

**ENC 2305**  
Killer Creatures & Invasive Species:  
Florida's Unruly Wildlife & the Media

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**Office Hours:** MWF 11:45-12:35 & 3:00-3:50, or by appointment

**Course Description**

Analytical Writing and Thinking (ENC 2305) is designed to advance students' critical thinking and writing skills beyond first-year composition. To achieve those goals, students will learn advanced analytical techniques and communication strategies that professors in all disciplines expect them to know. The texts and assignments in the course will expose students to challenging ideas. Students will be introduced to seminal ideas in specific disciplines and will be asked to engage in debates important to our time and our culture.

In this course, students will hone their reasoning skills through engagement with a specific topic and sharpen their writing skills through multiple drafts of papers with substantial feedback from their peers and their instructor. The culmination of the course will be a portfolio that demonstrates the individual student's growth as a thinker and as a writer.

**Outcomes**

By the end of ENC 2305, students will be able to

- Analyze specific influential research, theories, or philosophies
- Recognize writing as an open process that permits writers to use reinvention and rethinking to revise their work
- Understand the collaborative nature of writing processes by critiquing their own and others' work
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills
- Incorporate the ideas of published scholars in their own work
- Produce a scholarly writing style, including clear, coherent, efficient, and well-organized prose as well as logical argumentation

**Course Theme**

Writing is a source of anxiety for lots of people. This section aims to reduce your fear about commas and redirect that energy to some of the things that might kill you during your time in Florida. Sharks, gators, snakes... Of course, on an intellectual level, many of us understand that the actual physical threat posed by such creatures is negligible in the developed world. Yet people are fascinated by formidable predators; they scare us, but they also attract and fascinate us. They may also distract us from creatures that pose greater threats.

The subject matter and theme of each section of ENC 2305 is developed in accordance with the instructors' own studies. This section focuses on the study of cultural depictions of "dangerous" animals. What makes an animal dangerous? What are the different ways in which that danger can manifest? What are the consequences of labeling an animal dangerous and of propagating

narratives about its danger? Also, in an age of perpetual anthropogenic ecological crises, who are we to demonize sharks? By examining this subject, students will gain basic orientation to the field of animal studies and the relationship between scientific and cultural knowledge. Ultimately, students will learn to read deeply and think critically.

### **Required Texts**

All written texts will be provided on Canvas. Since there is no screening time associated with this course, students will be required to watch films on their own time. In some cases, this may require purchasing a subscription to a streaming service or digitally renting films.

### **Assignments and Grading**

#### **Critical Definition**

**1500-1700 words**

**150 points**

**Due: Jan. 31 (Fri)**

Students will develop a carefully crafted extended definition of a theory or concept related to the course theme. Students will analyze how their chosen theory or concept has been used and defined (or misused and misdefined) before providing their own analysis and critique. The definition should explain the theory or concept's relevance to the cultural study of animals. Students are encouraged to provide a visual example (still image or clip) and describe how that visual illustrates or explains the term. Students will be provided with a list of possible terms from which to choose. Students can select a term not included on the pre-approved list, but must confirm their selection with the instructor.

#### **Critical Analysis of News Coverage**

**1500-1700 words**

**150 points**

**Due: Feb. 28 (Fri)**

Students will select a non-human animal species that lives in Florida (or its surrounding waters). The species can be native or invasive, but it should be considered dangerous by some criteria (e.g., it potentially poses a threat to human life or the natural ecology). For a month, students will monitor the news for stories about their species; Google Alerts will be a useful tool for this process. Students are not limited to news stories specifically centered in Florida. Students will make observations about how the news media presents this species. Factors that might be considered include: what stories gain the most traction, how are these stories illustrated, what sources provide commentary, and how is the species being characterized? Your analysis does not have to be exhaustive – find an angle that interests you. In addition to this overview, students will provide a close reading of a story they find particularly interesting. For their close reading, students can select a story published outside of the month-long monitoring period.

**Application of Theory or Concept to Current Topic****3000-3200 words****350 points****Due: Apr. 10 (Fri)**

Employing the skills of scholarly research, close reading, and critical thinking, students will engage a topic related to the course's central theme. Students can stray beyond the borders of Florida for this project, but, as with the previous assignment, their work should engage an animal that can be considered dangerous. Students may weigh in on a debate or topic in the field of animal studies, they may survey representations of a single species and analyze the various presentations, or they may do a comparative analysis of representations of different species. Students are not restricted to the above options and are encouraged to discuss and develop their ideas with the instructor. Students can draw upon analytical methods and readings from outside the course, but their original research projects must engage class readings and concepts.

**Final Portfolio****150 points****Due: Apr. 22 (Wed)**

Students will turn in a final portfolio that showcases their work over the course of the semester. Students should include their best work, but also demonstrate their intellectual and personal growth over the course of the semester. This means including items from early in the semester in order to demonstrate what they've learned. Portfolios will include a letter to the reader that explains the portfolio's contents and offers critical reflection on each item to demonstrate what the student has learned.

**Peer Review Workshops (3 @ 20 points each)****In-Class Activities: Jan. 29 (Wed); Feb. 26 (Wed); Apr. 8 (Wed)**

As part of the writing and revision process, students will have a guided peer review for each of the three major papers. Students will provide constructive feedback on the ideas and writing of their peers.

**Attendance & Participation (60 points)**

The success of this class depends upon students' active and informed participation. It is vital that students come to class ready to discuss readings and screenings, and to offer mature and thoughtful insights that forward the group's understanding of these texts and the subject. Absences, lateness, or failure to participate in class discussion or activities will affect the student's attendance and participation grade.

**Classwork / Homework: Reading/Screening Quizzes & Class Prep Sheets (10 @ 10 points each)**

Throughout the semester, students will either be given comprehension quizzes in-class, or prep sheets to be completed as homework in order to prepare for in-class discussions. Prep sheets will need to be uploaded to Canvas before the relevant class.

## Grading Scale\*

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599

\*Students will be graded on a scale of 0-1000, but can earn up to 1020 points. When trying to calculate your final grade, consider your total points in relation to the above grading scale.

## Course Credit Policy / General Education Learning Outcomes

Course grades have two components. To receive a writing credit, students must receive a grade of “C” or higher. Students must also turn in all papers totaling 6,000 words to receive the 6,000-word University Writing Requirement credit (E6). The writing requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

PLEASE NOTE: a grade of “C-” **will not** confer credit for the University Writing Requirement or the CLAS Composition (C) requirement.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to content, organization and coherence, argument and support, style, clarity, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics. Conferring credit for the University Writing Requirement, this course requires that papers conform to the following assessment rubric. More specific rubrics and guidelines applicable to individual assignments may be delivered during the course of the semester.

## General Education Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement and topic sentences.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.

ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical structure.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the satisfactory range, papers may contain a few spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive and do not obscure the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Attendance

Attendance is required. The policy of the University Writing Program is that students missing more than **SIX PERIODS** during a semester without a valid, documented excuse **will fail the entire course**. The UWP exempts from this policy **only** those absences deemed excused according to UF policy, including university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, illness, and religious holidays. For absences due to illness, injury, or other unexpected events, students should alert the instructor promptly and provide documentation (e.g., a signed doctor's note). Students are not required to explain unexcused absences, but should inform the instructor about extenuating circumstances that are likely to affect their performance or attendance (family emergencies, mental health concerns, etc.).

Please Note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been called, they are late. Lateness disrupts the entire class. Two instance of tardiness count as one absence. Arriving 5 minutes after the scheduled start of class counts as one absence.

### **Late / Make-Up Work**

Students are responsible for submitting assignments by their due dates and times as listed on Canvas. For every 24-hour period after the exact posted time (including weekends), assignments will be automatically deducted 10 points. After seven 24-hour periods, assignments will receive an automatic zero. Late submissions will not be accepted in cases that inconvenience or impact other students or planned class activities.

Homework and papers will be due by the next class period for students with valid excused absences. In-class activities (including peer reviews) are not available for late submission of make-up.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits plagiarism and defines it as follows:

*A Student must not represent as the Student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:*

- *Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.*
- *Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student's own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student's own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.*
- *Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.*
- *Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.*

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. Ignorance or carelessness are not excuses violating the Honor Code. At minimum, violations will result in a zero on the assignment. Students may also fail the entire course or be expelled from the University.

Students who are unsure about what constitutes plagiarism should not hesitate to contact their Instructor. [Online resources](#) can also provide clarification.

**Important Tip:** Never copy any information without providing the exact location from which it came. Students who are unsure about what qualifies as plagiarism should

### **Classroom Behavior**

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

### **Technology**

Students are allowed to take notes on digital devices and are encouraged to bring any device necessary to complete in-class activities required Internet access. Digital devices may not be

used for unrelated activities during class, and activities that distract other students will not be tolerated. Cell phones and other noise-making devices must be turned off or in silent mode. Abuse of the technology policy will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

### **In-Class Work**

Participation is a crucial part of success in this class. Students will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, peer reviews, and other in-class activities. Be prepared for unannounced quizzes or activities on the readings or classroom discussion. Students must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. Writing workshops require that students provide constructive feedback about their peers' writing. In general, students are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

### **Paper Maintenance Responsibilities**

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### **Paper Formatting**

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc, .docx) documents to Canvas. File names should include the student's last name and specify the assignment (e.g., Smith-Def.docx). Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Your name and the assignment name should be at the top of your document (left or right justified). Each paper should have a title centered at the top of the document.

### **Students with Disabilities**

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202 or [online](#). DRC documentation must be provided to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Please inform the instructor of any necessary accommodations early in the semester.

### **Students in Distress**

The University of Florida has a number of resources available to help students experiencing difficulties in their lives (whether related to school or not). Do not hesitate to seek help.

Non-emergency safety concerns – UFPD	352-392-1111 (for emergencies, call 911)
Dean of Students Office	352-392-1261
U Matter We Care	352-294-2273, <a href="mailto:umatter@ufl.edu">umatter@ufl.edu</a> , <a href="http://umatter.ufl.edu">http://umatter.ufl.edu</a>
Counseling and Wellness Center	352-392-1575
Field and Fork Pantry	Rawlings Hall, <a href="https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/">https://pantry.fieldandfork.ufl.edu/</a>

Students are not required to inform the instructor about personal problems, but are encouraged to reach out if accommodations are required.

## **Tentative Schedule**

### **Week 1 [Critical Reading – Scholarly/Written & Visual Texts]**

- **Reading:** Waldau, Paul. “Opening Doors.” *Animal Studies: An Introduction*, Oxford UP, 2013, pp. 1-31.

### **Week 2 [What is Animal Studies?]**

- **Readings:**
  - Berger, John. “Why Look at Animals?” *Why Look at Animals?* Penguin Books, 2009, pp. 12-37.
  - Burt, Jonathan. “John Berger’s ‘Why Look at Animals?’: A Close Reading.” *Worldviews*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2005, pp. 203-218.

### **Week 3 [Visualizing & Narrating Animals]**

- **Readings:**
  - Plumwood, Val. “Surviving a Crocodile Attack / Being Prey.” *UTNE Reader*, Jul-Aug 2000.
  - Richardson, Lance. “Python wars: the snake epidemic eating away at Florida.” *The Guardian*. 22 Aug. 2019.
- **Screenings:**
  - “The Bounty Hunters Catching Pythons in Florida.” *Vice News*. 11 Feb. 2019.
  - “Burmese Python Invasion: Fighting Invasive Species.” *CBS News*. 24 Oct. 2018.
  - “Python Hunters Take on Florida Everglades’ Snake Problem.” *CBS This Morning*. 17 May 2017.
  - “Snake Hunters from Indian Tackle Florida’s Python Problem.” *ABC News*. 5 Aug. 2017.

### **Week 4 [Writing & Peer Review]**

### **Week 5 [National Invasive Species Week – Unnatural Nature]**

- **Screening:** *Cane Toads: An Unnatural History* (dir. Mark Lewis, 1988)



### **Week 6 [Python Bowl 2020 – Hunting & Animal Life]**

- **Reading:** Abbate, C.E., and Bob Fischer. “Don’t Demean ‘Invasives’: Conservation and Wrongful Species Discrimination.” *Animals*, vol. 9, 2019, pp. 1-14.
- **Listen:** “30-50 Feral Hogs.” *Reply All*.

### **Week 7 [Non-Fiction – Wildlife Films & News Reporting]**

- **Screening:** “Wild Florida.” *Nature*. PBS
- **Reading:** Chris, Cynthia. *Watching Wildlife*, U Minnesota P, 2006. (Excerpts)

### **Week 8 [Writing & Peer Review]**

### **Week 9 – Spring Break – No Class**

### **Week 10 [Monster Movies]**

- **Screening:** *Crawl* (dir. Alexandre Aja, 2019)
- **Readings:**
  - Howard, Miles. “‘Crawl’ Could Usher in a New Wave of Climate Change Horror Films.” *Vice*. 17 Jul. 2019.
  - Malamud, Randy. “Film Animals.” *An Introduction to Animals and Visual Culture*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, pp. 70-93.

### **Week 11 [Monster Movies Part 2]**

- **Screening:** *Frogs* (dir. George McCowan, 1972)
- **Reading:** Quammen, David. *Monsters of God: The Man-Eating Predator in the Jungles of History and the Mind*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2003. (Excerpts)

### **Week 12 [Florida Natural History Museum – Science, Education, and Setting the Record Straight]**

- **Reading:** Pittman, Craig. *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Florida Panther*. Hanover Square Press, 2020. (Excerpts)

### **Week 13 [Writing & Peer Review]**

**Week 14 [Florida Man, AND Woman – the Human-Animal Divide]**

- Screenings:
  - *Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness*. (Select Episodes)

**Week 15 [Writing, Peer Review, and Conclusion]**