6: "America's Playland"		
Week 14: Take Your Place in the Sun in Fabulous Florida!		
11/20	Watch " Vintage Florida Films 1942 " and " Florida Hot Spots 1957 " and read O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" and Salinger's "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" Discuss nostalgia, ethics, and the façades of the American family/vacation	
11/22	NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK	
Week 15: The Florida Project		
11/27	Watch " Walt Disney Presents the Florida Project ," " 60 Minutes: Florida Before Disney (1972) ," " Outside the Kingdom – The World Beyond Disney ," " The Mouseketeers at River Country (1977) ," and " Disney's Forgotten Waterpark – Abandoned River Country " What is Gothic about Florida? What is Gothic about Walt Disney World?	
11/29	Watch " All Us Kids Love Florida (1962) " and read Russell's "Ava Wrestles the Alligator" and "St. Lucy's Home For Girls Raised By Wolves"	
Week 16: See Ya Real Soon!		
12/4	Read Grunwald's " A Requiem for Florida, the Paradise That Should Never Have Been " and Arnett's " The Problem With Writing About Florida " Closing thoughts and Evaluations	
12/11	FINAL PAPER DUE	