

# INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN LIT

## AMERICAN LITERATURE AS INTERDISCIPLINARY PRACTICE

### Course Texts

*Cane* by Jean Toomer

*Tender Buttons* by Gertrude Stein

*Howl* by Allen Ginsberg

*Chelsea Girls* by Eileen Myles

*The Grave on the Wall* by Brandon Shimoda

Additional PDFs and readings will be posted on iCollege.

### Dr. Sturm's Contact Info & Office Hours Schedule

**Email:** [nsturm@gsu.edu](mailto:nsturm@gsu.edu)

#### Office hours for Fall 2022:

In-person office hours are on Mondays 11am-noon at 25 Park Place Room 2335—23rd floor.

Virtual office hours via Zoom are available by appointment based on our shared availability and schedules. Please email me ahead of time to arrange a virtual meeting.

See Page 7 of this syllabus for policies related to COVID-19 and wearing face masks

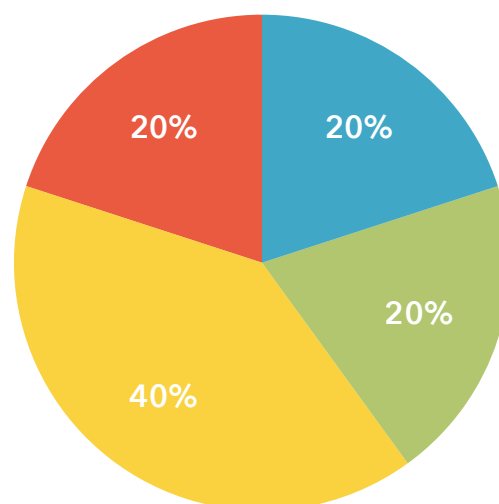
## Course Description

This course traces the development of American literature from 1865 to the present by studying the works of both marginal and canonical writers with an emphasis on race, gender, sexuality, and aesthetic experimentation. By reading poetry, novels, nonfiction prose, and hybrid genres, we will investigate some of the primary issues in American literature and culture over the last roughly 150 years. Students will leave this class with a broad understanding of the aesthetic, historical, and critical themes of contemporary American literature.

## Assignments

Students will complete three primary artifacts and a final reflective portfolio. Assignments will include individual work and group collaboration in a variety of multimodal processes that will challenge and expand students' skills as readers and communicators.

- Quizzes: 100 points
- Paper 1: 100 points
- Paper 2: 200 points
- Participation: 100 points



## COURSE SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR UPDATE AT ANY TIME

Week 1	IN-CLASS	WHAT TO DO
Monday, August 22	Introduction to course	
Wednesday, August 24	Discuss reading	Read "Bartleby, the Scrivener" by Herman Melville (pdf)
<b>Week 2</b>		
Monday, August 29		NO CLASS
Wednesday, August 31		NO CLASS
<b>Week 3</b>		
Monday, September 5		Labor Day: NO CLASS
Wednesday, September 7	Discuss reading	Read Poetry Packet (pdf)
<b>Week 4</b>		
Monday, September 12	Discuss reading	Read <i>Cane</i> by Jean Toomer pg 1-107
Wednesday, September 14	Discuss reading	Read <i>Cane</i> pg 111-160
<b>Week 5</b>		
Monday, September 19	Discuss reading	Read <i>Tender Buttons</i> sections "Objects" and "Food"
Wednesday, September 21	Discuss reading	Read <i>Tender Buttons</i> section "Rooms" and "Afterword" by Juliana Spahr
<b>Week 6</b>		
Monday, September 26	Discuss Paper #1 process	
Wednesday, September 28	Discuss readings & film	Amendments 13, 14, and 15 to United States Constitution; "A Letter to My Nephew" by James Baldwin (pdfs); Watch documentary <i>13th</i> directed by Ava DuVernay
<b>Week 7</b>		
Monday, October 3	Discuss film	Finish <i>13th</i>
Wednesday, October 5	Discuss reading	Read <i>Howl</i> by Allen Ginsberg
<b>Week 8</b>		

Monday, October 10	Discuss reading	In-class handouts of poems/ excerpts of mid-20th century poetry
Wednesday, October 12	Continue to discuss poetry readings	<b>DUE:</b> Paper #1 by Friday 10/14 at 11:59pm
<b>Week 9</b>		
Monday, October 17	Discuss reading	Read <i>Chelsea Girls</i> by Eileen Myles pg 1-53
Wednesday, October 19	Discuss reading	Read <i>Chelsea Girls</i> pg 55-99
<b>Week 10</b>		
Monday, October 24	Discuss reading	Read <i>Chelsea Girls</i> pg 101-185
Wednesday, October 26	Discuss reading	Read <i>Chelsea Girls</i> pg 187-214
<b>Week 11</b>		
Monday, October 31	Discuss reading	Read <i>Chelsea Girls</i> pg 215-274
Wednesday, November 2	Discuss reading	Read selection of Myles's poetry (pdf)
<b>Week 12</b>		
Monday, November 7		NO CLASS
Wednesday, November 9		NO CLASS
<b>Week 13</b>		
Monday, November 14	Discuss reading	Read <i>The Grave on the Wall</i> by Brandon Shimoda pg 1-93
Wednesday, November 16	Discuss reading	Read <i>Grave</i> pg 94-124
<b>Week 14</b>		
Monday, November 21		Fall Holiday–NO CLASS
Wednesday, November 23		Fall Holiday–NO CLASS
<b>Week 15</b>		
Monday, November 28	Discuss reading	Read <i>Grave</i> pg 125-200
Wednesday, November 30	Continue to discuss Shimoda	
<b>Finals Week</b>		

December 5-9

**DUE:** Paper #2 and Reflective Questionnaire by Friday 12/9 at 11:59pm

## Policies

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### Expectations of a University-Level Student

The following suggestions will help you succeed in this class and others at the college level

- Read and know the policies stated on the course syllabus
- Adhere to all submission guidelines and procedures set out by your instructor
- Attend class
- Attend class prepared to participate, having completed any assigned work for the day, and to complete any work assigned in class
- Follow the posted schedule for the course for attendance and work
- Keep track of all deadlines and tasks whether given on a printed calendar, in an electronic form (e.g., email or iCollege), on the board, or verbally in class
- Correspond with your instructor in a respectful and polite way
- Talk to your instructor and ask questions when they arise (this may be in class, via email, or during office hours)
- Schedule an appointment or stop by during office hours to discuss details of your coursework, grades, or any other private matters (the classroom is public and not the best place for these conversations)

### Community

We are part of a learning community dedicated to supporting a positive environment for all participants. We must treat one another with **respect** at all times. Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important relating to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, and nationalities. Disruptive behavior such as disrespecting a member of the class, eating, sleeping, text messaging, web browsing, holding personal conversations, or doing work for other classes does not support this community. If you are disturbing the class, I may ask you to leave for the day, forfeiting any in-class assignments we may complete after your departure. If disruptive behavior continues or a pattern of disruption occurs, additional steps may be taken, including permanent removal from the course. Keep in mind that our community does not end at the classroom door, but extends to our iCollege space, course emails, and all other out-of-class environments used for our course interactions.

Please see [http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2016/09/Disruptive\\_Student\\_September9\\_2016.pdf](http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2016/09/Disruptive_Student_September9_2016.pdf) for information regarding GSU's Disruptive Student Behavior Policy.

### Mature Themes

Quite often, course materials and class discussions will deal with issues of gender, sexuality, race, and violence, and other potentially sensitive and/or triggering topics and themes. In such cases, I expect students to be respectful, and to approach both the material, your classmates, and me with the utmost maturity. If students are at any point unsafe or anticipate being uncomfortable, I encourage you to come speak with me as soon as possible. If you ever need to leave the classroom due to course content, you have my complete consent to do so.

### **Community of Care and Mental Health Resources**

Being a student can be stressful; you often have a lot to manage between classes, personal life, family, and work. In addition, writing and composing are vulnerable acts. As part of our effort to form a supportive community in this class, we should strive to look out for one another. A kind word, an enthusiastic comment about a peer's writing, or simply offering to listen can go a long way toward this goal. If stresses emerge regarding your course work, please speak with me. I will strive to support each of you in your academic life.

As a student, you may experience a range of challenges that can interfere with learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, substance use, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may impact your ability to attend class, concentrate, complete work, take an exam, or participate in daily activities. Problems with relationships, family worries, loss, housing or food insecurity, or a personal struggle or crisis can also contribute to decreased academic performance. In these cases, please consider taking advantage of the resources the university provides through the Dean of Students' Office or the Counseling and Testing Center. You can reach Counseling at <https://counselingcenter.gsu.edu/> and 404-413-1640 and the Dean of Students Student Advocacy team at 404-413-1515.

### **Attendance/Punctuality/Participation**

Attendance is expected and integral to success in the course. You should come to class each day, on time and prepared to work, and be sure to stay for the duration of the class. While in class, focus on the work of the day in our course and refrain from conducting personal business or work for other classes. A 20% portion of your final course grade is connected to daily writing and activities structured to help you be successful in the course. This 20% can raise or lower your final grade by more than a letter grade and can determine whether or not you pass the class. If you ever have questions about your course grade or attendance record, please feel free to ask me. We will go over your current standing and how, if needed, you may improve your engagement in class and your in-class writing grade.

Our course is designed as a face-to-face course and, as such, your success will rely on your being in class to interact with course materials, other students, and me. Even though we may use iCollege and other online platforms for discussions and completing work, nothing can replace the in-person interaction during class. For this reason, no daily writing or in-class work can be made up if you are absent. In other words, you can't simply make up work on your own, submit it to iCollege, and presume I will accept it.

Just as your attendance is critical to your success in this course, so is your active participation. This means regular, meaningful contributions to our class discussions, be they ideas, statements, questions, or written responses. Participation in a university-level classroom may seem intimidating at first. Some of you may be nervous speaking in front of others—you're not alone as most of us have been there. Public speaking is unavoidable, both for the duration of your academic career and beyond. Overcoming this unease is remarkable, and is something you should be very proud of. Additionally, because we are a learning community, your thoughts and questions are absolutely vital to the success of our class. We will all work to make our class a place where all feel comfortable sharing their work and ideas.

### **Supplemental Attendance Policies related to COVID-19**

Students who want to do well in this course will attend class following the attendance policy. You will need an excused absence due to illness. GSU has a new process for students seeking excused absences through the Dean of Students Office. Please submit documentation to <https://>

[deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/professor-absence-notification/](https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/student-assistance/professor-absence-notification/). I will then be notified by the Dean of Students of any excused absences. **Anyone who has a positive COVID test is encouraged to alert the university so that appropriate contact tracing can be conducted.**

### **Wearing a Face Mask in Class**

You are encouraged to wear a face covering in all class meetings. I know that face masks may make some aspects of class more difficult. It will be harder for us all to project our voices and read each other's facial expressions. However, I am willing to sacrifice these elements since wearing a mask is one thing I can control to support the health and safety of our community. Be aware that wearing face mask is not required by GSU, so there is no penalty if you choose to not wear a mask. Our university community has a strong tradition of upholding the value of mutual respect, we therefore ask students to not engage in behavior that would be disruptive if your fellow students make a different choice about wearing masks. If you have concerns, please discuss them with me and I will work to the best of my ability to provide a comfortable environment conducive to student learning.

### **Missed and Late Work**

Generally, late major projects and papers are not accepted. However, I understand that emergencies can arise. Late assignments will therefore be evaluated on a case-by-case basis in keeping with the university policy on excused absences. All major assignments must be completed to pass the course. Please see me to discuss allowances that I can make in the case of a necessary absence (such as a documented illness or family emergency).

### **Communication**

Assignment material, changes to our schedule, or other announcements will be made in class, sent via email, and/or posted on our class iCollege site. Remember, you are responsible for all information covered in class, including days you are absent. I suggest you share phone numbers or email addresses with at least one of your classmates in the event you must miss class one day.

If you would like to contact me outside of class, please do so via email or come by during my office hours. You may have questions or just want to chat—I encourage both! I typically check my email on weekdays during regular work hours. This means I may not receive an email you send on Friday night until Monday—plan accordingly. Additionally, while we each have preferred email accounts, I will only send emails to your GSU student email account, per university policy. All correspondence, therefore, will come to yourcampusid@student.gsu.edu from my @gsu.edu faculty email account. Please check this account regularly as any communication outside of class will be sent to this address.

### **Assignment Submission**

All major assignments will be submitted electronically to our class iCollege site. Emailed assigned will not be accepted unless specifically noted otherwise in class or on an assignment sheet.

### **Plagiarism**

You should familiarize yourself with Georgia State's policy on Academic Honesty ([https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2019/07/2019\\_7\\_3\\_Academic\\_Honesty.pdf](https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/files/2019/07/2019_7_3_Academic_Honesty.pdf)). This policy refers to every piece of writing you do for class, drafts, reading responses, and finished essays alike. If you are ever unsure what may or may not be plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask me. In fact, I welcome your questions. Any work that is turned in to this class that is plagiarized or violates the university academic honesty policy will receive an automatic 0 for the assignment grade. Furthermore, I may refer you to the College of Arts and Sciences for further disciplinary action or course penalties.

Georgia State University defines plagiarism as “. . . any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own . . . [It] frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text . . . the quotation of paragraphs, sentences, or even phrases written by someone else.” At GSU, “the student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources . . . and the consequences of violating this responsibility.” In addition, students are required to be honest in their academic work by writing their own papers. Handing in writing or other content you receive from someone else or allowing someone else to heavily edit or write work for you constitutes an academic honesty violation.

### **Incomplete Work**

In order to receive an incomplete, a student must inform the instructor, either in person or in writing, of his/her inability to complete the requirements of the course. A grade of incomplete will only be considered for students who meet the following three conditions: passing the course with a C or better; present a legitimate, non-academic reason to the instructor (documentation may be required); have only one major assignment left to finish. Assignment of incompletes and the terms for removal of the “I” will be set at the instructor’s discretion.

### **Student Accommodations**

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Georgia State University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought. Also, please schedule an appointment with me so that we may discuss any accommodations you need in our class during office hours. To respect your privacy, we will not discuss these accommodations in class.

### **Writing Studio**

The Georgia State University Writing Studio writes, “The purpose of the Writing Studio is to enhance writing instruction by providing undergraduate and graduate students with an experienced reader who engages them in conversation about their writing assignments and ideas, and familiarizes them with audience expectations and academic genre conventions. We focus on the rhetorical aspects of texts, and provide one-on-one, student-centered teaching that corresponds to each writer’s composing process. Although we are not a line-editing or proofreading service, we are happy to discuss grammar concerns with students from a holistic perspective and offer additional resources that can aid students in building confidence. In tutor sessions, tutors will be alert listeners, will ask thoughtful questions, and will not judge or evaluate the work in progress. We offer confidential, 30 minute sessions (for undergraduate students) and 60 minute sessions (for graduate students) for face-to-face tutoring. Through Write/Chat, our online tutoring service, we also offer similarly-timed sessions for remote interactions. For instructors and faculty, the GSU Writing Studio often sponsors workshops and classroom visits, led by faculty and staff, on various topics dealing with academic writing. Finally, all are welcome to take advantage of our print resources and quick-help handouts that respond to the most popular requests and topics. Please visit the Writing Studio in 25 Park Place (The Sun Trust Building), Room 2420 or at [www.writingstudio.gsu.edu](http://www.writingstudio.gsu.edu) for more information. We look forward to seeing you.”

This service is free and a valuable resource for all writers, and I strongly encourage you to take advantage of this space. Please note, that you will need to make an appointment for tutoring at [www.writingstudio.gsu.edu](http://www.writingstudio.gsu.edu), although you are welcome to stop by the Studio to get information or to get assistance with making an appointment.

**Online Evaluation of Instructors**

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

**Title IX at Georgia State University**

The Title IX Coordinators are the designated university officials with primary responsibility for coordinating the compliance with Title IX. This includes providing leadership for Title IX activities; providing consultation, education and training; and helping to ensure the university responds appropriately, effectively and equitably to Title IX issues. Contact information for the Title IX Coordinators are available at the bottom of [this site](#).