

LIT 3319: Contexts, Literature of the American South
Eleven -Week Summer Session 2021

Course Information

LIT 3319.0U1

Online

MW 12:30 PM - 2:45 PM

Professor Contact Information

Dr. Ingrao

Office: Virtual office hours will be held via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Office Hours: T 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM, W 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM, and by appointment

Email: jingrao@utdallas.edu

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

LIT 2350 and 6 semester credit hours from the following: LIT 2320 or LIT 2321 or LIT 2331 or equivalent, or instructor consent required.

Course Description

LIT 3319 (3 semester hours) examines representative selections of literature written during such periods as the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the early nineteenth century, or post-World War One; topics such as the literature of the scientific revolution; or movements such as Surrealism, or the Beats. May be repeated for credit as content varies.

This summer we will journey together through the Gothic South examining major authors and themes. We will begin in areas of comingled terror and resistance such as southern swamplands before considering tensions between the country and city in southern Gothic literature, as well as examining the ongoing legacy of the abuses of slavery in such works as Randall Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits* and Jesmyn Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, before concluding with the zombie apocalypse.

Most critics argue for the legacy of slavery as focal to the southern Gothic and, though this will be one of our key points of conversation throughout the summer, I have hope that we can also take the Gothic into discussion of gender, sexual identity, and social class as well.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

This course seeks to offer students the potential to: 1) Demonstrate familiarity with selected works of both some of the canonical writers of the American South, such as O'Connor and Williams, and "emerging authors," such as Randall Kenan and Jesmyn Ward, among others; 2) Demonstrate an understanding of and compare expressions of the Gothic in southern literature primarily of the 19th and 20th centuries; 3) Apply contextual readings dealing with the Gothic to primary works by such authors as O'Connor, Williams, Dickey, and others; 4) Formulate questions based upon course readings and actively participate in class discussions; 5) Complete a project on the southern Gothic that demonstrates the ability to effectively synthesize contextual information with a primary work or, comparatively, works to communicate analytical insight into the southern Gothic.

Required Textbooks and Materials

Textbooks are available at the UTD Bookstore and commercially.

Use the following editions for the most potential for success in the course; digital copies are fine:

Tennessee Williams, *Suddenly Last Summer* (Dramatist Play Service)
Flannery O'Connor, *The Violent Bear It Away* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux)
James Dickey, *Deliverance* (Delta)
Randall Kenan, *A Visitation of Spirits* (Vintage)
Jesmyn Ward, *Sing, Unburied, Sing* (Scribner)
Alden Bell, *The Reapers are the Angels* (Holt)

Selected stories by authors such as Poe, Faulkner, Chopin, and others, and contextual materials such as critical articles will be available online. These selections are marked as "online" on the "Assignments & Academic Calendar" and may be accessed using the "Online Readings" link from the Course Homepage.

The course will also incorporate clips from such films as the cinematic adaptation of Dickey's *Deliverance*, and a performance of Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*. I have hope that the author of the zombie apocalypse novel, *The Reapers are the Angels*, will join us for a virtual meeting.

Assignments & Academic Calendar

The following assignments are also viewable via the eLearning "Calendar" link

I. WEEK ONE (May 24th - May 26th):

- **Goals:** 1. Define the "southern Gothic"
2. Demonstration of the southern Gothic from stories by Poe and Faulkner

- **Read for May 26th:** 1. Marshall's "Defining Southern Gothic" (online) and the associated learning module
2. Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (online)
3. Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily" (online)
- **To Do:** 1. **May 24th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Syllabus" discussion board forum
2. **May 26th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Introduction" discussion board forum

General guidelines for posting appear below on page nine of this syllabus. Specific instructions will be included with each individual forum.

II. WEEK TWO (May 31st - June 2nd):

- **Goals:** 1. Examine the swamp as southern Gothic space
2. Demonstration of the swamp as southern Gothic space from stories by Chopin and Page
- **Read for June 2nd:** 1. Wilson's "The Swamp and Antebellum Southern Identity" (online) and the associated learning module.

The learning module for Wilson includes information about further contextual information from Byrd and Jacobs. Readings from Byrd and Jacobs are recommended, but not required

2. Chopin's "Désirée's Baby" (online)
3. Page's "No Haid Pawn" (online)

- **To Do:** 1. **June 2nd at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "June 2nd" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have the week's reading done before our meeting and three questions about the week's topic prepared. See pages nine through ten of this syllabus.

III. WEEK THREE (June 7th - June 9th):

- **Goals:** 1. Examination of the swamp as global southern Gothic space (with **CANNIBALS!!!**)
2. Examination of O'Connor and the "anagogic"
3. Demonstration of the swamp as global Gothic space from Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*
4. Demonstration of O'Connor and the anagogic from her short fiction

- **Read for June 7th:** 1. Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*
2. Sofer's "Unbecoming Acts: Power, Performance, and the Self-Consuming Body in Tennessee William's *Suddenly Last Summer*" (online)
3. Tunc's "Sexuality, Insanity, and the Old South in Tennessee Williams's *Suddenly Last Summer*" (online)

Both Sofer and Tunc share one associated learning module which includes a link to a performance of Williams's play. See this module with your reading of Williams's play.

- **Read for June 9th:** 1. O'Connor's "On Her Own Work" (online) and the associated learning module
2. O'Connor's "A Good Man is Hard to Find" (online)
- **To Do: 1. June 7th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "June 7th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have the reading by Williams, Sofer, and Tunc done before our meeting and three questions prepared.

2. **June 9th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "O'Connor Short Works" discussion board forum

IV. WEEK FOUR (June 14th - June 16th):

- **Goals:** 1. Further examination of O'Connor and the anagogic
2. Examination of southern Gothic tension between "country" and "city"
3. Demonstration of both O'Connor and the anagogic, and the tension between country and city, from her *The Violent Bear it Away*
- **Read for June 14th:** 1. O'Connor's *The Violent Bear it Away*, pages 3-177 and the associated learning module

To help provide context for O'Connor's novel, see Wilson's discussion of key characteristics of southern Protestantism on our course Homepage. This reading is recommended, but not required.

- **Read for June 16th:** 1. O'Connor's *The Violent Bear it Away*, pages 179-243
- **To Do: 1. June 14th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "O'Connor Novel" discussion board forum.

2. *Project on the Southern Gothic assigned today. Email me if you have questions or need help getting started. See pages ten through eleven of this syllabus.*

3. **June 16th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "June 16th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have O'Connor's novel read before our meeting and three questions prepared.

V. WEEK FIVE (June 21st - June 23rd):

- **Goals:** 1. Examination of southern Gothic tension between "city" and "country"
2. Demonstration of the tension between city and country from Dickey's *Deliverance*
- **Read for June 23rd:** 1. Satterwhite's "City to Country, circa 1967-1970" (online) and the associated learning module
2. Dickey's *Deliverance*, pages 2-165
- **To Do:** 1. **June 23rd by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Dickey Pages 2-165" discussion board forum

VI. WEEK SIX (June 28th - June 30th):

- **Goals:** 1. Further examination and demonstration of southern Gothic tension between "city" and "country" in Dickey
2. Examination of the legacy of slavery as central to southern Gothic
3. Demonstration of the legacy of slavery as central to southern Gothic from Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*
- **Read for June 28th:** 1. Dickey's *Deliverance*, pages 169-278 and the associated learning module which links to selected scenes from Boorman's 1972 cinematic adaptation of *Deliverance*
- **Read for June 30th:** 1. Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*, pages 3-65
- **To Do:** 1. **June 28th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "June 28th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have Dickey's novel read, clips from Boorman's film watched, and three questions prepared before our meeting.

2. **June 30th by 12:30 PM** -- *Rough draft of Project on the Southern Gothic due. Submit directly to the instructor via email.*

3. **June 30th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Kenan Pages 3-65" discussion board forum

VII. WEEK SEVEN (July 5th - July 7th):

- **Goals:** 1. Further examination and demonstration of the legacy of slavery as central to southern Gothic from Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*
- **Read for July 7th:** 1. Kenan's *A Visitation of Spirits*, pages 66-257 and the associated learning module
- **To Do:** 1. **July 7th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "July 7th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have Kenan's novel read before our meeting and three questions prepared.

VIII. WEEK EIGHT (July 12th - July 14th):

- **Goals:** 1. Examination of race as central to southern Gothic
2. Demonstration of race as central to southern Gothic from Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*
- **Read for July 14th:** 1. Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, pages 1-191, and the associated learning module
- **To Do:** 1. **July 13th** -- *Rough drafts of the Project on the Southern Gothic will be returned on Tuesday, July 13th. Begin revision. In addition to regular office hours on July 13th, I will be available today from 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM if you would like to discuss plans for revision, Ward's novel, or any other ideas from our class with me.*
2. **July 14th by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Ward Pages 1-191" discussion board forum

IX. WEEK NINE (July 19th - July 21st):

- **Goals:** 1. Further examination and demonstration of race as central to southern Gothic from Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*
2. Examination of the zombie apocalypse trope as both chronicle and deconstruction of southern Gothic, or **ZOMBIES, ZOMBIES, ZOMBIES!!!**
3. Demonstration of the zombie apocalypse trope as both chronicle and deconstruction of southern Gothic from Bell's *The Reapers are the Angels*

- **Read for July 19th:** 1. Ward's *Sing, Unburied, Sing*, pages 193-289
- **Read for July 21st:** 1. Bell's *The Reapers are the Angels*, pages 3-68 and the associated learning module
- **To Do:** 1. **July 19th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "July 19th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have Ward's novel read before our meeting and three questions prepared.

2. **July 21st by 11:00 PM** -- Post to the "Bell Pages 3-68" discussion board forum

X. WEEK TEN (July 26th - July 28th):

- **Goals:** 1. Further examination and demonstration of the zombie apocalypse trope as both chronicle and deconstruction of southern Gothic from Bell's *The Reapers are the Angels*
- **Read for July 26th:** 1. Bell's *The Reapers are the Angels*, pages 69-162
- **Read for July 28th:** 1. Bell's *The Reapers are the Angels*, pages 163-225
- **To Do:** 1. **July 26th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "July 26th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

Have through page 162 of Bell's novel read before our meeting and three questions prepared.

2. **July 28th at 12:30 PM** -- Attend the "July 28th" virtual meeting on Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

***Conversation with the author on this day, July 28th. Have Bell's novel read before our meeting and three questions prepared.*

XI. WEEK ELEVEN (August 2nd - August 4th):

- **To Do:** 1. **August 2nd from 12:30 PM - 2:45 PM** -- *I will be available during our scheduled class time to answer any final questions you have about revision. This is in addition to my regular office hours for the week.*
2. **August 4th by 12:30 PM** -- *Final, revised drafts of the Project on the Southern Gothic will be due. In addition to regular office hours on August 4th, I will be available today from 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM to discuss any final thoughts about the southern Gothic.*

Grading Policy

Semester grades will be calculated in accordance with the following percentages:

Quizzes	20%
Discussion board posts	25%
Virtual meetings	25%
Project on the Gothic	30%

Letter grades correspond to the following numerical values in calculating a student's semester grade:

A+	4.00	C+	2.33	F	0.00
A	4.00	C	2.00		
A-	3.67	C-	1.67		
B+	3.33	D+	1.33		
B	3.00	D	1.00		
B-	2.67	D-	0.67		

Course & Instructor Policies

This will be an online course that will primarily follow an asynchronous format; that is, we will not meet face-to-face in a virtual format for **every** class. **With this in mind, it is of extreme importance that you:**

1. Keep up with all readings, assignments, due dates, and so on. **Reference the "Assignments & Academic Calendar" frequently.** I would recommend that each week of the semester, you look and plan at least a week ahead in order to avoid falling behind, or potentially missing a reading, assignment, or due date.
2. **Get in touch with your instructor regularly via email and virtual office hours.** In a face-to-face class, I happily urge students to contact me and visit office hours frequently. In the case of an online course, such communication is not only **desired** but also **essential** to your potential for success in the course.

This course requires four major assignments that will be used in determining a semester grade:

1. Reading quizzes will be given throughout the semester. **All reading quizzes will be unannounced in advance, so students should plan to keep up with the reading assignments listed in the "Assignments & Academic Calendar."** **The instructor will send an announcement when a quiz is available, but you should also plan to check eLearning regularly for the quizzes.**

All quizzes will be multiple choice, and you will have twenty-four hours to complete a quiz.

As a hint, you may expect at least one quiz for the majority of each of the major authors we will discuss: O'Connor, Dickey, Kenan, Ward, and Bell.

As a further hint, on those Mondays during the semester when we have neither a discussion board forum posting or virtual meeting, quizzes are much more likely.

Plan to stay slightly ahead in the reading.

Quizzes will be graded on a check + (exceeds expectations), check (meets expectations), check - (does not meet expectations) basis. At the end of the semester, the combined total of check plus and check quiz grades will be counted and applied to a letter grade as follows:

- Five or more combined check plus and check grades = A
- Four combined check plus and check grades = B
- Three combined check plus and check grades = C
- Two combined check plus and check grades = D
- One or no combined check plus and check grades = F

With the exception of a grade of F, plus credit will be applied to the semester quiz grade in those cases that a student has earned more check pluses than checks.

2. Students will need to complete eight discussion board posts throughout the semester; these posts will ask students to respond to course readings within contexts presented by the course. Deadlines for posting will be stated in the "Assignments & Academic Calendar." Postings should meet the following criteria:

- a. Each posting should be approximately 250-500 words **with the exception of the first posting concerning the course syllabus.**
- b. Again **with the exception of the first posting concerning the course syllabus.** each posting should respond specifically to the reading (for example, include a page number or numbers), and pose a question to which the instructor and other students can respond.

At the end of the semester, discussion board postings will be translated to a letter grade as follows:

- Seven or more postings = A
- Six to five postings = B
- Four to three postings = C
- Two postings = D
- One or no postings = F

3. This course will host eight virtual class meetings during the semester.

Please have three questions about the topic for the week prepared in advance for each meeting in case I ask you to begin the meeting.

These meetings will be of high importance as dialogue about ideas is key to literary analysis; dialogue is, in short, why those of us who work in the field of literature do what we do.

Meetings will take place via Blackboard Collaborate Ultra and will be stated in the "Assignments & Academic Calendar." You may expect each meeting to last for at least ninety minutes.

Contact the instructor in advance if you anticipate missing a meeting or have concerns about running Blackboard Collaborate Ultra. Note also as per the following criteria that some meetings may be missed without penalty in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

Moreover, meetings will be recorded and archived for students' reference.

The instructor expects active participation during meetings, but also understands that some students are more "shy" about speaking up than others. I have hope to foster a supportive and comfortable learning environment for this class that will encourage comments from all. If you are not naturally inclined to speaking up in class, then do not worry but do be prepared to respond if I should ask you to share the questions you prepared in advance for the meeting.

At the end of the semester, participation in meetings will be translated to a letter grade as follows:

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|----------------------------------|---|---|
| • Four or more meetings attended | = | A |
| • Three meetings attended | = | B |
| • Two meetings attended | = | C |
| • One meeting attended | = | D |
| • No meetings attended | = | F |

4. A project on the southern Gothic that may take one of several forms, so choose an option that engages and interests you as we will begin work on the project during week four of the semester.

Students may choose one of the following options for the project:

- A formal research paper of five pages. All conventions of eighth-edition MLA format should be observed.
- An annotated bibliography in which each annotation is approximately 500 words. The annotation should offer a summary of the source and explain the importance of the source to a potential research question concerning the southern Gothic. All conventions of eighth-edition MLA format should be observed.
- A podcast of about five to ten minutes in length with the possibility of being longer at the student's discretion.
- An original video of about five minutes in length.
- Pending instructor approval, an original and creative idea of your choice not listed here.

Regardless of the type of project that you choose, all projects must:

- a. Use one primary and five researched ("secondary") sources.
- b. Concern at least one of the primary authors—Williams, O'Connor, Dickey, Kenan, Ward, or Bell--to be discussed in class during the course of the semester. Students should note that much more research exists concerning Williams, O'Connor, Dickey, and Kenan, as opposed to Ward and Bell.
- c. All projects will undergo both a rough and final draft.

Grading of projects will be conducted holistically, with a focus on the following:

- a. Presentation of ideas that build upon what has been discussed by the class.
- b. Use of examples from sources.
- c. Connection of examples from sources to the primary text.
- d. Organization.
- e. One primary and five researched sources are used. All projects, with the exception of the annotated bibliography, will need to be accompanied by a bibliography in eighth-edition MLA format.

The assignment of letter grades to a project reflect the following rubric:

A = Examples that reference sources specifically and are connected in an apparent and recognizable, perhaps even insightful, manner to thought process. Both examples and analysis are strong and build upon, rather than just repeating class ideas. All required sources are present, and ideas follow logically from one source to the next.

B = Examples that reference sources specifically and are connected to thought process but in a manner that lacks clarity, even though ideas and examples build upon class ideas. In this case, either examples or analysis would benefit from more development. All required sources are present, and ideas generally follow logically from one source to the next; that is, a reader might have to look at a transition more than once to make sense of it.

C = Examples that reference sources but in a less specific manner than an A or a B project and are connected to thought process but in a manner that lacks clarity. In this case, both examples and analysis would benefit from more development, and the project just repeats rather than builds upon class ideas. All required sources are present, and the order of ideas are might need to be looked at several times in order to make sense of organization.

D = Examples are vague, and summary replaces analysis in a number of cases. **A project will also automatically be assigned a D as a starting point for grading in those cases in which sources are missing.** Ideas are not connected to one another, or the order of ideas causes confusion.

F = Examples are not used or are vague and disconnected from analysis. Sources are not used, or a bibliography is not submitted constituting plagiarism. Ideas are not connected to one another, or the order of ideas causes confusion. The project is not submitted on time without a valid excuse for late submission having been approved.

In light of the pandemic, late work will not **generally** be accepted without a valid excuse. Legitimate excuses for late work may include the following:

1. Religiously observant students wishing to turn in work late due to a religious holiday should notify their instructor in advance of the holiday, and should discuss with him acceptable ways of turning in work late.
2. A documented illness of the student or of someone for whom the student acts as a caregiver.
3. A documented work-related absence for essential workers.

Students seeking to submit an assignment late must first present documentation of a valid excuse before the assignment will be accepted.

This course will be conducted according to strict codes of academic honesty. All cases of cheating will be fully investigated. Penalties for cheating may include failing an exam, failing the course, or suspension and expulsion from the University. Students are expected to know the University's policies and procedures on such matters, as well as those governing student services, conduct, and obligations.

Please do not hesitate or delay contacting the instructor with any questions concerning these policies. Remember that communicating regularly with me gives more potential for success in the course.

Comet Creed

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: "As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do."

Technical Support

If students experience any problems with their UTD accounts they may send an email to: <https://www.utdallas.edu/oit/helpdesk/> or call the UTD Computer Helpdesk at 972-883-2911.

Withdrawal from Class

The administration of this institution has set deadlines for withdrawal of any college-level courses. These dates and times are published in that semester's course catalog. Administration procedures must be followed. It is the student's responsibility to handle withdrawal requirements from any class. In other words, the professor cannot drop or withdraw any student. Students must do the proper paperwork to ensure that they will not receive a final grade of F in a course if they choose not to attend the class once they are enrolled.

NOTE: June 9th is the last day to drop this course without incurring a W.

Additional Important Policies

It is the student's responsibility to review additional University policies concerning Office of AccessAbility services, avoiding plagiarism, resources to aid in the potential for success, incomplete grades, student conduct and discipline, academic integrity, technical support, email use, copyright notice, grievance procedures, and religious holy days at <http://provost.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies/>

These descriptions and timelines are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.