

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

City University of New York

Department of Academic Literacy and Linguistics

Course Information

**Literacy in American Society:
Contexts and Practices (ACL 150)**
Section: 051W
Semester: Fall 2023
Credits: 3

Instructor Information

Name: Prof. Barnes
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Office: N482
Office Hours:
Tu 12:00PM – 2:00PM in office and via Zoom
We 9:00AM – 10:00AM via Zoom

Class Hours: 3 Asynchronous

Laboratory Hours: 0 Hours Required

Pathways: US Experiences in its Diversity; Liberal Arts Elective; Elective in LIN Program

This class is being hosted on the BMCC OpenLab: [BMCC OpenLab \(cuny.edu\)](https://openlab.bmcc.cuny.edu/). Please either join the class or request membership, whichever option is available to you.

Zoom Office Hours: To attend office hours via Zoom, please click the following link on the days/times listed above. You can also copy and paste the link to your browser. The link to office hours is also posted on our course site on the OpenLab:

<https://bmcc-cuny.zoom.us/j/86339749337?pwd=QkZXc0lCbVVaQ2hJeEM1OExLL3Bmdz09>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Literacy in American Society asks students to investigate the varieties of literacy behaviors in American society as sociocultural phenomena. Students will be exposed to the research of major scholars in the interdisciplinary field of literacy research (e.g., New Literacy Studies) as a means of considering the role literacy and literacy behavior plays, both historically and in a contemporary context, in a diverse American society. Students will analyze the various definitions of literacy and track the development of multiple literacies in American society, specifically studying the transmission of literacy as a cultural value, particularly in oppressed communities. The course will provide the students with the opportunity to analyze and reflect on their personal relationship with literacy and opportunities for upward mobility in a stratified United States.

Basic Skills: ENG 88, ESL 94, ACR 94

This is also a **writing intensive** (WI) course that fulfills the WI requirement for graduation. Writing intensive courses pay special attention to developing critical reading, writing, and analytic skills to prepare students for college-level coursework in general. Both informal and formal writing will be designed to maximize your understanding of the subject matter. Formal writing assignments, at least 10-12 pages total, account for a significant portion of your grade and will include opportunities for revision.

ASYNCHRONOUS ONLY: There are no live sessions. All course content will be completed **ASYNCHRONOUSLY** and there will not be any live sessions. All content, assignments, instruction, feedback, lectures, and exams will be posted online and completed on students' own schedule.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES Students will be able to...	ASSESSMENTS
a) compare how literacy is defined and practiced, both historically and contemporaneously, in various cultural and ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings, discussions, journals, quizzes
b) compare how various cultural and ethnic groups within the United States define literacy and develop and participate in literacy behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings, discussion, journal, Literacy Narrative, research paper
c) analyze and evaluate how literacy policies and institutionalization of perspectives of literacy affect a) literacy practices and behaviors of cultural and ethnic groups and b) stratification of cultural and ethnic groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings, discussions, quizzes, journal, research paper
d) analyze how literacy communities are formed, how individuals are socialized into literacy practices, and how approaches to literacy are created by and reflective of cultural values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings, journal, discussion, position paper
e) read, analyze, and evaluate research that examines the historical and contemporary relationship between literacy and the participation of cultural and ethnic groups with institutions of power in America, including education, medicine, and governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings, research, journals, quizzes, discussion, research paper

GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES	ASSESSMENTS
<p>Communication Skills Express ideas clearly in written form</p> <p>Employ critical reading skills to analyze written material</p> <p>Exhibit active listening skills Give an effective oral presentation</p>	<p>Journals Literacy Narrative</p> <p>Research Paper Position Paper</p> <p>Presentation In-class discussion In-class group and pair activities</p>
<p>Social & Behavioral Sciences Demonstrate an understanding of the unique theories and methods of a social or behavioral science Analyze and interpret a social, economic, political, cultural, philosophical, or historical issue</p>	<p>Journals Literacy Narrative Research Paper Position Paper Presentation In-class discussion In-class group and pair activities</p>
<p>Information & Technology Literacy Conduct research using appropriate research Strategies Make effective use of technology</p>	<p>Research paper Position paper Presentation</p>

Values Demonstrate awareness of one’s own values and beliefs while showing respect for the ideas, values, and beliefs of others Demonstrate an appreciation of social and cultural diversity Appreciate personal and social responsibilities Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning	Journals Literacy Narrative Research Paper Position Paper Presentation In-class discussion In-class group and pair activities
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WI Course Student Learning Outcomes Upon successful completion of this course,	Measurements (means of assessment for student learning outcomes listed in first column)
1. Students will complete at least 10-12 pages of formal writing assignments that have gone through the revision process.	Literacy narrative, research essay, final reflection
2. Students will generate pieces of informal writing in response to a variety of prompts, concepts, situations or reading assignments.	Discussion board posts, oral history project, self-reflections, quizzes, freewriting

Required Text & Readings

There are no required textbooks for this course. Materials will be available on the OpenLab and Blackboard. This is an Open Educational Resource (OER) and Zero Textbook Cost (ZTC) course.

Use of Technology

This is an online course, hosted on the BMCC OpenLab. Instructions for joining the course on will be emailed to you and posted on Blackboard. We will use Blackboard for quizzes, essay submission the gradebook. Be sure to log into our course site at least 3 times per week to check for updates and to keep up with the coursework. I also encourage you to visit me during my office hours.

Grading/Evaluation Criteria


Assignment	% of Final Grade
Introduction on Flip	2%
Literacy Narrative	4%
Conversation (7 total, select 6)	20%
Quizzes (4)	8%
Research Essay Plan	3%
Oral History Project	8%
Letter to Ms. Adichie	4%
Midterm Check In	4%
Essay check-in	4%
Outline and Peer Review	10%

Research essay	15%
Literacy Presentation	8%
Final Reflection	10%
	100%

Outline of Topics:

All assignments are due by 11:59pm at the end of the weekly units (see weeks 1-15 below). **Most weeks start and end on a Tuesday**, with some exceptions (see: 🌀)

Week	When	Weekly Materials	Assignments
1	Fri Aug 25 - Tues Sept 5	INTRODUCTIONS: YOU & COURSE Research: what is literacy? Watch: Literacy is the Answer	Q & A about this class Introductions on Flip Conversation #1
2	Tues Sept 5 - Tues Sept 12	ETHNOGRAPHY OF LITERACY Read: Ethnography of Literacy Read: About the Sociocultural Perspective of Literacy Research: Orality vs. Literacy	Conversation #2
3	Tues Sept 12 – Tues Sept 19	(SOME) LITERACY ISSUES IN THE US Read: This Type of Illiteracy Could Hurt You Watch: The Illiteracy-To-Prison Pipeline Read: The Relationship Between Incarceration and Low Literacy Watch: How Schools Keep Kids in Poverty Watch: America's Illiteracy Problem Watch: Childhood Literacy Review oral history project	Literacy Narrative Quiz 1/ Blackboard: Literacy Issues in the US
4	Tues Sept 19 – Tues Sept 26	NEW LITERACIES Contribute to class glossary/ Write Read: Dawn of the New Literacies Watch: The Essential Elements of Digital Literacies	Conversation #3 Work on oral history project
5	Tues Sept 26 – Tues Oct 3	AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES (Group Y) Read: African-Born Immigrants in U.S. Schools Watch: Challenges for Africans in U.S. Schools Watch: Africans in America OR INDIAN AND ALASCAN NATIVE PERSPECTIVES (Group X) Read: Education of American Indian and Alaskan Native Children Watch: Native American Students Watch: Native American Education	Oral History Project Conversation #4 Review research essay options

6	Tues Oct 3 – Tues Oct 10	<p style="text-align: center;">ASIAN PERSPECTIVES</p> Read: Chinese Immigrant Parents Watch: Stereotypes of Asian Americans Watch: The Struggle of Being Asian Read: Immigration Act of 1917	Quiz 2/ Blackboard: Asian Perspectives Select research essay option and begin the journey
7	Tues Oct 10– Tues Oct 17	<p style="text-align: center;">MIDDLE EASTERN PERSPECTIVES</p> Read: Arab and Other Middle Eastern Americans Read: Literacy Reform in the Middle East Watch: Middle Eastern Students in the U.S.	Conversation #5 Research your essay topic Research Essay Plan (submit on Blackboard)
8	Tues Oct 17 – Tues Oct 24	<p style="text-align: center;">MIDTERM WEEK</p> Read/Watch: The Danger of a Single Story Read: English Test for Naturalization	Midterm Check In Letter to Ms. Adichie Quiz 3/ Flip: Who Are You?
9	Tues Oct 24 – Tues Oct 31	<p style="text-align: center;">HISPANIC/ LATINX PERSPECTIVES</p> Read: The Potential and Promise of Latino Students Watch: Defining Latino: Young People Talk Identity Watch: What Being Hispanic and Latinx Means	Conversation #6 Work on essay outline Essay check-in
10	Tues Oct 31 – Tues Nov 7	<p style="text-align: center;">BLACK/ AFRICAN - AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES</p> Read: Slave Era Barriers and Black Literacy Take: Literacy Test Read: African American Literacy and COVID19 Read: Black Boy	Conversation #7 Work on essay outline
11	Tues Nov 7 – Tues Nov 14	<p style="text-align: center;">LITERACY AND GENDER</p> Read: Gender Equity Begins with Literacy Read: Disrupting Dichotomies for Social Change Watch: Why kids need to learn about gender and sexuality Lindsay Amer	Quiz 4/ Blackboard: Literacy and Gender Research Essay Outline
12	Tues Nov 14 – Tues Nov 21	<p style="text-align: center;">PEER REVIEW + NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES (Group X)</p> Read: U.S. Occupation and the Hawaiian People Watch: Hawaii's Legacy of Literacy OR <p style="text-align: center;">EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES (Group Y)</p> Read: European Immigrants in the U.S.	Peer Review (your critique of two classmates' drafts) Write/ revise your essay
13	Tues Nov 21 – Tues Nov 28	<p style="text-align: center;">LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY</p> Read: Social Media Effects on Teens Watch: How Technology Changes How We Read	Submit Research Essay + Happy Thanksgiving
14	Tues Nov 28 – Tues Dec 5 	<p style="text-align: center;">PRESENTATIONS</p> Post your presentation by Mon Dec 4 Comment on classmates' presentations by Dec 5	Present and participate on Flip

15	Tues Dec 5 – Mon Dec 11th 	REFLECTIONS	Reflection Draft Final reflection: <i>Thursday</i> <i>Dec 14th</i>
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Class Participation:

- Class participation is a key to your success in this course. In asynchronous courses, this means submitting assignments on a weekly basis and by the due date, contributing to our online conversation board, engaging with classmates, and checking our course site at least 3 times per week for updates and announcements.
- Ideally, you wouldn't miss any course assignments. I have tried to make all course materials meaningful, and believe you will benefit from completing all relevant tasks.
- However, life happens. The world doesn't stop just because you have an essay to write. So there needs to be some flexibility. How much? It's hard to say as every one of you is a unique human being with your own unique circumstances.
- That said, there is a point at which you may have missed too many weekly units and assignments to be able to pass the course. This is not about whether you are a good person or not. It's a judgment about what it means to have this course on your transcript. How can you receive credit for work you haven't completed, right?
- If you miss 1 weekly unit, you don't have to do anything, but if you wish, let me know what is happening and reach out for help if needed.
- If you miss more than 1 weekly unit, do get in touch with me so that we can crate a plan of action. I want you to be successful.
- If you miss more than two weekly units (equivalent to two weeks of instruction/ 6 class hours), you will likely be in danger of failing the course. Please reach out to me to discuss the next steps.

Late Work

Ideally, you submit all work on time. But, again, stuff happens. If you need an extension, let me know. I tend to think about late work as having two types: the type that isn't really going to matter to anyone if it's a bit late (suggested deadlines) and the type that actually does matter (hard deadlines). Please see the Cruelty-free class info on our course site on the OpenLab for more information. Also, feel free to ask me.

Conversation Posts (select 6 out of 7; 20% of your final grade)

You will engage in online discussions on the OpenLab throughout the course. The discussion will be based on the topic and/or reading currently at hand. As an example, you will collectively take a historic literacy test used by states to assess whether someone was eligible to vote. Then, you will discuss your thoughts and reactions to the literacy test on our conversation forum.

Literacy Narrative: 2-3 pages (4% of your final grade)

You will write a personal literacy narrative of a specific moment you associate with literacy practices connected with your community. You can choose to write this paper chronologically (e.g., childhood, adolescence) or thematically.

Oral History Project (8%)

You will conduct an oral history project of an individual who attended school at least 20 years prior to you. You will record an oral history of that individual's experiences with literacy instruction, and reflect on the interview. When all students' oral histories are collected and submitted, I will analyze them, demonstrating to students how to find themes related to literacy, identity, communities, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses.

Quizzes (8% of your final grade)

Some weekly lessons will include an open-ended quiz posted on Blackboard that focuses on the key concepts in the reading assignments. You will be asked to use the respective weekly readings to support your answers.

Research Essay: 4-5 pages (15% of your final grade)

Option 1: Ethnography of Community

You will conduct a mini-ethnography where you will observe individuals engaged in literacy practices (e.g., a Bible reading group; book club). Specifically, you will focus attention on the way that literacy is a tool that assists in the development of community, how communities create literacy practices, and the relationship between that community and identity formation (e.g., gender) and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses.

Option 2: Literacy Landscapes and Superdiversity: Literacy in the Community:

You will study a diverse community in New York City and explore the language employed in the local environment (e.g., signs in store windows) and consider a) the expected literacy and language demands of members of the community and b) the landscape's relationship to the concept of superdiversity. Analyses should focus on how language relates to identity, community, power, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourse.

Option 3: Literacy History Project

You will analyze how members of a particular minority community (e.g., indigenous groups in Northern United States) have been affected by the institutionalization of literacy in the United States. You will examine scholarship that points to literacy practices within this community that are devalued or ignored by formal schooling while considering the strengths of the literacy practices of minority communities. You should also consider how minority communities have used the hegemonic tools of literacy practice to gain access to power.

Option 4: Think-Aloud Experiential Study

You will conduct a mini-research project where you gather data about individuals' experiences with a particular literacy practices (e.g., the reading of a Supreme Court opinion addressing equality). You will ask participants to engage in think-alouds about what they understand/do not understand while reading; what they disagree with. In reflection, participants will then discuss their overall thoughts about the relationship between literacy their access to power by being able to comprehend and evaluate the reading. You will analyze your data and your subjects' relationship to identity, community, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses

Option 5: Analyses of Literacy Tests

With or without a partner, you will distribute a historic literacy test to at least five adults. Post-Civil War, many states required adults to pass a literacy test to be eligible to vote (with the explicit purpose of limiting voting access of African-American voters). You will ask these individuals to take the literacy test. After the participants finish the test, you will ask participants to discuss their reactions to/experiences with taking the literacy test (e.g., did they feel there was cultural bias in the

way the literacy test was structured). Individually, you will then write a reflection outlining what you learned through the activity while using data from participants to inform their reflection.

Literacy Presentation (8% of your final grade)

You will complete a literacy presentation via PowerPoint or other presentation tool, which will encompass a thorough investigation of a literacy perspective from a chosen group of people (as covered in the course) and one that you identify with. You will evaluate and make critical connections between a topic of your choosing and your own personal experiences, and the experiences of other individuals.

OR

Present your research essay to the class.

Final Reflection: 4 pages (10% of your final grade)

You will revise your literacy narrative to discuss the relationship between literacy practices, identity, community, and/or hegemonic power and your own learning in the course.

As this course is interdisciplinary, additional assignments could include, among others, a phenomenological study of experiences with literacy, analyses of the way that popular culture (e.g., television/film, music) and/or art portrays/represents literacy among diverse groups in the United States, or an analysis of the performance of literacy and its relationship to identities, communities, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses.

BMCC is committed to the health and well-being of all students. It is common for everyone to seek assistance at some point in their life, and there are free and confidential services on campus that can help.

Gender-Inclusivity

BMCC community members have the right to use and be referred to according to their preferred name, title, and/or personal pronouns. Everyone also has the right to use all spaces according to their self-identification, including restrooms and locker rooms. To learn more about how to change your preferred name and affirm your gender identity at CUNY (including requesting a new ID card and/or email address), go here: <https://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/student-affairs/lgbtq/>

Anyone who has experienced harassment related to gender or sexual identification, who needs assistance, or who wishes to file a complaint, can contact the Office of Compliance and Diversity: <https://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/about-bmcc/compliance-diversity/>.

Advocacy and Resource Center (formerly Single Stop)

<https://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/student-affairs/arc/>, room S230, 212-220-8195, arc@bmcc.cuny.edu. If you are having problems with food or housing insecurity, finances, health insurance or anything else that might get in the way of your studies at BMCC, come by the ARC Office for advice and assistance. Assistance is also available through the Office of Student Affairs, S350, 212-220-8130, studentaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu.

Counseling Center www.bmcc.cuny.edu/counseling, room S343, 212-220-8140. Counselors assist students in addressing psychological and adjustment issues (i.e., depression, anxiety, and relationships) and can help with stress, time management and more. Counselors are available for walk-in visits.

Office of Compliance and Diversity www.bmcc.cuny.edu/aac, room S701, 212-220-1236. BMCC is committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment free of unlawful discrimination/harassment, including sexual harassment, where all students are treated fairly. For information about BMCC's policies and resources, or to request additional assistance in this area, please visit or call the office, or email olevy@bmcc.cuny.edu, or twade@bmcc.cuny.edu. If you need immediate assistance, please contact BMCC Public safety at 212-220-8080.

Office of Accessibility www.bmcc.cuny.edu/accessibility, Room N360 (accessible entrance: 77 Harrison Street), 212-220-8180, accessibility@bmcc.cuny.edu. Students who need academic accommodations in connection with a disability must initiate the request with BMCC's Office of Accessibility (OA). Students need to register with the Office of Accessibility in order to officially disclose their disability status to the College and to determine eligibility for appropriate reasonable accommodations (including any prior IEPs or 504s). Please contact the OA at the start of the semester (or as soon as possible) to coordinate any accommodation request/s.

BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one's own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC's Web site, www.bmcc.cuny.edu. For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).