

**Instructor:** Sherman, Alexander

**Unique #:** 35725

**Semester:** Autumn 2026

**Cross-lists:**

**Areas:**

**Restrictions:**

**Computer Instruction:**

### Description:

Worlds are defined by how people have moved across them and by how they imagine historical and possible movements, both freely chosen and forcefully imposed. We will thus enter world literature by studying mobility. How are movement and, just as importantly, the denial of movement represented in literature? Who gets to move? Who has to move? How can they move? And what does it mean to move? A special but not exclusive focus is travel across the ocean—including through enslavement, piracy, trade, marriage, and migration—in connection to the history of empire and the conditions of diaspora.

This semester doubles as a survey of various genres: poetry (epic and lyric), drama, novel, autobiography, travelogue, letter, history, tale, film, and graphic novel, across periods, regions, and languages. An acquaintance with the norms and histories of genres will prepare students for future work in literature, creative writing, and history courses. We will also visit the Harry Ransom Center to learn about the travels of our course texts.

This course may be used to fulfill three hours of the communication component of the university core curriculum and addresses the following four core objectives established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board: communication skills, critical thinking skills, teamwork, and personal responsibility.

### Texts:

- *The Odyssey* [Ὀδύσσεια, *Odýsseia*], Homer (ca. 750 BCE), selections from ISBN 9780143039952
- *Medea* [Μήδεια, *Mēdeia*], Euripides (431 BCE), ISBN 9780199537969
- *The Frogs* [Βάτραχοι, *Bátrakhoi*], Aristophanes (405 BCE), ISBN 9780451214096
- “The Book of Ruth” [מְגִלַּת רֹּחַ, *Megillath Ruth*] (ca. 500 BCE), ISBN 9780190276089
- “Digest of Columbus’s Logbook,” Bartolomé de las Casas (Spanish; ca. 1527); Letter to Luis de Santángel, Cristoval Colon [Christopher Columbus] (1493), ISBN 9780140442175
- *The Tempest*, William Shakespeare (1611), ISBN 9780395754900
- Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor [سندباد البحري, *Sindibādu l-Bahriyy*] in *One Thousand and One* [كتاب الف ليلة وليلة, *Alf Laylah wa-Laylah*] (ca. 700-1700) and *The Arabian Nights* [Les mille et une nuits] (1704-17), from 9781631493638
- *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, Olaudah Equiano (1789), ISBN 9780393974942
- *Indiana*, George Sand (Amantine Aurore Dupin) (1832), ISBN 9780199540488
- *Zong!*, M. NourbeSe Philip (2008), ISBN 9781644453049
- *Mississippi Masala*, dir. Mira Nair (1991)
- *Persepolis*, Marjane Satrapi (2003), ISBN 9780375714832
- “Tryin’ to Get Over: Narrative Posture in Equiano’s Autobiography,” Chinosole (1982)
- *The Elements of Academic Style*, Eric Hayot (2014), ISBN 9780231537414
- *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, M. H. Abrams and Geoffrey Galt Harpham (2005), ISBN 9780495898023

**Requirements & Grading:** Plus/minus grades are used.

| Assignments                                                                              | Description                                                                                                                    | Percent of Total Grade                                   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>WRITING</b>                                                                           |                                                                                                                                | 55                                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close reading a passage</li> </ul>              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an argument about one passage (1000 words)</li> </ul>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 12.5</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpreting a text through passages</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an argument about one text (1500 words)</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17.5</li> </ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arguing from texts</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an argument about some larger concern using course texts (2000 words)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22.5</li> </ul> |

| Assignments                                                                                                                 | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Percent of Total Grade                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                             | ○ Workshop for final paper                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ○ 2.5                                                                             |
| <b>READING</b>                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 30                                                                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading responses</li> <li>• Reading quizzes</li> <li>• Reading journal</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One paragraph making a claim about the text, due at each class meeting</li> <li>• Short weekly quizzes</li> <li>• A separate log tracking your readings, presented to class</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 15</li> <li>• 10</li> <li>• 5</li> </ul> |
| <b>PARTICIPATION</b> (including attendance)                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 15                                                                                |

#### Schedule:

| Week | Date | Day | Class Topic                                                                                                                                             | Reading Due                                   | Assignments Due                                                        |
|------|------|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | 8/25 | T   | Introduction                                                                                                                                            | N/A                                           | N/A                                                                    |
| 1    | 8/27 | Th  | “The Book of Ruth” [מְגִלַּת רוּת, <i>Megillath Ruth</i> ] (Biblical Hebrew/Koine Greek; ca. 500 BCE)                                                   | Syllabus; full book                           | First reading response (see the syllabus)                              |
| 2    | 9/1  | T   | <i>The Odyssey</i> [Ὀδύσσεια, <i>Odýsseia</i> ], Homer (Homeric Greek; ca. 750 BCE)                                                                     | Books I-XII                                   | First quiz                                                             |
| 2    | 9/3  | Th  | Writing close reading paragraphs; <i>Odyssey</i> continued                                                                                              | “The Uneven U” and “Paragraphs” by Eric Hayot | Reading response (and all future Thursdays unless indicated otherwise) |
| 3    | 9/8  | T   | <i>Odyssey</i> continued                                                                                                                                | Finish <i>Odyssey</i>                         |                                                                        |
| 3    | 9/10 | Th  | <i>Odyssey</i> continued                                                                                                                                |                                               |                                                                        |
| 4    | 9/15 | T   | <i>Medea</i> [Μήδεια, <i>Mēdeia</i> ], Euripides (Ancient Greek; 431 BCE)                                                                               | Full play                                     | Read assignment guide for first essay                                  |
| 4    | 9/17 | Th  | <i>The Frogs</i> [Βάτραχοι, <i>Bátrakhoi</i> ], Aristophanes (Ancient Greek; 405 BCE)                                                                   | Full play                                     |                                                                        |
| 5    | 9/22 | T   | “Digest of Columbus’s Logbook,” Bartolomé de las Casas (Spanish; ca. 1527) and “Letter of Columbus to Various Persons,” Cristóbal Colón (Spanish; 1493) | Full letter (pp. 37-76, 115-23)               |                                                                        |
| 5    | 9/24 | Th  | Revising paragraphs and theses workshop                                                                                                                 | N/A                                           |                                                                        |
| 6    | 9/29 | T   | <i>The Tempest</i> , William Shakespeare (English; 1611)                                                                                                | Full play                                     |                                                                        |

| Week | Date  | Day | Class Topic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Reading Due                                                                                                      | Assignments Due                                            |
|------|-------|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6    | 10/1  | Th  | <i>The Tempest</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | N/A                                                                                                              |                                                            |
| 7    | 10/6  | T   | Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor [سندباد البحري, <i>Sindibādu l-Bahriyy</i> ] in <i>One Thousand and One Nights</i> [كتاب الف ليلة وليلة, <i>Alf Laylah wa-Laylah</i> ] (Arabic; ca. 700-1700) and <i>The Arabian Nights</i> [ <i>Les mille et une nuits</i> ], ed. and trans. Antoine Galland (French; 1704-17) | Excerpt: pp. 203-262                                                                                             | Essay 1                                                    |
| 7    | 10/8  | Th  | <i>The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African</i> , Olaudah Equiano (English; 1789)                                                                                                                                                                            | Through Chapter II (pp. 5-43)                                                                                    |                                                            |
| 8    | 10/13 | T   | <i>Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | To end (pp. 43-178)                                                                                              |                                                            |
| 8    | 10/15 | Th  | Writing an essay; <i>Life of Olaudah Equiano</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Read and reverse outline<br>“Tryin’ to Get Over: Narrative Posture in Equiano’s Autobiography,” Chinosole (1982) |                                                            |
| 9    | 10/20 | T   | <i>Indiana</i> , George Sand (Amantine Aurore Dupin) (French; 1832)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Through part 2 (pp. 3-135)                                                                                       | Read assignment guide for second essay                     |
| 9    | 10/22 | Th  | Writing an essay; <i>Indiana</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                  |                                                            |
| 10   | 10/27 | T   | <i>Indiana</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | To end (pp. 137-271)                                                                                             |                                                            |
| 10   | 10/29 | Th  | <i>Indiana</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | N/A                                                                                                              |                                                            |
| 11   | 11/3  | T   | Traveling texts (visit to Harry Ransom Center).<br>Note: screening of <i>Mississippi Masala</i> sometime this week.                                                                                                                                                                                          | N/A                                                                                                              | Essay 2; no quiz today                                     |
| 11   | 11/5  | Th  | <i>Mississippi Masala</i> , dir. Mira Nair (English; 1991)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Full film                                                                                                        | <i>Mississippi Masala</i> discussion post AND HRC response |
| 12   | 11/10 | T   | <i>Persepolis</i> , Marjane Satrapi (French; 2003)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Full text                                                                                                        |                                                            |
| 12   | 11/12 | Th  | <i>Persepolis</i> continued                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | N/A                                                                                                              |                                                            |
| 13   | 11/17 | T   | <i>Zong! </i> , M. NourbeSe Philip (multiple languages; 2008).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Full poem, “Glossary,” “Manifest,” “Notanda,” and “Gregson v. Gilbert” (1-211). Also watch performance:          | Read assignment guide for final essay                      |

| Week                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Date  | Day | Class Topic            | Reading Due                                                                                                                                                | Assignments Due                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|-----|------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |     |                        | <a href="https://tinyurl.com/zong-e303c">https://tinyurl.com/zong-e303c</a> . Suggested optional reading: "Preface," "Stars, Actually," and "Introduction" |                                                                              |
| 13                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 11/19 | Th  | <i>Zong!</i> continued | N/A                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                              |
| <b>THANKSGIVING BREAK: NO CLASS</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |       |     |                        |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                              |
| 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 12/1  | T   | Closing discussion     | N/A                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                              |
| 14                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 12/3  | Th  | Writing workshop       | Drafts in your workshop group                                                                                                                              | Submit full draft by 8 AM <b>on Wednesday 12/2</b> ; no reading response due |
| Final paper due by end of final exam slot for course: 12/14/2026 at 10:00 AM. For confirmation, see <a href="https://onestop.utexas.edu/registration-and-degree-planning/final-exam-information">https://onestop.utexas.edu/registration-and-degree-planning/final-exam-information</a> . |       |     |                        |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                              |

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to write paragraphs that use close reading of textual evidence to make clear, structured arguments by practicing in quizzes and reading responses, reviewing models, and by incorporating instructor and classmate feedback, as well as practicing underlying close reading skills in discussions.
2. Students will be able to analyze texts at different scales (i.e., passages, single works, comparisons) through scaffolded writing assignments and varied discussion prompts.
3. Students will be able to read and understand challenging literary texts, with basic considerations for genre, language, and history, in relation to an overarching topic (i.e., mobility) through assessments of reading via quizzes and through extended interpretations in assignments.
4. Student will be able to read, think, and understand with greater resilience, persistence, and openness through collective critical discussion about a large range of texts.

**Policies:** *Documented Disability Statement:* The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at (512) 471-6259 (voice), or visit <https://disability.utexas.edu/2023/04/welcome/>

*Honor Code:* The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

*Academic Integrity:* Any work submitted by a student in this course for academic credit will be the student's own work. Plagiarism = Failure. Fabrication = Failure. For additional information on Academic Integrity, see <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/avoiding.php> and <https://catalog.utexas.edu/general-information/appendices/appendix-c/student-conduct-and-academic-integrity/>.

I do not specifically prohibit the use of large language models (LLMs) to complete the major writing assignments for this class, and my evaluation of your work will not alter. However, all policies on plagiarism still apply. As such, you **must** do the following if you use LLMs for writing, including for prewriting, such as brainstorming and outlining, and for small tasks, like spellchecking and formatting:

1. Ensure that all writing you submit does not plagiarize from another published source. Even if a chatbot gave you the plagiarized material, when you copy its output, you become responsible.

2. Submit a supplemental file showing the exact model you used, the series of prompts you entered, and the model's outputs. If you do not follow these guidelines, then usage of LLMs counts as plagiarism.

*Religious Holy Days:* By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Web Site:** Canvas.