

A black cat with glowing yellow eyes is looking over a laptop keyboard. The scene is dimly lit, with the cat's face and the keyboard keys visible. The cat's eyes are the focal point, reflecting light. The keyboard is a dark-colored laptop keyboard with white keys. The overall mood is mysterious and focused.

Transatlantic Self-Reliance

Black Atlantic
Making the
African Diaspora

James Martin

Welcome to
IDH2930

**Transatlantic
Self-Reliance**

This syllabus is produced in order to provide you with an overview of “Writing About the Atlantic Crossings.” We will address the syllabus together in our first session in case of lack of clarity. Besides that, whenever you feel that you have a question that the syllabus does not answer, you are welcome to get in touch with me:
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Section: 27133

Meetings: W, Period 3 (9:35-10:25)

Location: Honors Village, Classroom 114

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Turlington Hall
330 Newell Dr
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<https://english.ufl.edu/>

Welcome to Transatlantic Self-Reliance. I am thrilled to have you in this course and I know this will be really fun!

Course Description

Much of the world that we inhabit today was built - directly or indirectly - upon the landmark crossing of the Atlantic Ocean. It was through crossing the Atlantic that the European empires expanded their territories, people settled in new geographies, and new countries and languages came into existence. However, making this New World was not an entirely innocent undertaking; it also relied on destruction. Accounts of this undertaking are plentiful and one of the most significant examples of it is *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself*.

Equiano's life was a roller coaster of events and his resilience in facing the predicaments of life as an enslaved African in the Atlantic Ocean, his industriousness in improving his status, his endless travels around the Atlantic

World, his profound yearning for learning and education, and his shrewdness in observing the injustices of an economic system at its inception renders his memoir one of a kind.

By focusing on the historic and literary aspects of Equiano's writing, this course helps you develop the critical skills of textual interpretation and historical contextualization. You will learn how formal and stylistic elements, as well as historical context, shape the meaning and significance of literature. By expanding your understanding of the fluidity of meaning, this course aims to develop your ability to decipher meaning from language, and better understand your own interactions with science, technology, media, commerce, and politics.

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Course Objectives

What are we planning to do?

You will develop a broader cultural literacy and better understand the changing definition and role of literature in society.

Therefore, by the end of the course you will be able to:

1. Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works as well as the structures and conventions of literary genres.
2. Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analyses, while identifying formal and genre-related elements in the texts.

3. Critically assess the roles literature has played historically and continues to play in our experience.
4. Connect literary texts to their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts.

I am also looking forward to hearing from you in our first session what you want to learn throughout this semester and incorporate ways to reach those goals in our course.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

What will you need for this course (besides positive vibes)?

In order to follow the course readings, you are required to purchase Olaudah Equiano's book in advance. I understand that some of you might already have a different edition. However, in case you don't, please use the ISBN to purchase the correct version:

- *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: or, Gustavus Vassa, the African, Written by Himself*, Modern Library Classics, ISBN: 9780375761157

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

There are two items that shape your grade:

- Attendance and participation (400 points)
- Weekly discussion posts (600 points)

- **Attendance & Participation (400 points)**

Attendance is mandatory and will be assessed by class roll or sign-up sheet. Although it is essential to keep in mind that your presence is considered meaningful when you participate in our discussions. Those who contribute to the conversations get a better share of this element of the grade.

Each session will begin with a series of basic questions on the assigned readings. If you keep up with those readings, you can easily answer these questions and usher us into the actual discussion. Needless to say, this is a crucial component in your participation grade.

You will lose 1% from your final grade for every unexcused absence. Absences will be excused in accordance with UF policy. Acceptable reasons include illness, religious holidays, military obligation, and the twelve-day rule (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>). Should you miss a class for any reason, you are responsible for informing yourself as to what was covered in class.

- **Weekly responses (between 350 and 500 words)**

Based on the readings that we have for each session, you are given a number of prompts. Your job is to pick one of them and write a short response to it on Canvas. This is a weekly assignment and in order to strike a balance between your workload and the content of your responses, I am setting a minimum and maximum workload. You will submit your weekly responses before the class and we will use your responses for our class discussions. After the session, you will receive a grade for your response. Please look at the next session for a writing rubric.

Writing Rubric

What to focus on when writing

There are a number of criteria that your writings should meet in order to obtain a satisfactory grade. Here are the important items in your writing:

Coherence (25%):

Your writings should be coherent. Every time you write an essay, you have a main argument that you decide to write about and you have some supporting ideas for it. When you are writing, you should move through your ideas smoothly and logically. Your supporting ideas should not contradict with one another, and they should be at the service of your main argument.

Language and Tone (25%):

When writing your comprehensive assignments, final paper prospectus, and critical analysis essay, you should use a language that fits the academic discussions. These assignments are very different from discussion posts on Canvas, or from when you are talking about your ideas in class. Therefore, the language that you use in them has to be compatible with their nature.

For your discussions and reflections, you can write your essay without the need for a specific language.

Vocabulary and Structure (25%):

Your writings in this class are considered as professional essays in literature. Therefore, you're required to use the appropriate terms that you will learn during our discussions in your writing. Moreover, your writings should follow the appropriate structure in English language. Make sure you read, and re-read, your assignments before submitting.

Textual References (25%):

Your writings should demonstrate your familiarity with the text about which you are writing. You need to prove that you have read the text thoroughly and are able to make references to it while you write in order to make your point.

COURSE POLICIES:

Here is a link to the policies maintained by the University of Florida that you need to adhere to while taking courses:

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Here are some additional points:

Grading Scale (& GPA equivalent):

Note: A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, and how letter grades are considered in your GPA calculation see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

<https://student.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>

Please bear in mind that **a minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards Honors Completion Requirements**. Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Requirements module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Makeup Policy:

Except in the case of certified illness or other UF accepted excuse (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>), there will be no make-up option for missed exams or late assignments. Where possible, make-ups should be arranged by email or in person prior to the expected absence. In case of illness, student should contact the instructor on his or her return to classes.

Cell phone policy:

You are expected to turn off your cell phones or to set them to “Do Not Disturb” mode as nobody wants to be disturbed or have their speech interrupted by someone else’s cell phone.

Late Policy:

Arriving late to the class disrupts the flow of conversations and also prevents you from being a part of it.

Each time you are late, you lose 0.5% of your final participation grade.

Another point that matters when it comes to punctuality is when you submit your assignments in terms of deadlines. I understand how other courses that you are taking also affect your working schedule, so I strongly recommend that if you are not making it to our assignment deadlines, you should write to me so we can figure out how to make things work for you with minimum damage to your final grade. If I do not get anything from you - neither your work nor an explanation - by the submission deadline, you will lose the grade for that assignment.

Academic Honesty:

Everyone is required to be honest in their coursework, may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for their projects. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. For University of Florida's honor code, see <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the

Disability Resources Center (<https://disability.ufl.edu>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources:

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>)

Honors Program contact information:

Honors Village Complex #4, 352-392-1519

- Quick questions for an Honors advisor? Email advisor@honors.ufl.edu
- Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings: <https://bit.ly/UFHonorsAdvising>
- Honors Program Event Calendar: <https://www.honors.ufl.edu/news--events/calendar-of-events/>

Online Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu>

SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change

Transatlantic Self-Reliance	Week 1	01/14	Introduction, Overview, Strategizing
	Week 2	01/21	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 1)
	Week 3	01/28	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapters 2)
	Week 4	02/04	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapters 3)
	Week 5	02/11	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 4)
	Week 6	02/18	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 5)
	Week 7	02/25	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 6)
	Week 8	03/04	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 7)
	Week 9	03/11	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 8)
	Week 10	03/25	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 9)
	Week 11	04/01	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 10)
	Week 12	04/08	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 11)
	Week 13	04/15	<i>The Interesting Narrative of ...</i> by O. Equiano (Chapter 12)
	Week 14	04/22	Reflection Day

