

**AML 2070: Survey of American Literature**  
**Section 8599: Figure Poetics**

Fall 2008	MWF Period 4	Room: Matherly 251
Instructor: Gary Hink, English Dept. T.A.	Email: ghink@ufl.edu	Office: TUR4411; MWF Per. 6
Course website: <a href="http://figural.wordpress.com">http://figural.wordpress.com</a>	E-Learning: <a href="http://lss.at.ufl.edu">http://lss.at.ufl.edu</a>	

**Overview**

In surveying selections of American literature, we will not ask what the texts *mean*, but how they *function*: for this course, I propose that we regard these texts as *expressive*, conveying something distinctly “American.” To identify the expressive function, we will explore and apply the poetic logic of *figure* (metaphor) – an image that conveys affect, which can not be directly stated. Another label is T.S. Eliot’s term “objective correlative,” which we will examine first in his poem, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.” In order to understand figural expression, we will read additional Modernist poetry and derive from Jane Hirschfield’s essays on the logic of metaphor; our objective is to analyze a variety of American literature through this perspective (“lens”), to see what new results arise concerning our object of study (“target”) – some of which might likely be familiar, by design.

Using this method of critical reading, we will try to formulate what these American authors express about America; ideas of “the American Dream”; notions of American identity, experience, and literature itself. As culture does not exist in a vacuum, we will also remain attentive to issues of sex, class, race, and sexuality – considering the social contexts and political relevance, while fundamentally questioning definitions of “American” identity. In other words, we will speculate how ideas of America and *the label* “American” are expressed through literature, seeking to understand and describe this cultural process. Within these parameters, this course satisfies UF’s General Education requirement for the Humanities content area, as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisingened.html#requirements>.

**Required Texts**

All texts available at Goerings Book Store (1717 NW First Ave) and from websites (e.g. Amazon.com).

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> . (Scribner or Penguin editions)	ISBN 0-743-27356-7
Hirschfield, Jane. <i>Nine Gates: Entering the Mind of Poetry</i> . Harper Perennial, 1998.	ISBN 0-060-92948-0
Pynchon, Thomas. <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> . Harper Perennial (1999 or 2006 editions)	ISBN 0-060-91307-X
<i>The Norton Anthology of American Literature Sixth Edition, Volume D</i> . Ed. Nina Baym. 2002.	ISBN 0-393-97900-8

Composition Handbook (e.g. *Penguin Handbook*, *A Writer’s Reference*, *Rules for Writers*)

- Note: one purchased for ENC 1101/2 will likely suffice; please verify during first class.

**Grade Distribution**

6 Reading Response papers (500-600 words each)	40%
Attendance and Participation	25%
Research-Based Essay (2000-2500 words)	20%
Analytic Essay (1000-1500 words)	15%

*Note:* if we opt to create a collaborative website/wiki, grade values will be adjusted accordingly.

## ***Assignments and Grading Criteria***

### **Research-Based Essay** (2000-2500 words; 3 secondary sources)

An analytic and argumentative essay about a text, either one read in class or independently, supporting a thesis with both textual evidence and secondary sources. A topic proposal is required, in order to receive feedback and guidance. I will provide detailed assignment guidelines, topic/text suggestions, and evaluation criteria long before the proposal is due. An example approach might discuss the text within the original social, historical, or cultural context – or within any of these contexts when reading at present. *Note:* final essays are due two weeks before our last class, on which day I will return evaluated essays with feedback; no work can be accepted on our last day.

### **Analytic Essay** (1000-1500 words; no secondary sources)

This essay will seek to answer the question, “How does the work function?” by analyzing the figural expression by one text from class and by supporting this interpretation through discussion of (only) textual evidence. We will dedicate ample class time for practicing this interpretive method and for reviewing essay-writing strategies; likewise, I will provide a detailed assignment description with examples and with evaluation criteria.

### **Reading Response Papers** (6 responses; 500-600 words each)

These informal assignments serve to illustrate attentive and critical reading of assigned texts. Evaluation will correspond accordingly, with credit assigned **(1)** for submitting work on-time; **(2)** for demonstrating close reading of assigned texts and attention to class lecture/discussion topics, particularly by describing insights and connections; **(3)** for providing thoughtful and relevant answers to response prompts, with **(4)** specific examples from respective readings, while **(5)** minimizing and/or avoiding summary, repetition, digression (tangents), and any unnecessary discussion. Tentative response prompts (*subject to change, posted online*) include:

- identifying expressive figure(s); comparing/contrasting the techniques of 2-3 texts
- analyzing an “expressive” work in another medium, *e.g.* **music, film, visual art**
- describing the historical or social context as expressed by work; or, inversely, the present significance
- presenting a working definition of “American Literature,” as a descriptive argument
- composing a creative *expressive* work, deriving from examples of readings

### **Extra Credit Opportunities**

These options are not required, but strongly recommended – both to engage in mature scholarly practices, as well as to safeguard against the detrimental effects of lower essay grades than expected, (*i.e.* “preemptive” effort rather than “reactionary” extra credit requests).

- 1) “Reading Journal” entries on student blog: discuss questions, difficulty, and other observations; describe insights, particularly concerning connections that emerge, especially between our selections and those outside of class. Beginning Week 3, one entry per week minimum; one per text maximum.
- 2) Post Reading Response assignments online; comment on fellow bloggers’ entries. Replies must be productive, relevant, perceptive, and above all, respectful in order to receive credit; we will discuss this further in class.

## ***Course Objectives***

In addition to practicing insightful reading and critical thinking, students in this course will work toward analyzing texts using the learned methodology and toward discussing literature in a cogent fashion, supporting interpretations and arguments with textual evidence while avoiding summary and uncritical repetition of ideas.

This particular class has been designed with two main audiences in mind: general education students who have some interest in United States literature and students who plan to major in English. This class will present the students in each group with texts that have been or are currently considered exceptionally important to American literature and/or culture.

The student learning outcomes for this course are as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements>.

Composition courses provide instruction in methods and conventions of standard written English (i.e. grammar, punctuation, usage) and the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive, require multiple drafts submitted to the instructor for feedback prior to final submission, and fulfill 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement.

For more about the University of Florida Composition requirement, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>

To graduate, students must complete courses that involve substantial writing for a total of 24,000 words. This course meets the requirement of E6 classes: Coursework with at least 6,000 words. In this class,

1. The student must write a minimum of 6,000 words in the course (one double spaced, typed page in 12 point type is 300 words).
2. This written work must be evaluated on the effectiveness, organization, clarity, and coherence of the writing as well as the grammar, punctuation and usage of standard written English.
3. The student must be provided feedback on the written work submitted.
4. Teamwork or writing done by a group or team, class notes, in-class essay examinations, and term papers submitted too late in the semester to be returned to students in class cannot be used to meet the minimum word requirement. Drafts cannot be counted separately from final drafts as part of the total number of words completed during the course.

For more information about the Gordon Rule, see: <http://www.cba.ufl.edu/gened/gordonrule.asp>

## ***Course Policies***

### **Attendance and Participation**

Attending class is vital to one's success in this course, as we will frequently discuss and practice our critical approach to writing about literature; any lectures will seek to be markedly relevant to assignments. Class discussion will occupy most sessions, though – thus, daily participation is both expected and recorded for the “Attendance **and** Participation” percentage of the final grade. *Hint:* Participation illustrates having read for that day; this precludes my giving pop “reading check” quizzes, to which I will resort if necessary. Finally, every absence after the third will lower the final grade by a letter; students will not pass the course after their sixth absence.

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

***Quite simply: do not plagiarize in this or any class.*** We will discuss plagiarism at length in class.

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines which have been accepted by the University. The academic community of students and faculty at the University of Florida strives to develop, sustain and protect an environment of honesty, trust and respect. Students are expected to pursue knowledge with integrity. Exhibiting honesty in academic pursuits and reporting violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines will encourage others to act with integrity. Violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and a student being subject to the sanctions in paragraph XIV of the Student Conduct Code. The conduct set forth hereinafter constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Guidelines (University of Florida Rule 6C1\_4.017).

For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and collusion, see: <<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>>

### **Students with disabilities:**

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Staff at the Disability Resource Center will assist any student who registers as having a disability. Official documentation of a disability is required to determine eligibility for appropriate classroom accommodations. The professional employees at the Disability Resource Program serve as full-time advocates for students with disabilities ensuring students have physical and programmatic access to all college programs.

For more information about Student Disability Services, see: <<http://www.ufl.edu/disability/>>

### **Statement on harassment:**

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code at <<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php>> and policies regarding harassment at <<http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>>

### **Final grade appeals:**

Please consult me with any questions about grades. If the issue is unresolved and students ultimately request review by the English Department, they can appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

*Schedule of Readings and Assignments (subject to change, in consult with class)*

W 8/27 Read/Discuss: Robert Frost: "The Figure a Poem Makes" (NAAL 1200-1)  
 F 8/29 Read: NAAL Introduction (1071-84). Discuss: Modernism, historical context

M 09/01 **No Class / Labor Day**  
 W 09/03 *Nine Gates* chapter 1: "Poetry and the Mind of Concentration"  
 F 09/05 T.S. Eliot: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1420-3); "Objective Correlative" handout

M 09/08 Willa Cather: "The Sculptor's Funeral" & "Neighbour Rosicky" (1113-42)  
 W 09/10 Susan Glaspell "Trifles" (1203-12)  
 F 09/12 Sherwood Anderson: from *Winesburg, Ohio* (1214-28)  
**Due: Reading Response**

M 09/15 F. Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* (through Chapter 5)  
 W 09/17 *Great Gatsby* (Chapters 6-7)  
 F 09/19 *Great Gatsby* (Chapters 8-9)  
**Due: Reading Response**

M 09/22 *Nine Gates* chapter 2: "Question of Originality"  
 W 09/24 William Carlos Williams: selections from 19 poems (1265-81)  
 F 09/26 Ezra Pound: selections from 9 poems (1283-96)

M 09/29 *Nine Gates* chapter 5: "Poetry and the Mind of Indirection"  
 W 10/01 Hart Crane: selections from 12 poems, incl. "To Brooklyn Bridge" (1809-45)  
 F 10/03 Ernest Hemingway: "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" (1848-64)  
**Due: Reading Response**

M 10/06 *Nine Gates* chapter 6: "Inward and Outward Looking"  
 W 10/08 Wallace Stevens (1235-51): "The Snow Man," "The Emperor of Ice-Cream," "Disillusionment of Ten O'Clock," "Anecdote of the Jar," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," others  
 F 10/10 John Steinbeck: from *The Grapes of Wrath* (1902-13)  
**Due: Reading Response**

M 10/13 Zora Neale Hurston: "The Eatonville Anthology" & "The Gilded Six-Bits" (1507-27)  
 W 10/15 Langston Hughes: selections from 15 poems (1892-1901)  
 F 10/17 Claude McKay: selections from 10 poems (1458-62)  
**Due: Reading Response**

M 10/20	Essay Workshop: In-class exercise (content analysis and support)	
W 10/22	Essay Workshop: Organization and Revision	
F 10/24	<b>No Class / Homecoming</b>	
M 10/27	<b>Due: Essay 1</b>	
	Read: Carl Sandburg: selections from 7 poems (1230-3)	
W 10/29	John Dos Passos: from <i>U.S.A.</i> (1674-93)	
F 10/31	Dorothy Parker: "The Waltz" (1615-8); Genevieve Taggard: 6 poems (1620-2)	
M 11/03	Nella Larsen: <i>Quicksand</i> Chapters 1 through 11 (1528-1565)	
W 11/05	<i>Quicksand</i> Chapters 12-16 (1565-1585)	
F 11/07	<i>Quicksand</i> Chapter 17 to end (1585-1609)	
M 11/10	<b>Due: Project Proposal</b>	
	Read: William Faulkner: <i>As I Lay Dying</i> (1695-1742)	
W 11/12	<i>As I Lay Dying</i> (1742-1766; beginning with "Tull")	
F 11/13	<i>As I Lay Dying</i> (1767-end; beginning with "Moseley")	
M 11/17	<i>Nine Gates</i> chapter 7: "The Way of Shadow and Light"	
W 11/19	Gertrude Stein: from <i>Tender Buttons</i> (1164-73)	
F 11/21	Gertrude Stein: from <i>The Making of Americans</i> (1152-64)	<b>Discuss: Essay 2</b>
M 11/24	Essay Workshop / Conferences	
W 11/26	Essay Workshop / Conferences (if necessary)	<b>Due: Essay 2</b>
F 11/28	<b>No Class / Thanksgiving</b>	
M 12/01	Thomas Pynchon: <i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> Chapters 1-3 + PynchonWiki annotations	
W 12/03	<i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> Chapters 4-5	
F 12/05	<i>The Crying of Lot 49</i> Chapter 6 + short film online	
M 12/08	Student Presentations	<b>Due: Reading Response (creative)</b>
W 12/10	Student Presentations	

*optional anthology selections for essay topics:*

William Faulkner: "Barn Burning" (1791-1802)  
 F. Scott Fitzgerald: "Winter Dreams" (1642-58) & "Babylon Revisited" (1658-72)  
 Eugene O'Neil: *Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1340-1417)  
 Katherine Anne Porter: "Flowering Judas" (1464-72); "Pale Horse, Pale Rider" (1472-1505)  
 Jean Toomer: From *Cane* (1636-40)  
 Thomas Wolfe: "The Lost Boy" (1866-85)

*Poets:*

E.E. Cummings (1624-34)	Amy Lowell (1144-50)
H.D. (1304-20)	Edna St. Vincent Millay (1610-3)
Robert Frost: (1175-99)	Marianne Moore (1327-37)