English 4307: Witchcraft and American Literature

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Required texts (*please ensure you acquire the correct editions!*)
1) *The Book of Witches : An Anthology* (ISBN: 9780063113220)
2) *Feminism, Oranges and Witchcraft : La Curandera y el Cazador* (ISBN: 9798610447902)
3) Several other required readings will be posted under READINGS in Blackboard. Some other material (such as PowerPoints, video clips, etc.) will be posted in Audio/Visual tab in Bb.

Course description

The course will explore the rich tapestry of American literary traditions and the portrayal of witches, enchantresses, and magical beings. This course provides a unique lens through which to examine cultural, historical, and societal gender and sociopolitical dynamics regarding women and witches, as well as their portrayal in both literature and in cinema in the United States. From the haunting trials of Salem to the modern reinterpretations of magic, students will analyze a diverse range of texts, including short stories, poetry, and contemporary works. Uncover the symbolism and significance of witches in American literature, examining how these fantastical figures mirror societal fears, desires, and perceptions across different time periods.

1. **Historical Perspectives:** Trace the origins of witchcraft in American literature, exploring early colonial beliefs, the Salem Witch Trials, and their enduring impact on literary representation.
2. **Magic and Power:** Investigate the portrayal of witches as powerful figures challenging societal norms. Analyze how these characters navigate issues of gender, power dynamics, and rebellion.
3. **Cultural Context:** Examine the influence of diverse cultural traditions on the depiction of witches. Explore the intersections between folklore, mythology, and literary imagination.
4. **Modern Reimaginings:** Investigate contemporary literature and media that continue to explore the theme of witches, considering how these narratives reflect contemporary societal concerns and perspectives.
5. **Critical Analysis:** Hone your critical thinking skills by analyzing and interpreting literary works through various lenses, including feminist theory, cultural studies, and historical perspectives.

Student Learning Outcomes

SLO 1 – Students will demonstrate a critical understanding of the significance of major authors, literary works in different genres, and definitive literary movements in literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

SLO 2 – Students will demonstrate the ability to critically analyze and interpret literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

SLO 3 – Students will demonstrate the ability to conduct and utilize research methodologies in the study of literature, theory, and writing, as focused by their programs.

1. **Intersectionality and Feminist Perspectives:** Students will explore the intersectionality of witchcraft and women's experiences, considering how race, class, and other social categories intersect with gender in the context of witchcraft beliefs and practices. They will examine feminist perspectives on witchcraft, analyzing the ways in which it has been reclaimed as a symbol of resistance, empowerment, and spirituality within contemporary feminist movements. Students will critically reflect on the complex relationships between witchcraft, activism, and social justice.
2. **Research and Scholarship**: Students will develop advanced research skills by engaging with primary and secondary sources related to witchcraft and women. They will learn how to critically evaluate and analyze scholarly works, historical documents, and ethnographic accounts. Through research projects and assignments, students will demonstrate their ability to synthesize information, develop coherent arguments, and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on witchcraft and women.
3. **Ethical Considerations:** Students will explore the ethical implications of studying witchcraft and its impact on women. They will critically reflect on the biases and stereotypes perpetuated in academic research, media, and public discourse regarding witchcraft. Students will engage in discussions and assignments focused on addressing these ethical concerns, fostering a deeper understanding of the responsibilities and potential harm that can arise from the study of witchcraft and its portrayal of women.
4. **Critical Thinking and Reflection**: Students will develop critical thinking skills by interrogating and challenging dominant narratives surrounding witchcraft and women. They will learn to analyze complex historical and cultural phenomena, evaluate multiple perspectives, and construct reasoned arguments. Through class discussions, written assignments, and presentations, students will cultivate their ability to think critically and reflectively, while actively engaging in respectful and constructive dialogue with peers.

Marketable Skills

1. Students will communicate effectively in writing and speaking.
2. Students will use different research strategies to address problems and develop ideas that engage a variety of perspectives.
3. Students will recognize how social and cultural contexts shape meaning and language.

Course requirements: *This web course is not a self-paced course. Pay close attention to due dates (and times) for all assignments.* Web-delivered courses differ from face-to-face courses in that almost

all contact between instructor and students and between students will be electronic. If you have not taken a Web course before this semester, or if you need to refresh your memory about the electronic requirements for an online course and about the tools you will be required to use in Blackboard, review the "Getting Started" information on our course homepage. *You are expected to be familiar with Blackboard; not knowing how Blackboard works is not an excuse for turning in work late!* If you have difficulties submitting an assignment, contact me immediately, <u>NOT AFTER THE DUE DATE</u>, as notifying me of a problem after the deadline negates any opportunity for possible makeup work.

Required Format for Turning in Assignments
Please turn in all of your assignments in either Microsoft Word OR PDF formats ONLY. I have a lot of trouble opening any other kind of format.

Due Dates, Time, and Life in General
Assignments will have very specific due dates, but in most cases, most assignments will be due on a SUNDAY no later than 11:59 pm. WARNING! DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO TURN IN YOUR WORK. As has happened in the past—many times, students who wait until the last minute sometimes run into unforeseen problems, such as: running out of battery life, PC dies, PC is stolen, a virus hits, a meeting at work goes into overtime, a child or two becomes ill, but none of these are valid reasons and will not be honored as excuses for turning in work late. You are given ample time in which to work on and complete these assignments ahead of time, *if you wait until the last minute, and something unforeseen happens, it's your fault.*

I know most graduate students have full time jobs (some of you have more than one job), and some of you have families, but you must negotiate your time properly, in a manner that does not sacrifice the quality of your work. Life and work will always be a juggling act; it's up to you to take care of business.

Tech Assistance
If you need help with the technology when submitting an assignment, contact the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (see below) immediately. If you need technical assistance, contact the Support Staff at the Lobo Technology Assistance Center (LTAC): **Online**: Contact us (24x7x365): http://www.sulross.edu/pages/4401.asp. Please use your email/ domain credentials to log in. Our website (www.sulross.edu/oit) has "how to" information on using the online system, which is designed to help you avail quicker service and responses from OIT staffs. **Phone**: 432-837-8888 (x8888/8765).Hours (Subject to change):Weekday (Mon-Fri): 8am-6pm Weekend (Sat-Sun): 11am to 4 pm. **In-person**: LTAC support counters will provide in-person/ walk-in helpdesk services and technology consultation. LTAC counters are located at: BAB 101 and Library ground floor in the back of the building. Hours: 8am to 5pm (Mon- Fri).

Absences
Sul Ross State University allows a maximum of 20% absences in a course before an instructor drops a student for excessive absences. In this online course, "excessive absences" is defined as non-participation in the course for three (3) weeks or more. Any student dropped for non-participation will receive an F in the course.

To avoid being dropped, you must participate regularly. Participation in the course is defined as

• logging in to the course to check activities and to read discussion boards,

• gaining access to and using supplemental materials,

• posting on discussion boards as scheduled, and

• turning in assignments in a timely manner.

Professor e-communication
I will communicate with the class through Announcements and by e-mail, so be sure to log in daily to check for announcements on the course home page and to check your Sul Ross e-mail account regularly. **REMEMBER: this is NOT a self-paced course, which means assignments and deadlines will be posted with specific deadlines and times.** You will find specific assignment details, due dates, and times in TENTATIVE ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE.

Makeup Work
Opportunities to make up assignments are available only in extreme, urgent circumstances. It is your responsibility to turn in your work on or before the deadline. If the assignment is not turned in by the deadline, work MIGHT be accepted but ONE WHOLE LETTER grade (10 points) will be deducted *per day* the assignment is late, weekends count. *Makeup work is granted at the professor's discretion.* To be eligible for possible makeup work, you MUST contact me in a reasonable time BEFORE the deadline (not an hour before the deadline, not five mins before, and certainly not AFTER the deadline). *If you contact me after the deadline, you will not be considered eligible to makeup that assignment, so don't ask.*

No Late Work Policy
Late work is not accepted for any reason due to **student negligence** (forgetting to turn in an assignment, forgetting to log in, waiting until the last minute to begin assignments, not knowing how to use Blackboard, etc).

Student integrity and responsibility
Web-delivered courses are similar to face-to-face courses in that students are expected to exhibit academic integrity by respecting the discussion of their colleagues in the class, presenting as their own work only content that they have generated, scrupulously attributing and documenting all outside sources in their papers and discussion, and, in general, adhering to the ethical standards of scholars. I expect you to be responsible for your own learning, and follow all of the course requirements and procedures. Failure to abide by these regulations can result in failure in the course.

Personal Responsibility
It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your email/Announcements frequently! I leave detailed instructions and details in the Announcements/email feature and in the Tentative Assignment Schedule in Blackboard; it's up to you to check in and find out what's due, when, and how to turn in assignments.

Online Classroom Expectations

DAILY, FREQUENT CHECK-INS: You must check into Blackboard 9 frequently/daily. I write detailed summaries of objectives for the day/week under the Announcements/email feature in Blackboard 9; it is your responsibility to read them. I will not review any assignment/lecture materials AFTER the due date.

REASONABLE TIME CHECKS: What this means is, don't contact me *late in the evenings* and expect me to respond. I have two sons (ages 5 and 2 years old), so I am in bed early and get up early,. It's best to contact me via email early in the morning, or during office hours. I will always email you in a timely fashion, so look for my response as soon as you contact me. If you need to speak with me, call me during office hours, and/or leave a message. For students living in Alpine, I encourage you to stop by my office! If my office hours don't work for you, you can always make an appointment with me. I'd be happy to meet you in person!

Community decorum: In respecting others opinions, we will cultivate a virtual classroom environment that fosters communal learning. No one is allowed to bully, intimidate, or make disparaging comments/remarks. Everyone is expected to maintain a level of respect which fosters a sense of community and equable learning. If you cannot maintain common decency, you will be barred from participating in online discussion for that session. If you continue disrespecting others, you will be barred from the course entirely, and you will earn an "F" for the course.

Individual decorum: Online courses do share some characteristics of traditional classroom environments, but are still quite unique in their operations, especially in that success in online courses depends on individual responsibility, more so than in a traditional face-to-face classroom. You are required to master time management, as well as make a conscious decision to CHECK IN DAILY. In order to achieve success in this course, please ensure you do the following:

-read assignments as they are assigned. Keeping up with the reading schedule is **absolutely vital to your success in this course**. If you do not consider the reading schedule a priority, your grade will suffer because quizzes, assignments, and major papers, revolve around the reading schedule

-turn in assignments by the due dates

-check your email/ Blackboard Announcements on a *daily* basis

-participate respectfully during forums. Your input, thoughts, and ideas relative to course readings and other course materials, are an important part of this course.

-DO NOT interfere with others' ability to learn; this means, you cannot monopolize the online classroom conversation, rudely interrupt others, shame or intimidate others, or otherwise prohibit or interrupt the learning process with disrespectful and/or disruptive behavior.

Academic Honesty

I expect each student to strictly adhere to the rules and regulations regarding academic pursuits. The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. Please see page 82 in the SRSU **Student Handbook: for complete information**.

http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files//sites/default/files/users/docs/records_srsu/handbook_2012-2013-complete.pdf

1. "Cheating" includes:

a. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report,

other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same.

b. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.

c. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.

d. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of an unadministered test.

e. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.

f. Bribing another person to obtain an unadministered test or information about an unadministered test.

g. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of the rough and/or final versions of an assignment by a professional typist.

h. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea in ones own written work offered for credit.

i. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.

j. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.

k. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.

Plagiarism Policy

As a simple guideline, if you submit your own work, you will avoid all serious types of plagiarism. Nevertheless, a responsible student should also consider the less obvious variants of plagiarism, especially when writing research papers that require citations. I am fully aware of AI (Chat GPT), and it is expressly forbidden in this course.
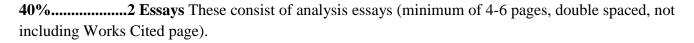
Instances of plagiarism, such as submitting an essay with sentences or passages cut and pasted from an online source, or a paper obtained from an online "paper mill," students in this course will automatically fail the assignment, receive a final grade of F, and be recommended for dismissal from the university. There is no excuse for serious plagiarism. I will also regard unattributed citations – verbatim copying of another's person's work without some indication of the source – as a serious form of plagiarism. In other words, don't insert any text in a paper that is not your own without also noting the source. You can email me with a question before an assignment is due, stop by my office during my office hours, or even parenthetically raise the question in your paper. *It's your responsibility to comply with principles of academic honesty; it's my responsibility to see that every student receives a fair and accurate grade.* Here is my policy on plagiarism for this course:

> ⚠ The *first offense* of plagiarism or academic dishonesty (collusion, paying an editing service, having someone else write or otherwise edit your work), in part or in whole, will result in a failing grade on that assignment(s). The student has the right to appeal to the Dept. Chair, then Provost, and eventually to the Provost and VP for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. The decision of the Provost and VP for Academic Affairs is final.

ADA Accommodation

Sul Ross State University is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services. Students seeking accessibility services must contact the Counseling and Accessibility Services, Ferguson Hall, Room 112. The mailing address is P. O. Box C-171, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, TX 79832. The telephone number is 432-837-8203.

Graded Course Requirements

40%...................2 Essays These consist of analysis essays (minimum of 4-6 pages, double spaced, not including Works Cited page).

30%..................Daily Assignments/Homework These consist of various assignments, including quizzes, journals, Discussion Boards, and others.

20%.................PowerPoint presentation Students will present a PowerPoint which focuses on one or more subjects we discussed during the semester, and the ways in which these ideas correlate to one or more of the texts we read. This presentation will occur during the day our final exam is scheduled by the university

10% ……….. Student participation
Students will be graded on the following: promptness, participation (in class, attending class, office hours, emailing, staying engaged with course proceedings, ability to thoughtfully and respectfully engage with instructor and peers in and out of class). For specific grading criteria regarding student participation grade, please see below:

This rubric will be used to grade student participation:

0 (F): Absent (each time a student is absent, they will receive a "0" for that day's class participation. The only way this can be avoided is if the student has an excused absence (guaranteed to be waived) and/or an explained absence (not guaranteed to be waived) AND if the student notifies the professor ahead of time (not 5 mins before class begins and certainly not after class ends).
60 (D): Tries to respond when called but does not offer much in the way of class discussion. Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion
70 (C): Demonstrates adequate preparation. Offers straightforward information without elaboration. Demonstrates sporadic involvement in discussion
80 (B): Demonstrates good preparation. Offers interpretation and analysis. Responds to other students constructively. Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement
90 (A): Demonstrates excellent preparation. Offers analysis and synthesis. Puts together pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches. Always on time, courteous, and never turns in late work/assignments.

Grades

A **90-100:** Outstanding performance in mastering of the subject. Achievement of superior quality. (4 grade : points per credit hour)

B **80-89:** Consistent performance in achievement beyond the usual requirements of the course. Achievement of high quality. (3 grade points per credit hour)

C **70-79:** Performance of a satisfactory nature. Achievement demonstrating an understanding of the subject sufficient for continued study in the discipline. (2 grade points per credit hour)

D **60-69:** Minimally acceptable performance. Achievement demonstrating below average understanding of the basic elements of the course. (1 grade point per credit hour)

F **50-59:** Achievement at a level insufficient to demonstrate understanding of the basic elements of the course. (0 grade points)

Incomplete grade(I):The grade of "I" is given by the instructor upon consultation with the student. The work to be completed and deadline for completion must be specified on the grade report to the Director of Records and Registration. A student may have a maximum of one academic year in which to remove an T during which time the "I" will not be calculated in the student's grade point average. f the work is not completed by the deadline set by the instructor, the "I" will be converted to an "F" and will be calculated n the student's grade point average for the semester in which the "I" was given. Normally, an incomplete grade will be awarded only for situations such as illness, family emergencies, or unusual circumstances which prevent a student from completing a course in a semester or summer term. Incomplete grades must be removed prior to graduation.

Withdrawal grade (W): The grade of "W" is given for courses dropped after the 12th/4th class days through the last day to drop a course with a "W" as published in the University's calendar. Students who wait until the published deadline must have complied with the class attendance policy of this catalog. An instructor is not obligated to recommend a "W" for a class if excessive absences have occurred. Students will not be permitted to drop a course or withdraw from the University after the published deadline.

Final Note

It's worth noting that there's a predictable and positive correlation between careful time management and academic success. I encourage you to make a wise decision as to what kind of student you will be early on and to plan accordingly. *No extra points, no extra credit work will be assigned, so don't ask.* **You are completely responsible for meeting all deadlines and keeping track of any changes made to the course schedule.** You have several resources made available to you to ensure your success in this course, so I strongly encourage you to take advantage of them.

Tentative Semester Calendar

Subject to change

1/17: First class day. Course policies, procedures discussed.

1/21: **Academic Integrity Policy DUE @11:59 pm.**

3/11-3/15: Spring Break. No classes held.

3/18: Midsemester; **Major Essay #1 DUE @11:59 pm**

5/1: Last class day

5/2: Dead Day (no classes held; no new course content introduced)

5/7: **Major Essay #2 DUE**

Final PowerPoint Presentation; date TBD

-----END OF SEMESTER-----