Only in Florida

English 245 Fall 2018



This course takes seriously the popular perception that Florida is the nation’s magnet for weird, surreal and otherwise unbelievable places, people, events and behavior. By conducting critical examinations of real-life and literary representations of alligator wrestling matches and python hunts; drug runners and dumb criminals; murder trials and Spring Break escapades, you’ll gain a deeper understanding of the modes, agendas, ideologies and perspectives that inform the creation and promulgation of myth, urban legend, reputation, perception and “fact.”

The structure and format of this course mirrors its content: namely, it is straight-up unconventional and downright weird. Instead of meeting for a 2.5-hour block once per week throughout the semester, we are meeting for much longer stretches of time over a much shorter period. This unique structure gives us the privilege to travel to locales and study phenomena in-depth and in-person that isn’t possible within the confines of the traditional course meeting schedule.

However, with big privileges come big responsibilities. This course not only compresses a semester’s worth of reading into 6 terribly short weeks, but also makes a significant demand on your time during this same period. While the course’s abbreviated timeline is tantalizing in its appeal (who wouldn’t want to complete a course in about half the time?), please, please, please don’t be lured into the mistaken notion that a shorter course equals less work. From previous experience, most students find exactly the opposite to be true.[[1]](#footnote-1) If you are able and willing to proverbially give me your weekends in September (and one in August), then this course is for you. If you have a lot on your plate at the beginning of the term, find the thought of spending long periods of time on the JUMP bus with your classmates (and me) to be less than desirable, or aren’t able to commit to the class schedule, then you should jump ship while you can.

**Tour Guide**: Dr. Jana Mathews

**Course Meets**:

Sunday, August 26: 10am-3pm

Friday, August 31: 4pm until Sunday, September 2 at 6pm (overnight; Labor Day Weekend)

Sunday, September 9: 10am-3pm

Sunday, September 16: 7:30am-1:00pm

Sunday, September 23: 10am-3pm

Saturday, September 29: 9am until Sunday, September 30 at 7pm (overnight)

As noted on the course schedule, there are two overnight Immersion-based field trips: August 31-September 2 (Labor Day weekend) and September 29-30. These field trips are integral and required parts of our course and count toward the total number of contact hours included this semester. Please also note that we will be meeting from 7:45am-1pm (instead of 10-3) on September 16 to accommodate the needs of our community partner.

**Office Hours**: 113 Carnegie, by appointment

**Email**: [jmathews@rollins.edu](mailto:jmathews@rollins.edu)

**Cell**: 407-913-1679

By far the easiest and quickest way to reach me is by text. While I always aim to get back to students ASAP, texts received after 9pm may not be answered until the next morning, so hang tight and don’t stress—I’ve got you.

**Required Course Materials**

Please order the three assigned texts for this course on Amazon or borrow from the library. The campus bookstore will not be selling them.

* Nilo Cruz, *Anna in the Tropics* (ISBN1559362324)
* Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (ISBN 0060931418)
* Gilbert King, *The Devil in the Grove* (ISBN 0061792268)
* Access to Blackboard (BB)
* Access to Netflix and Amazon Prime Video (if you or your friends/roommates don’t have one/either of these, let me know)
* Rollins email account

\*\*\*As noted in the course schedule, a $100 course fee has been added to your tuition to cover the cost of field trips. Thanks to the generosity of an alum donor and the Office of Community Engagement, the remaining costs of our weekly field trips and overnight Immersions (excluding lunches) are covered.\*\*\*

**Course Goals**

1) to gain knowledge about the various ways that Florida literature and culture reflect broader American cultural norms and taboos

2) develop and hone the skill of critical analysis and close reading using literary texts, film, commercials, high and low art and architecture

3) to identify and conduct a critical examination of the ethical principles and issues related to Florida

culture in contemporary America

**Course Assignments**

Your assigned work for this course will take the form of **three essays, weekly quizzes and homework assignments and on-site activities.**All essays must be double-spaced, typed in 12 point Times New Roman font and include 1-inch margins. All written work is due on Blackboard by the dates specified on the syllabus.

Please note that this course is a four-credit-hour course that meets at least 5 hours per week for 6 weeks. The value of four credit hours results from work expected of enrolled students both inside and outside the classroom. Rollins faculty require that students average about 90 minutes of outside work for every hour of scheduled class time, or about 27 hours each week, in out-of-class assignments. In this course, the additional outside-of-class expectations include assigned readings, homework assignments, take-home quizzes, group projects, essay research, writing, and revision, film screenings, community engagement activities and full participation in all weekly and overnight field studies.

**Classroom Decorum**

Please be respectful of your teammates and refrain from engaging in discourteous behavior (ie. arriving late, leaving early, reading the newspaper, sleeping etc.). Note: I am addicted to cell phone technology just like the rest of the world, but in class, I have a zero tolerance policy toward texting.

**Attendance**

This course covers a lot of ground in a very short period of time. Because we meet for at least 5 hours every Sunday, missing one class period is the equivalent of being absent for 2 weeks of a traditional 15-week semester (more on the overnight trips). **Because of the amount of contact hours and on-site field work built into our overnight trips, you must attend the full duration of both in order to be eligible to receive a passing grade for this course. If you miss a regular 5-hour class period (tardies count as absences) your overall course grade will be reduced by 1 full letter grade.** **If you miss 2 class periods, you will earn a failing grade for the course.** No one has ever fallen into this category, so don’t be the first! Please note, I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. If you might need to miss a class due to a religious holiday or campus business, please contact me BEFORE August 26 to try to work something out. Please note that due to the hyper-accelerated pace of this course, I reserve the right to not allow missed classes for these reasons. Out of fairness to students who make the sacrifice to come to class on time, missed work, including quizzes, cannot be made up.. Don’t mess with me, because I love you but also totally mean business. ☺

**Grading**

Your grade for this course will be calculated as follows:

Close Reading Essay 1 (4-5 pages): 20%

Close Reading Essay 2 (4-5 pages): 20%

Final Essay (5-6 pages): 30%

Weekly Quizzes, Discussion Posts, and other Homework Assignments: 30%

A (94-100) A- (90-93) B+ (87-89) B (84-86) B- (80-83) C+ (77-79); C (74-76); C- (70-73); D+ (66-69); D (64-66); D- (60-63) F (59 and below)

****

**Essay Grading Rubric**

To promote fairness in grading, I adhere to the following standard evaluation rubric:

**A (90-100)**

The “A” essay contains a specific and arguable thesis statement that is sustained and supported throughout the entire essay. The essay displays a defined organizational structure with coherent introduction, body, and concluding paragraphs that are logically and seamlessly integrated by smooth transitional clauses and phrases. Textual citations are incorporated into complete sentences and are accurately cited and thoroughly explained and analyzed. The essay has been edited meticulously and is free of errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and mechanics.

**B (80-89)**

The “B” essay contains a thesis that is arguable but one that is underdeveloped or inconsistently argued. The paper follows a logical sequence, but individual paragraphs are disjointed, repetitive, confusing, digressive, or predictable. It offers more (or fewer) textual quotes than are necessary and/or fails to perform in-depth analyses of them. This level of essay contains sentences that are clear, but language that is imprecise or clumsy. Minor errors in grammar, spelling, and usage appear.

**C (70-79)**

The “C” essay lacks a specific thesis or presents one that “disappears” or “multiplies” after the first paragraph. It is overwhelmingly descriptive (plot summary) and contains transitions that are weak or confusing. This essay lacks depth in relation to the topic (penetrating only its surface) and contains numerous errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

**D (60-69)**

The “D” essay lacks a central and unifying subject. It presents a confused and disjointed discussion of various, sometimes random ideas. Key elements of organization (introductory and concluding paragraphs) are missing or misplaced. Serious errors in spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure and content are present.

**F (59 and below**)

The “F” essay is submitted late, does not follow the assignment, is plagiarized, or is incomprehensible.

**COLLEGE POLICIES**

Disability Services  
Accessibility Services Rollins College is committed to equal access and inclusion for all students, faculty and staff. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 create a foundation of legal obligations to provide an accessible educational environment that does not discriminate against persons with disabilities. It is the spirit of these laws which guides the college toward expanding access in all courses and programs, utilizing innovative instructional design, and identifying and removing barriers whenever possible. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of academic accommodations in order to fully participate in your classes, please contact the Office of Accessibility Services, located on the first floor of the Olin Library, as soon as possible. You are encouraged to schedule a Welcome Meeting by filling out the “First Time Users” form on the website: http://www.rollins.edu/access and/or reach out by phone or email: 407-975-6463 or Access@Rollins.edu. All test-taking accommodations requested for this course must first be approved through the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) and scheduled online through Accommodate at least 72 hours before the exam. Official accommodation letters must be received by and discussed with the faculty in advance. There will be no exceptions given unless previously approved by the OAS with documentation of the emergency situation. We highly recommend making all testing accommodations at the beginning of the semester. OAS staff are available to assist with this process.

Title IX Statement

Rollins College is committed to making its campus a safe place for students. If you tell any of your faculty about sexual misconduct involving members of the campus community, your professors are required to report this information to the Title IX Coordinator. Your faculty member can help connect you with the Title IX Coordinator, (TitleIX@rollins.edu or 407.691.1773). You will be provided with information, resources and support. If you would prefer to speak to someone on campus confidentially, please call the Wellness Center at 407.628.6340. They are not required to report any information you share with the Title IX Coordinator. Misconduct under Title IX includes gender-based discrimination and harassment, sexual harassment, sexual violence including fondling and assault, sexual coercion/force, sexual-based communication, sexual exploitation, interpersonal violence including dating and domestic violence, stalking, complicity and retaliation. Everyone is protected under the following protected statuses: sex (including pregnancy), gender, gender identity (including transgender status), gender expression, and sexual orientation. For information, visit Rollins.edu/titleix.

Academic Honesty

This course places a heavy weight on independent thought and original work. For this reason, I take plagiarism very seriously. Forms of plagiarism include, but are not limited to purchasing a paper online, cutting and pasting material from the Internet or other electronic or print source (including Wikipedia), passing off someone else’s work (or portions of that work) as your own, and failing to cite external sources.  If I suspect that you have cheated on an assignment, I will encourage you to self-report to the Dean of Student Affairs. Depending on the situation, you may fail the assignment, the course, or both. If you have a question or find yourself in muddy terrain, don’t hesitate to ask me for help. With all submitted work, Rollins students affirm their commitment to the Academic Honor Code by including the following pledge followed by their signature:  
  
*“On my honor, I have not given, nor received, nor witnessed any unauthorized assistance on this work.”*

**Recording Device Use**

In order to protect the integrity of the classroom experience, the use of recording devices is limited to either the expressed permission of the faculty member or with proper documentation from the Office of Accessibility Services. Information about accommodations through Accessibility Services can be found at http://www.rollins.edu/accessibility-services/. Recording without the proper authorization is considered a violation of the Rollins Code of Community Standards.

**Course and Instructor Evaluation**

At the end of each semester, students are asked to evaluate the course and instructor. These evaluations are extremely valuable in the teaching and learning process on our campus. Student evaluations help assess student perceptions of classroom learning and often lead to improved teaching.  Your feedback is important and Rollins students are encouraged to be honest, fair, and reflective in the evaluation process. The online evaluative survey is anonymous. Students are never identified as the respondent.  Instead, each student’s comments are assigned a random number.  You will be asked to rate your course and instructor on a numerical scale and through narrative comments.

The online Course and Instructor Evaluation (CIE) process opens at 8:00 a.m. on the first scheduled date.  It remains open for a period of 14 days (2 weeks) until 12:00 a.m. (midnight) on the final scheduled date. The evaluation period ends prior to the start of final examinations and faculty cannot access completed evaluations until 10 days after the end of final exams.

Students will receive one email at the start of the CIE period, one after the 15th day, and a final reminder the day before the CIE period ends. Students who complete evaluations for all classes will be able to view grades ten-days before students who do not complete an evaluation form.

**CLASS SCHEDULE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Sun August 26** | **WTFlorida + Holy Florida 10am-3pm** |
|  | Before Class:   * Text me at 407-913-1679 to confirm that you still plan to take this class and know that it starts on 8/26 and have read the syllabus in its entirety and agree to its terms. * Peruse @\_FloridaMan Twitter Account. Write down the best ‘Florida Man’ headline you can find and bring to class on 8/26. * Google “Florida memes,” be inspired by greatness, and then use an online meme generator of your choosing to create your own unique Florida-themed meme. Use of photos from your personal camera roll is highly encouraged. Post said masterpiece to the designated discussion forum on Blackboard before 8/25 at 11:59pm. * View *Florida Man* (50-minute documentary; link on BB) * Listen to “If You Build It, Will They Come?” (35-minute podcast; link on BB)   Today’s Class Schedule  **10am-12:00pm**:Field Trip to local megachurch  Please meet in the classroom (Orlando 115) promptly at 10am. We will be attending an actual church service, so please dress respectfully (ie. no shorts, flip flops, t-shirts).  **12:00-3pm** 30-minute lunch break; course introduction, discuss assigned readings |
| **F Aug 31**  **Sat Sept 1**  **Sun Sept 2** | **Invasive Species**  **Delray Beach Weekend Immersion Trip Friday-Sunday**  **\***All expenses for this trip, including meals, lodging and transportation are provided.  Before this trip:   * View: *Exotic Invaders: Pythons in the Everglades* (Netflix 55 min) * Read and come to Saturday evening’s class meeting prepared to discuss: * Russell, “Ava Wrestles the Alligator” (BB)\*\* * Frazier, “Frogpocalypse Now” (BB)\* * Grunwald, “The Boomtown that Shouldn’t Exist” (BB)\* * Douglas, from *Everglades* (BB) * Complete and submit Immersion waiver and contract * Complete Pre-Trip Discussion Forum Post Assignment on Assigned Readings   4:00pm Meet outside Cornell Fine Arts Building  Please bring class materials (notebook and assigned readings) as well as clothing, swimsuit, toiletries—including sunscreen and insect repellent—for 2.5 days  4-8pm Drive to Del Ray Beach (we will be stopping for dinner along the way)  Overnight: Hyatt Place Delray Beach, FL  There will be 3 people per room (2 double beds and a pull-out sofa)  7-8am breakfast at hotel  8:15am meet in lobby  8:15-9:00 Drive to Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge  9-11am Loxahatchee Volunteer Activity (invasive species removal via canoe)  11:30-1:00pm Lunch  1:00-2:00 Gumbo Limbo Nature Center, Boca Raton, FL  2:00-4:00 Wakodahtchee Wetlands, Del Ray Beach  4:00-5:00 Free time at hotel  5:00-7:00 Group dinner  7:30-9:00pm Class meeting-hotel conference room  Overnight: Hyatt Place Del Ray Beach, FL  7-8am breakfast at hotel  8:15am meet in lobby  8:15-9:00am Drive to Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge  9am-12pm Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Volunteer Activity  12-2pm Lunch + Class meeting  2-6pm Drive back to campus  After trip:  Complete Post-Trip Discussion Forum Post Assignment by 9/4 at 11:59pm |
| **Sun Sept 9** | **Old Florida 10am-3pm** |
|  | Before Class:   * Read and come prepared to discuss:   -*Anna in the Tropics* (2003 award-winning play)\*\*\*  -Mar, “Blood Ties” (BB)\*\*  -French, “Club Meds” (BB)\*   * Make a Florida delicacy from one of the old-school cookbooks on BB (or use your own family recipe) and bring to class to share.   Today’s Class Schedule:  10am-12pm Discuss assigned reading  12-12:30pm Lunch break  12:30-3pm Field trip to Orange County Regional History Museum  After Class:   * Submit your Orange County Regional History Museum on-site assignment to BB by Tuesday, 9/11 at 11:59pm * View the Jamilah Sabur Exhibition at CFAM between now and 10/25 and complete the related assignment by 10/25 |
| **Sun Sept 16** | **Hidden Florida 7:30am-1pm** |
|  | Before Class:   * View: *The Florida Project* (available on Amazon Prime 2 hrs)\*\* * View: *Hot Girls Wanted* (available on Netflix 2 hrs)\*\* * Complete on Blackboard: Pre-Class Discussion Forum Assignment * Submit to Blackboard: Close Reading Essay #1   Today’s Class Schedule:  7:30am Meet at CFAM. Please wear a Rollins t-shirt and closed-toed shoes. If you have long hair, please bring a hair elastic to pull it back while we work.  7:45-8:15am Drive to United Against Poverty Site  8:30-12:30pm Meal Prep, Service and Clean Up  12:30-1:00pm Drive back to campus  After Class:   * Complete on Blackboard: Post-Class Discussion Forum Assignment by 9/18 at 11:59pm. |
| **Sun Sept 23** | **Race 10am-3pm** |
|  | Before Class:   * Read and come to class prepared to discuss: * Gilbert King, *The Devil in the Grove\*\*\** * Williams, “After Oranges”\* (BB) Read for knowledge about history of orange production in FL * Read Reitman, “All American Nazis” (BB)\*\* * Complete BB discussion post on the assigned reading   Today’s Class Schedule:  10am Meet promptly at CFAM  10-11am Drive to Groveland Historical Society  11-12pm Visit Groveland Historical Society  12-2pm Lunch and on-site discussion about the book and visit. Please bring a lunch or money for one.  2-3pm Drive back to campus |
|  | **North Florida**  **Amelia Island Weekend Field Trip Saturday-Sunday** |
| **Sat 9/29**  **Sun 9/30** | Before this trip:   * Read and be prepared to discuss at Saturday evening’s class meeting:   -Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*\*\*\*  -excerpts from Bartram’s *Travels* (BB)  9:00am Meet at CFAM with school supplies and overnight bag  9-11:30am Drive to Amelia Island  11:30-1pm Lunch  1:00-2:30pm Visit Fort Clinch  3:00-5:00pm Check in to hotel; free time  5:00-7:00pm Dinner  7:00-9:00pm Class meeting in hotel conference room  Overnight: Breakwater Hotel at the Beach Fernandina Beach, FL  There will be 2 people per room.  8-9am Breakfast at hotel  9-11am Visit to Kingsley Plantation  11-12:30pm Lunch  1-2pm American Beach Museum  2-3pm Civil War Cemetery  3-4:30pm Activity  4-7:00 pm Return home to campus |
| **Sun 10/7** | Close Reading Essay # 2 Due to Blackboard  Opportunities will be available for individual meetings and tutorials with me before this paper is due |
| **Sun 10/21** | Final Essay Due to Blackboard |

1. “This course is super fun, but it sucks up a lot of your time when it’s in session. The reading load is heavy and there is no break between papers.”

   -from a former ‘Only in Florida’ student’s course evaluation [↑](#footnote-ref-1)