

# ENGLISH 2140: 402 AND 403

*The Tricky and the Tall in American Folk Tradition, Literature, and the Popular Culture of the Walt Disney Corporation*

Clemson University

Fall 2020: August 19, 2020 to December 11, 2020

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Office Information: online drop-in office hours, 10:30-11:30 T-Th, and by appointment

## DESCRIPTION

In this online American literature course, we will study North American folk, literary, and pop culture traditions following two thematic trajectories—“the tricky”: tales of tricksters, hucksters, and common-sense out-witters, and “the tall”: tales of self-reliant iconoclasts standing apart from the pack, of loner frontiersmen pushing boundaries, and of physically and metaphorically larger-than-life heroes. Alongside written works, we’ll examine the specific treatments of American folk traditions in the work of the Walt Disney Corporation and how it has shaped the popular American imagination of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. As we do so, we will explore the values implicit in the tales told among the peoples of North America, in our popular and in our literary and filmic traditions, and how we look to them to define who we are.

## COMPETENCIES AND OUTCOMES

Your work in this course will enhance your competency in the subject areas of arts and humanities and critical thinking. By the end of the course, you will demonstrate knowledge of a range of literary forms, texts, and films; you will identify and articulate effective interpretive questions; you will develop multiple solutions to literary problems; and you will argue complex claims effectively and eloquently, by recognizing flaws in logic and thinking, assessing and sorting relevant information to use as evidence, and analyzing in close, engaged readings of texts and films. In addition to these formal competency outcomes, you will also gain competency in chairing and in facilitating online meetings, synthesizing group discussions, and working creatively and productively in an online format.

## REQUIREMENTS

**QUIZZES, 20%.** Our class is organized into modules of content and assignments for each week of the semester. Each week’s module will contain one quiz on the reading/viewing assignments for the week and/or on the lecture content for that week. There are three types of questions you’ll receive in these quizzes: **factual questions** for which there is a single correct answer, **interpretive questions** which ask you to analyze the text you’ve read or film you’ve watched based on evidence from the text, and space for you to provide **your own interpretive question** that you’ve prepared in advance of the quiz. Please prepare an interpretive question for every item in the syllabus marked “for analysis” following the template you’ll receive in our first week. You will be asked to provide these in the quizzes and then you will also use them in your group discussions.

**DISCUSSION, 15%.** Group discussion is an integral part of this class, a chance to test ideas, to learn from your peers, to practice your critical thinking and public speaking skills, and to explore creative ideas that you may use later in your essays. A significant portion of your grade will be determined by your sophisticated and meaningful participation and advancement of group discussions. In this online class, discussions will be held in an online video meeting format, which will be recorded and submitted to me for grading. Be prepared to share your interpretive question or questions from the quiz and to work creatively with your group to arrive at a variety of interpretations. Students who receive an A in discussion will volunteer significant positive contributions throughout the discussion that advance the work of the group. Students who receive a C will at least offer their interpretive questions to the group.

**DISCUSSION CHAIRING AND FACILITATION, 15%.** On a rotating basis, you will each serve as chair for your group discussion and as facilitator of the discussion. These roles are outlined in detail in the “Discussion Chairs and Facilitators” page in Canvas, which will also include week instructions for the discussion. Chairs and facilitators will be responsible for submitting a targeted synthesis of the outcomes of the meeting to me at the end of each week.

**OTHER SHORT ASSIGNMENTS, 10%.** We will have other occasional short assignments to support the activities of the class, including drafting assignments for your essay and writing workshop assignments.

**FORMAL ESSAY, 20%.** You will use your findings in this class to compose one formal essay analyzing the either the film *Moana* (2016) or *Black Panther* (2018) in comparison with one of the other texts we study this semester. In your essay, you will make an effective literary argument that offers multiple interpretations of the film, employing the building blocks of argumentation: claims, evidence, and analysis.

## REQUIREMENTS, CONTINUED

FINAL EXAM, 20%. The semester will conclude with a cumulative final exam which will test your mastery of the texts, films, terminology, and concepts we cover throughout the course. Consisting of a mix of factual and interpretive questions, the final exam will test factual content from your texts and my lectures, and then offer interpretive questions that build on the interpretive complexities you explore in your quizzes and your online discussions. **The best way to prepare for the final, therefore, is to take careful notes on my lectures and in the margins of your texts, and to actively participate in your group discussions, listening carefully to each other, and to the subsequent portion of the lecture in which I recap some of the key interpretive findings of the class in the previous week.**

## GRADE SCALE

**Assignments graded with letter grades will be weighted as follows:**

A=95, A-=92, B+=87, B=85, B-=82, C+=77, C= 75, C-=72, D+=67, D=65, D-=62

**Final grades will be weighted as follows:**

A=90-100, B=80-89, C=70-79, D=60-69, F=0-59; final averages within 0.5 of the next highest grade *may* be rounded up for students who have demonstrated sufficient effort.

## MATERIALS

BOOKS. Our required textbooks for the class are listed below.

*Son of a Trickster* by Eden Robinson (Knopf 2017)

*A Mercy* by Toni Morrison (Vintage 2008)

*Myths, Legends, and Folktales of America: An Anthology* by David Leeming and Jake Page (Oxford University Press 2000)

READINGS FOR DOWNLOAD. Other reading and viewing assignments are posted on our Canvas course website. If possible, I recommend that you print these so that you may annotate them as you read in preparation for group discussion and for the final exam.

FILMS. In addition to the texts listed above, you will also watch and **prepare for quizzes and for discussion** several films. All films will be streaming on the platform Disney+, which I ask that you subscribe to for the class.

TECHNOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS. This course will be run entirely online through the Canvas learning platform. In order to participate in the class, you'll need reliable internet access, Microsoft Word, and access to a laptop or smartphone with a working camera and microphone for online discussions. If you are unsure about whether or not your equipment meets these requirements, please contact CCIT at [ithelp@clemson.edu](mailto:ithelp@clemson.edu).

## POLICIES REGARDING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

ON ACCESSIBILITY. Diversity is significant and valuable to me; it is a strength and a critical component of our dynamic academic community. If you have a disability or temporary injury or condition, your experience contributes to our diverse classroom and adds an important perspective. You may require accommodations due to barriers in the structure of facilities, course design, technology used for curricular purposes, or other campus resources. If you experience a barrier to full access to this class please let me know, and please make an appointment to meet with a staff member in Student Accessibility Services as soon as possible. You can make an appointment by calling 864-656-6848, by emailing [studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu](mailto:studentaccess@lists.clemson.edu), or by visiting Suite 239 in the Academic Success Center building. The center strongly encourages that you make an appointment in advance. If you already have an Academic Access Letter, please present it to me early on so that accommodations can be made in a timely manner. You can access further information here: <https://www.clemson.edu/academics/studentaccess/>.

ON DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT. A critical component to the value this classroom places on diversity is its commitment to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons. This class, and Clemson University as a whole, does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy, national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information or protected activity (e.g., opposition to prohibited discrimination or participation in any complaint process, etc.). It does not discriminate in employment, educational programs and activities, admissions and financial aid. This includes a prohibition against sexual harassment and sexual violence as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. This policy is located at <http://www.clemson.edu/campus-life/campus-services/access/anti-harassment-policy.html>. If you have questions or concerns related to discrimination or sexual harassment in this class or any other, please contact Ms. Alesia Smith, who is the Clemson University Title IX Coordinator, and the Executive Director of Equity Compliance. Her office is located at 110 Holtzendorff Hall, 864.656.3181 (voice) or 864.656.0899 (TDD).

## **POLICIES FOR COURSEWORK**

**ON THE COURSE SCHEDULE.** This online class is designed for you to be able to work at your own pace and on your own schedule each week, while also enabling you to gain the benefits of group discussion. On the final page of this syllabus is a schedule, subject to change, which lists texts and films assigned for analysis, and items for you to complete each week. Reading/viewing assignments will be available to you from the start of the semester, so that you may complete them on your own schedule. All other assignments for each week, including lectures, quizzes, and other short assignments, will be posted for you in Canvas no later than noon (12pm) each Monday. After the add period for Clemson classes has ended in our second week, you will sign up for a group meeting time according to your own schedule availability, with meeting times available between Tuesday mornings and Thursday evenings. Based on your availability, I will assign you a place in a discussion group. Once you've received your group assignment, your group will meet at the same time each week. **Please note when scheduling your discussion group:** you'll be required to watch the week's lecture, complete the reading assignments, and take the quiz for the week *before* beginning your group discussion, so please ensure that you to have sufficient time.

**Unless otherwise noted, all work for each week will be due by the end of the day on Thursday (11:59pm).** Therefore, by our third week of classes, the assigned work for each week will follow the schedule below.

<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>
All lectures, quizzes, and assignments for the week will be posted no later than noon, 12:00pm	Drop-in office hours, 10:30-11:30	Drop-in office hours, 10:30-11:30	Drop-in office hours, 10:30-11:30
	Discussion Groups Meet	Discussion Groups Meet	Discussion Groups Meet
			All assignments for the week due by 11:59pm

**ON READING AND VIEWING.** Read your texts deeply and carefully, annotating them with questions and comments, marking words and passages that strike you. Watch the films carefully and critically, pausing to take notes along the way. Remember to compose and record your interpretive questions for the quiz and for your group discussion.

**ON TECHNICAL TROUBLES.** Given the online nature of our course, we will be highly reliant on properly functioning technology. Though I understand that it may not always be possible, please do your best to have back-up options available (a friend's computer, smartphone, etc.) in case you experience complications with your usual mode of course access. Please also arrange to submit your work with enough time to troubleshoot if you experience complications or delays. If you experience a technical problem, please follow these steps in this order: 1. Take a screenshot including the date and time. 2. Email me with the details of the page you're attempting to access or the assignment you're attempting to complete and the trouble you're having, and send your screenshot. 3. If it is a particularly pressing problem (such as a group discussion meeting), contact CCIT for help at [ithelp@clemson.edu](mailto:ithelp@clemson.edu). CCIT is likely to be able to respond most quickly.

I too will do my best to ensure that our class is not hindered by technical problems. I am likely to make some mistakes as we go along, however, so please let me know if something doesn't look right, or if an assignment appears to be missing, and I'll do my best to fix it as quickly as possible. Let's plan to be mutually understanding of technical troubles.

**ON DEADLINES.** You will be given one Late Assignment Coupon (on Canvas), which you may apply to extend the deadline for a single assignment for up to one week. The late coupon may not be applied to missed discussions, as they require the participation of the entire group, so please make every effort not to miss these meetings. Unless you experience a documented technical difficulty, all other assignments, regardless of excused or unexcused absence, should be submitted to Canvas on or before the day they are due in order to receive full credit. Late assignments will lose the equivalent of one letter grade or equivalent points per business day (M-F) that they are late. If I consent to accept an assignment by email rather than through Canvas, the assignment must be pasted into the body of the email as well as sent by attachment. Please do not assume I have received your email unless I've confirmed its receipt.

**ON ATTENDANCE IN ONLINE DISCUSSIONS AND MEETINGS.** If you do miss an assigned discussion or meeting, either due to a scheduling conflict or due to technical complications, you will not be given credit for that meeting regardless of the reason for the absence. In order to allow you to be absent once without penalty to your grade, however, I will drop your lowest weekly discussion score at the end of the semester. Please keep in mind that you will receive separate grades for chairing and facilitating meetings and that these grades will not be dropped. Please arrange to trade dates with a classmate if a complication arises with your scheduled dates for these roles.

ON ONLINE CONDUCT. Appropriate online academic conduct means maintaining a safe learning environment based on mutual respect and civility. All participants in Clemson courses are expected to behave professionally by adhering to these standards of conduct:

- Never transmit or promote content known to be illegal.
- Respect other people's privacy as well as your own.
- Forgive other people's mistakes.
- Never use harassing, threatening, embarrassing, or abusive language or actions.

Online communication that fails to meet these standards of conduct will be removed from the course. Repeated misconduct may result in being blocked from online discussions, receiving a grade penalty, or being dismissed from the course. Such misconduct in the online environment may also be reported to officials for appropriate action in accordance with University policy. If you ever encounter inappropriate content in our course, please contact me with your concerns.

ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. When preparing your essays, please do not use sources other than those assigned for the class without discussing them with me first. **You must cite any external source you use in preparing your written work.** If you are having trouble in your writing, please see me during my office hours or visit the Writing Center. You can find information about the Writing Center website at: <http://www.clemson.edu/centers-institutes/writing/>.

As members of the Clemson University community, we have inherited Thomas Green Clemson's vision of this institution as a "high seminary of learning." Fundamental to this vision is a mutual commitment to truthfulness, honor, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of others. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of a Clemson degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form.

When, in the opinion of a faculty member, there is evidence that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, the faculty member shall make a formal written charge of academic dishonesty, including a description of the misconduct, to the Associate Dean for Curriculum in the Office of Undergraduate Studies. At the same time, the faculty member may, but is not required to, inform each involved student privately of the nature of the alleged charge. If you have any questions whatsoever about what constitutes plagiarism, see me before you turn in final drafts of your work. Students are not allowed to submit work from other classes for credit in this course. **The minimum penalty for plagiarism in this course will be failure of the assignment; it may result in a failing grade for the course or even expulsion from the university.**

ON GRADES. If you are aiming for a specific grade in this class, the beginning of the semester is the proper time to strategize about ways to meet your goal. Track your progress carefully and meet with me in office hours in person or online at the first sign of trouble. I'll do my best to help. Although meeting with me early does not guarantee that you will receive the grade you wish, waiting to address problems until late in the semester will almost certainly make your situation impossible to turn around.

## SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS BY WEEK

### THE TRICKY

1	<b>AUGUST 19-21: COYOTE</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Trickster Gods...Coyote” ( <i>Myth</i> 21-23); “Coyote and God,” “Mana Zorra and ‘Mano Coyote,” “Señor Coyote as Judge,” and “The Tale of Rabbit and Coyote” (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Read “Introduction” ( <i>Myth</i> 3-6), Watch Lecture 1a., 1b., 1c.; Take Quiz 1; Complete Tech Test Conference (8/23)
2	<b>AUGUST 24-28: RAVEN, JARED, AND WEE’GIT</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> from “The Raven Cycle” (Canvas); “Myth of Raven” ( <i>Myth</i> 23-25); “The Raven,” Poe; <i>Son of a Trickster</i> (chs. 1-4) <b>To Complete:</b> Read “Folklore Studies and Popular Film and Television” by Mikel Koven, Watch Lecture 2, Take Quiz 2, Complete Discussion Group Sign-Up Sheet Assignment <b>Also:</b> Tuesday, August 25, is the last day to add a class
3	<b>AUGUST 31-SEPTEMBER 4: JARED AND WEE’GIT</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> <i>Son of a Trickster</i> , Eden Robinson (ch. 5 to end of the novel) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 3; Take Quiz 3; Group Discussion 1 <b>Also:</b> Tuesday, September 1, is the last day to drop a class without a “W”
4	<b>SEPTEMBER 7-11: BRER RABBIT AND MAUI</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Brer Fox and Brer Rabbit Go Hunting,” “Brer Rabbit and the Tar Baby,” “Maui the Trickster” (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Read “Forward,” by Julius Lester (Canvas) and <i>Myth</i> pgs. 170-172, Watch Lecture 4, Take Quiz 4, Discussion 2
5	<b>SEPTEMBER 14-18: WATCH FILMS FOR ESSAY ASSIGNMENT</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> Watch <i>Moana</i> (Disney, 2016) and <i>Black Panther</i> (Marvel, 2018) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 5, Read Essay Assignment; Begin Essay Brainstorming Exercise 1, Take Quiz 5
6	<b>SEPTEMBER 21-25: THE GAMBLER AND MARK TWAIN</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Gambler’s Eyes” and “Rider Chan” (Canvas) and “The Celebrated Jumping Frog,” Mark Twain (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 6, Complete Essay Brainstorming Exercise 1, Take Quiz 6, Discussion 3
7	<b>SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 2: BROM BONES</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> Read “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” by Washington Irving (Canvas); Watch <i>The Adventures of Ichabod</i> (Disney, 1949) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 7, Take Quiz 7, Complete Essay Brainstorming Exercise 2, Discussion 4

### THE TALL

8	<b>OCTOBER 5-9: PAUL BUNYAN, JOHN HENRY, AND RALPH WALDO EMERSON</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Paul Bunyan” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 135-136); “John Henry” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 181-185); “Self Reliance,” Emerson (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 8, Take Quiz 8, Complete Essay Brainstorming Exercise 3; Discussion 5
9	<b>OCTOBER 12-16: DAVY CROCKETT, DANIEL BOONE, AND WALT WHITMAN</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Davy Crockett” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 130-134), “Daniel Boone” (Canvas), “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 9, Take Quiz 9, Discussion 6
10	<b>OCTOBER 19-23: STAGOLEE, NAT TURNER, MARTIN LUTHER KING, AND MALCOLM X</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Nat Turner” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 169-170), “Stagolee” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 172-181), MLK and MX ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 190-201) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 10, Take Quiz 10, Post Essay Draft for Writing Workshop, Discussion 7 <b>Also:</b> Friday, October 23 is the last day to withdraw from a class without a final grade
11	<b>OCTOBER 26-30: FLORENS</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> begin <i>A Mery</i> , Toni Morrison (1-95) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 11, Take Quiz 11, Complete First Essay Workshop Assignment, Discussion 8
12	<b>NOVEMBER 4-6: FLORENS, WITCHES, AND FORMAL ESSAY PEER REVIEW</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> <i>A Mery</i> , Toni Morrison (96-109) and “Young Goodman Brown,” Hawthorne (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Complete Second Essay Workshop Assignment <b>Also:</b> November 2-3 is Fall Break
13	<b>NOVEMBER 9-13: FLORENS</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> finish <i>A Mery</i> , Toni Morrison (111-158) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 13, Take Quiz 13, Submit <b>FORMAL ESSAY</b> , Discussion 9
14	<b>NOVEMBER 16-20: JOHN SMITH AND POCAHONTAS</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> Account of John Smith (Canvas), <i>Pocahontas</i> (Disney 1995) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 14, Take Quiz 14, Discussion 10
15	<b>NOVEMBER 23-24: YEH SHEN AND JOHNNY APPLESEED</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> “Yeh Shen” ( <i>Myth</i> pgs. 202-206), “Johnny Appleseed” ( <i>Myth</i> 126-130), “Johnny Appleseed” (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 15, Take Quiz 15 <b>Also:</b> November 25-27 is the Thanksgiving Holiday
16	<b>NOVEMBER 30-DECEMBER 4: JACK, JUAN DEL OSO, AND EMILY DICKINSON</b> <b>For Analysis:</b> selections from <i>Southern Jack Tales</i> , “Juan del Oso,” and “The Robin’s my Criterion for Tune” and “Will there really be a ‘Morning?’,” Emily Dickinson (Canvas) <b>To Complete:</b> Watch Lecture 16, Take Quiz 16, Discussion 11

**FINAL EXAM: DUE THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2020 AT 11:59PM**

