

## 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 (ACR 150)  
Section: 5000  
Semester: Spring 2022  
Credits: 3

### Instructor Information

Name: Prof. Barnes  
Email: [ebarnes@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto:ebarnes@bmcc.cuny.edu)  
Phone: 212-220-800 ext. 1415  
Office: N482  
Office Hours:  
Tu 10:00am – 12:00pm In person and via Zoom  
Th 1:00pm – 2:00pm

Class Hours: 3 This is a hybrid class:  
Tu 2-3:15PM in person at 70 Murray M212 &  
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. Here is a link to the course site: [BMCC OpenLab \(cuny.edu\)](https://openlab.bmcc.cuny.edu/). Please either join the class or request membership, whichever option comes up.

**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.

Meeting ID: 851 3974 0329 Passcode 193451

<https://bmcc-cuny.zoom.us/j/85139740329?pwd=UEhsU3F6c2tRVFRDUVRac0xHaVhRZz09>

### 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

### Mode of Instruction

This is a hybrid class: in person sessions are held on the following Tuesdays: 2/1, 2/15/ 2/22/ 3/1, 3/8, 3/15, 3/22, 3/29, 4/5, 4/12, 4/26, 5/3, 5/10, 5/17. The other half of the course is asynchronous: about 50% of the 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"> <li>Readings, discussions, journals, quizzes</li> </ul>                          |
| 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"> <li>Readings, discussion, journal, Literacy Narrative, research paper</li> </ul> |
| 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"> <li>Readings, discussions, quizzes, journal, research paper</li> </ul>           |
| 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"> <li>Readings, journal, discussion, position paper</li> </ul>                     |
| 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"> <li>Readings, research, journals, quizzes, discussion, research paper</li> </ul> |

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

|                                                                                                             |                                                                           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| diversity<br>Appreciate personal and social responsibilities<br>Demonstrate commitment to lifelong learning | Presentation<br>In-class discussion<br>In-class group and pair activities |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Required Text & Readings

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

### Use of Technology

This is an online course, hosted on BMCC OpenLab. Instructions for joining the course on the OL will be emailed to you and posted on Blackboard. While the course site is on the OpenLab, we will use Blackboard for quizzes, essay submission, several course readings and the gradebook. Be sure to log into our course site on the OpenLab 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 on Zoom.

### Grading/Evaluation Criteria

| Assignment                   | % of Final Grade |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| Flipgrid Introduction        | 1%               |
| Literacy Narrative           | 4%               |
| Discussion Board Posts (7)   | 20%              |
| Quizzes (5)                  | 10%              |
| Oral History Project         | 8%               |
| Midterm Perspectives Project | 10%              |
| Midterm Check In             | 3%               |
| Draft and Peer Review        | 6%               |
| Research essay               | 20%              |
| Literacy Presentation        | 8%               |
| Final Reflection             | 10%              |
|                              | <b>100%</b>      |

*All assignments are due by 11:59pm at the end of the weekly units (see weeks 1-15 below). Our weeks begin and end on a Tuesday.*

| Week | When                                                                    | Weekly Materials                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Assignments                                                                    |
|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1    | <b>Class: Tu Feb 1</b><br>Tu Feb 1 –<br>Tu Feb 8                        | INTRODUCTIONS: YOU & COURSE<br>Research: what is literacy?<br>Watch: <a href="#">Literacy is the Answer</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Introductions on Flipgrid<br>Discussion Board Post #1                          |
| 2    | <b>Tu Feb 8: Classes follow Fri schedule</b><br>Tu Feb 8 –<br>Tu Feb 15 | ETHNOGRAPHY OF LITERACY<br>Read: Ethnography of Literacy<br>Read: About the Sociocultural Perspective of Literacy<br>Research: Orality vs. Literacy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Discussion Board Post #2                                                       |
| 3    | <b>Class: Tu Feb 15</b><br>Tu Feb 15 –<br>Tu Feb 22                     | (SOME) LITERACY ISSUES IN THE US<br>Read: This Type of Illiteracy Could Hurt You<br>Watch: <a href="#">The Illiteracy-To-Prison Pipeline</a><br>Read: The Relationship Between Incarceration and Low Literacy<br>Watch: <a href="#">How Schools Keep Kids in Poverty</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">America's Illiteracy Problem</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">Childhood Literacy</a>                                                    | <b>Literacy Narrative</b><br>Quiz 1 / Blackboard:<br>Literacy Issues in the US |
| 4    | <b>Class: Tu Feb 22</b><br>Tu Feb 22 –<br>Tu Mar 1                      | NEW LITERACIES<br>Contribute to class google doc on new literacies<br>Read: Dawn of the New Literacies<br>Watch: The Essential Elements of Digital Literacies                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Discussion Board Post #3                                                       |
| 5    | <b>Class: Tu Mar 1</b><br>Tu Mar 1 -<br>Tu Mar 8                        | AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES (Group Y)<br>Read: African-Born Immigrants in U.S. Schools<br>Watch: <a href="#">Challenges for Africans in U.S. Schools</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">Africans in America</a><br>OR INDIAN AND ALASCAN NATIVE PERSPECTIVES (Group X)<br>Read: Education of American Indian and Alaskan Native Children<br>Watch: <a href="#">Native American Students</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">Native American Education</a> | Discussion Board Post #4<br>Review research essay options                      |

|    |                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                             |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6  | <b>Class: Tu Mar 8</b><br>Tu Mar 8–<br>Tu Mar 15        | ASIAN PERSPECTIVES<br>Read: Chinese Immigrant Parents<br>Watch: <a href="#">Stereotypes of Asian Americans</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">The Struggle of Being Asian</a><br>Read: Immigration Act of 1917                    | <b>Oral History Project</b><br>Quiz 2/ Blackboard: Asian Perspectives<br>Select research essay option and begin the journey |
| 7  | <b>Class: Tu Mar 15</b><br>Tu Mar 15–<br>Tu Mar 22      | MIDDLE EASTERN PERSPECTIVES<br>Read: Arab and Other Middle Eastern Americans<br>Read: Literacy Reform in the Middle East<br>Watch: <a href="#">Middle Eastern Students in the U.S.</a>                                   | Discussion Board Post #5<br>Research your essay topic<br>Quiz 3/ Blackboard: Research Essay Plan                            |
| 8  | <b>Class: Tu Mar 22</b><br>Tu March 22–<br>Tu March 29  | MIDTERM WEEK<br>Read/Watch: <a href="#">The Danger of a Single Story</a><br>Read: English Test for Naturalization                                                                                                        | <b>Midterm Project</b><br>Midterm Check In                                                                                  |
| 9  | <b>Class: Tu Mar 29</b><br>Tu Mar 29 –<br>Tu Apr 5      | HISPANIC/ LATINX PERSPECTIVES<br>Read: The Potential and Promise of Latino Students<br>Watch: <a href="#">Defining Latino: Young People Talk Identity</a><br>Watch: <a href="#">What Being Hispanic and Latinx Means</a> | Discussion Board Post #6<br>Quiz 4/ Flipgrid: Who Are You?<br>Work on essay draft                                           |
| 10 | <b>Class: Apr 5</b><br>Tu April 5 –<br>Tu April 12      | BLACK/ AFRICAN - AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES<br>Read: Slave Era Barriers and Black Literacy<br>Take: Literacy Test<br>Read: African American Literacy and COVID19<br>Read: Black Boy                                           | Discussion Board Post #7<br>Work on essay draft                                                                             |
| 11 | <b>Class: Tu Apr 12</b><br>Tu April 12 –<br>Tu April 26 | LITERACY AND GENDER<br>Read: Gender Equity Begins with Literacy<br>Read: Disrupting Dichotomies for Social Change<br>Watch: <a href="#">Why kids need to learn about gender and sexuality   Lindsay Amer</a>             | Quiz 5/ Blackboard: Literacy and Gender<br>Work on essay draft<br><b>Research Essay Draft</b>                               |
|    | <b>Spring Break</b>                                     | <b>Friday April 15 – Friday April 22</b>                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Relax &amp; Write</b>                                                                                                    |
| 12 | <b>Class: Tu Apr 26</b><br>Tu Apr 26 –<br>Tu May 3      | NATIVE HAWAIIAN/ PACIFIC ISLANDER PERSPECTIVES (Group X)<br>Read: U.S. Occupation and the Hawaiian People<br>Watch: <a href="#">Hawaii's Legacy of Literacy</a><br>OR<br>EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES (Group Y)                 | <b>Peer Review</b> (your critique of two classmates' drafts) +<br><br><b>Submit Research Essay</b>                          |

|    |                                                     |                                                                                                                             |                                                                        |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                                                     | Read: European Immigrants in the U.S.                                                                                       |                                                                        |
| 13 | <b>Class: Tu May 3</b><br>Tu May 3 –<br>Tu May 10   | LITERACY AND TECHNOLOGY<br>Read: Social Media Effects on Teens<br>Watch: <a href="#">How Technology Changes How We Read</a> | Prepare your presentation                                              |
| 14 | <b>Class: Tu May 10</b><br>Mon May 9- Mon<br>May 16 | PRESENTATIONS                                                                                                               | Present and participate                                                |
| 15 | <b>Class: May 17</b>                                | REFLECTIONS                                                                                                                 | Reflection Draft<br><b>Final reflection:</b><br><i>Thursday May 19</i> |

### **Class Participation:**

Class participation is a key to your success in this course. This means attending and participating in class, submitting assignments on a weekly basis and by the due date, contributing to our Discussion Board, checking our course site at least 3 times per week for updates and announcements. If you miss more than two weekly units (equivalent to two weeks of instruction/ 6 class hours), you will be in danger of failing the course. Please reach out to Prof. Barnes if you are falling behind so that we can come up with a plan of action.

### **Late Work**

All work is required to be submitted on time. Students submitting work late, or wishing to submit work late, must speak to Prof. Barnes to make arrangements. It is important that students have open communication with the professor to ensure learning is taking place and work is being submitted in a timely manner.

### **(7) Discussion Board Posts (20% of your final grade, about 3% per post)**

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

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

Students will write a personal literacy narrative of a specific moment they were acculturated into the literacy practices associated with one community of which they are a member. Students can choose to write their papers chronologically (e.g., childhood, adolescence) or thematically. Students are encouraged to explore tensions that arise from participating in literacy practices of multiple communities.

### **Oral History Project (8%)**

Students will conduct an oral history project of an individual who attended school at least 20 years prior to the student. The student 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, the professor will analyze them, demonstrating to students how to find themes related to literacy, identity, communities, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses.

**Midterm Perspectives Project, 3 pages (10% of your final grade)**

Students will select 2 perspectives we have so far covered in this course. For each perspective, find at least one additional source. Using course materials and your own research, teach your audience about those two perspectives, by comparing and contrasting them. Using the chosen materials as a foundation, discuss how what you have learned helps inform your current learning, what aspects of the material was challenging and why, whether you found the information interesting or new (or why not), and how what you have learned will assist you professionally and in their own personal lives. Strive to make a deep, significant, personal connection with the material presented in class.

**Quizzes (10% 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. Students will need to use the respective weekly readings to support their answers to the quizzes.

**Individual Research Paper (Choice of Methodology): 4-5 pages (20% of your final grade)****Option 1: Ethnography of Community**

Students will conduct a mini-ethnography where they will observe individuals engaged in literacy practices (e.g., a Bible reading group; book club). Specifically, they 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:**

Students 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** For this paper, students 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. Students 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** Students will conduct a mini-research project where they gather data about individuals' experiences with a particular literacy practices (e.g., the reading of a Supreme Court opinion addressing equality). Students 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. Students will analyze data and their relationship to identity, community, and/or hegemonic or counternarrative discourses

**Option 5: Analyses of Literacy Tests**

With or without a partner, students 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). Students will ask these individuals to take the literacy test. After the participants finish the test, students 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, students will then write a reflection outlining what they learned through the activity while using data from participants to inform their reflection.

**Literacy Presentation (10% of your final grade)**

Students 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. Students will evaluate and make critical connections between a topic of their choosing and their own personal experiences, and the experiences of other individuals.

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

Students will revise their literacy narrative to discuss the relationship between literacy practices, identity, community, and/or hegemonic power and their 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.

**Advocacy and Resource Center** (formerly Single Stop)

<https://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/student-affairs/arc/>, room S230, 212-220-8195, [arc@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto: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](mailto:studentaffairs@bmcc.cuny.edu).

**Counseling Center** [www.bmcc.cuny.edu/counseling](http://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](http://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](mailto:olevy@bmcc.cuny.edu), or [twade@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto: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](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu/accessibility), Room N360 (accessible entrance: 77 Harrison Street), 212-220-8180, [accessibility@bmcc.cuny.edu](mailto: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](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu). For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).