

2025 Fall UnCommon Reads**IDH2930 ACOTAR (A Court of Thorns and Roses)****Meeting Time:** Tuesdays: 9:35am-10:25am**Meeting Location:** Little 119**Professor:** Ms. Patti Takacs patriciatakacs@ufl.edu**Materials/Book:** A Court of Thorns and Roses (2015) This is the only required text

Additional optional texts:

A Court of Mist and Fury (2016)*A Court of Wings and Ruin* (2017)*A Court of Frost and Starlight* (2018)*A Court of Silver Flames* (2021)**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 2-4pm or by appointment and also happy to meet online**Office Location:** Library West Office #502 (take the middle elevators to the 5th floor - stairways you would need keyed access) If you have any questions ask the circulation desk**Course Description:** The book is an in depth look at self discovery and personal growth. Some of the themes of the weekly class discussion will include the dynamics between power and freedom, class hierarchies, feminism, resistance movements, tyranny, authoritarianism, and the ethics of leadership, self discovery, romantic relationships, and how society handles trauma.**Safe Space:** This class is a place where all opinions/personalities/people are welcome. As a class we affirm the inherent dignity and rights of every person. We work to recognize and dismantle systemic and individual biases; to confront inequity and oppression; to enhance inclusion; and to advance racial and social justice in our lives/this class through good listening skills, self awareness, kind education, and considerate collaboration.**Course Objectives:**

Students will examine Moral Ambiguity and Ethics: ACOTAR presents moral quandaries, especially around characters' decisions and the consequences of their actions (e.g., Feyre's bargain with Tamlin). Students can explore how the text challenges traditional notions of right and wrong, especially in contexts of survival, love, and revenge.

Students will Investigate Themes of Resistance and Revolution: ACOTAR also touches on the theme of resistance to oppressive regimes. Students will analyze how various characters (e.g., the Night Court) push back against the established order and the role of rebellion in shaping the political landscape of the Fae world.

Students will Analyze the Relationship between Power and Freedom: ACOTAR provides a context to examine how power dynamics shape characters' actions and the societies within the book. This includes understanding how characters struggle with autonomy and how their agency is limited or expanded by the systems of power they inhabit.

Disclaimer: Many of us have read the series, while we will try not to give away the endings of the books it is unreasonable to think we can read all the books within these weeks. It would be nice to be able to discuss things that happen throughout the other books so please understand that in discussion we might ruin some of the plots.

Assignments:

10% Attendance: Based on my conference schedule you already get several weeks off so PLEASE do not miss any other weeks unless you are VERY ILL or have another EXTREME circumstance. The class is small, and your absence is greatly missed! Also, please email me IN ADVANCE (not during the class time for example) if you will be missing class for any reason, attendance is mandatory. UF attendance regulations applicable to this course

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>

20% Participation: This class is discussion based, it is designed for us to talk about interesting power, hierarchies, resistance, self discovery, and other political and social topics. Everyone brings a different experience and perspective to the world and one of the best things is being able to hear others opinions on the same topics.

	Exemplary (90%- 100%)	Proficient (80%-90%)	Developing (70%-80%)	Unacceptable (<70%)
Frequency of participation in class	Students initiate contributions more than once in each recitation.	Students initiate a contribution once in each recitation.	Student initiates contribution at least in half of the recitations	The student does not initiate contribution & needs an instructor to solicit input.

Quality of comments	Comments are always insightful & constructive; use appropriate terminology. Comments balanced between general impressions, opinions & specific, thoughtful criticisms or contributions	Comments mostly insightful & constructive; mostly uses appropriate terminology. Occasionally comments are too general or not relevant to the discussion.	Comments are sometimes constructive, with occasional signs of insight. Students do not use appropriate terminology; comments not always relevant to the discussion.	Comments are uninformative, lacking in appropriate terminology. Heavy reliance on opinion & personal taste, e.g., "I love it", "I hate it", "It's bad" etc.
Listening Skills	Students listen attentively when others present materials, perspectives, as indicated by comments that build on others' remarks, i.e., students hear what others say & contribute to the dialogue.	Students are mostly attentive when others present ideas, materials, as indicated by comments that reflect & build on others' remarks. Occasionally needs encouragement or reminder from T.A of focus of comment.	Students are often inattentive and need a reminder to focus on class. Occasionally makes disruptive comments while others are speaking.	Does not listen to others; regularly talks while others speak or does not pay attention while others speak; detracts from discussion; sleeps, etc.

20% Weekly Discussion Leader: The listed discussion questions are just suggestions, it would be better if you and your partner/s came with your own questions that inspired peer interaction and class discussion. You will work in teams. We will assign these on week 2 after the add drop period of the class.

	Exemplary	Proficient	Developing	Unacceptable
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	(90%- 100%)	(80%-90%)	(70%-80%)	(<70%)
Preparation	Thorough understanding of the reading, facilitator shows a depth of insight and careful preparation	Solid understanding of the reading, may miss some nuances	Demonstrates general understanding of the readings may show evidence of some gaps in comprehension	Facilitator shows some gaps or inaccuracies in understanding the readings, is unprepared
Facilitates Discussion	Facilitator effectively engaged students in discussion of topic, listening well and responds appropriately, uses follow up questions to expand on the discussion and encourages all to participate	Facilitator leads discussion well, may need more follow up questions to engage students more ot to engage more students or to keep students on track	Facilitator has some difficulty leading the discussion minimal opportunity for discussion allows discussion to go off topic but shows some skill as a facilitator	Facilitator ineffectively engages students in discussion and the discussion falls flat due to presenter difficulties
Quality of Questions	Insightful appropriate and in depth questions which lead to a through and useful discussion of the reading	Very good choice of questions with key points highlighted topic is well covered	Some good questions but may need more in depth questions or more questions to cover the readings	Questions need work and readings are not covered

20% Paper: Due 10/21/25

(Format: 1-2 pages in length, times new roman, black font, 12 pt. Lines 1.5 spaced)

Topic Option 1: The Ethics of Revenge and Justice: Several characters in ACOTAR, particularly Feyre, are motivated by revenge. Students should examine the morality of revenge, especially when the stakes are high, and how it affects the course of the story.

Topic Option 2: Social/Political Tie-In: Write about one of the political or social themes in the book, analyzing how Maas uses the world of ACOTAR to comment on real-world issues (e.g., class, power, gender etc).

Option 3: “Letters from Prythian: Epistolary Perspectives Across the Courts”
Students will write a series of **three fictional letters** from the perspective of a character in *A Court of Thorns and Roses*—but the letters must be addressed to someone *outside* the events of the novel (e.g., a sibling in another court, a scholar observing from afar, a future descendant, etc.). Each letter should reflect on a key moment involving moral ambiguity, resistance, or a power struggle.

For example:

- A conflicted Feyre writing to her mother about her bargain with Tamlin
- Rhysand secretly updating an ally in another court on resistance efforts
- Lucien expressing doubts about Spring Court loyalty
- A lesser-known servant or soldier sharing how they experience the rule of a High Lord

	Exemplary (90%- 100%)	Proficient (80%-90%)	Developing (70%-80%)	Unacceptable (<70%)
Content knowledge	Discussion paper promotes sophisticated use of content Paper demonstrates mastery of themes and reading. This is evidenced by extensive use of concepts; examples depict understanding	Discussion paper promotes basic use of content Paper demonstrates adequate understanding of reading. This is evidenced by use of concepts, examples depict understanding	Discussion paper promotes uncertain or misguided use of ideas/reading. The paper demonstrates the student has not fully book themes. This is evidenced with little or no use of concepts or examples that	The discussion paper lacks individual thoughts, examples, or discussion of the reading.

	of concepts and are clear and accurate. Posts engage concepts critically.	of concepts and are clear and accurate.	are correct with some details.	
connection	Paper connects to the assignment by addressing most or all its components, and linking to readings or topics discussed. The paper draws insightful links between content and personal life/academic life, with detailed explanation examples.	Paper connects to the assignment by addressing some of its components. Relevant topics are mentioned with connections to reading with some details/elaboration. The paper draws links between reading and participants' own academic/personal life, with some elaboration still needed.	Paper does not connect to the assignment and addresses few or no components of the assignment. Relevant topics are mentioned with very few connections to reading or topics discussed, or with no details or elaboration. The participants rarely or never mention their own personal or academic connections.	The paper doesn't follow assignment, does not draw conclusions from readings, and is not elaborated on when it comes to personal themes or topics within the book.
Critical analysis	The discussion paper displays an excellent understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts. Paper integrates an outside resource, or relevant research, to	The discussion paper displays an understanding of the required readings and underlying concepts and proper citation. Paper integrates an outside resource, or relevant	The discussion paper repeats and summarizes basic, correct information, but does not link readings to outside references, relevant research and does not consider	The discussion paper shows little or no evidence that readings were completed or understood. Paper is largely personal opinions or feelings, or without supporting

	support important points. Well-edited quotes are cited appropriately. No more than 10% of the posting is a direct quotation.	research, to support important points.	alternative perspectives or connections between ideas. Sources are not cited.	statements from the readings, or outside resources, relevant research, or specific real-life application.
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30% Final Project: Due 12/2/25

I like to have students do something other than a paper, and I love being creative and thinking outside of the box. Each of these options will require you to talk about your deliverables in class. You do not need a power point in addition to the deliverables, you just need to explain the ideas and choices you made. In the case of the podcast play a clip, in the case of the others show an example from your project. These presentations should be no more than 5 minutes in length. The grade is based on the deliverable listed below.

Option 1: Resistance Magazine “Voices of the Night Court”

Students will create a digital magazine (self-published magazine) that might circulate in the Night Court as a form of underground resistance propaganda. The short magazine should include fictional but textually grounded content such as: character interviews, revolutionary poetry, manifestos, freedom songs, protest art, coded messages, and op-eds critiquing the Spring Court or Amarantha’s rule. It should reflect how oppressed groups communicate, mobilize, and define justice.

Deliverables:

- A fully designed 6–10 page zine with both text and visuals (canva)
- A 1-page artist statement explaining the choices made and how they reflect resistance themes from the book

Option 2: “The Fae Ethics Podcast”

Students will create a podcast episode (or mock podcast script) where they act as Fae scholars, philosophers, or commentators debating ethical dilemmas from the novel.

Include interviews, dramatic readings, or “call-in” segments from characters (voiced by classmates or scripted). Think: *NPR meets magical realism*. Topics could include:

- Was the Tithe system morally defensible?
- Can love justify betrayal?
- What does “freedom” mean in a court-bound society?

Deliverables:

- 5–7 minute podcast or full script
- A short write-up of key arguments and how they reflect ethical frameworks

Option 3: “Court Fashion & Politics: A Design Portfolio”

Students will design a fashion portfolio inspired by the aesthetics and political ideologies of different Fae courts (Spring, Night, Autumn, etc.). They must justify how the colors, symbols, and styles reflect that court’s relationship to power, freedom, and resistance. Optional twist: Include “revolutionary fashion” or disguised resistance clothing for members of secret movements.

Deliverables:

- 4–6 illustrated designs (hand-drawn or digital)
- A short artist’s statement for each explaining the symbolism and political meaning

Option 4: “Rewriting the Map: Cartography and Colonial Power in Prythian”

Students will create a reimagined map of Prythian that highlights how borders, court divisions, and geography influence political power. They must analyze:

- Which groups benefit from existing borders?
- Where might resistance movements flourish and why?
- How would the map look from the Night Court’s perspective vs. the Spring Court’s?

Deliverables:

- A detailed map (artistic or GIS-style)
- A 1–2 page explanation of power dynamics and geography

Option 5: “Redacted Files: The Secret Dossier of the Night Court”

Students will create a secret intelligence dossier as if they're part of the Night Court's inner circle. Design elements can mimic a spy thriller or historical archive: Think mysterious, fragmented, and revealing.

This could include:

- Redacted mission memos
- Character profiles
- Surveillance notes on Tamlin or Amarantha
- Propaganda analysis
- Coded messages or "classified" correspondence

Deliverables:

- A dossier (a collection of documents about a particular person, event, or subject) with at least 5 distinct entries
- An analytical reflection connecting the materials to themes of resistance and power

	Exemplary (90%- 100%)	Proficient (80%-90%)	Developing (70%-80%)	Unacceptable (<70%)
Creativity	Presentation is unique and innovative, with visual aids that are effectively used to support or demonstrate the content. The focus chosen is original and inspired.	Presentation's information is highlighted with visual aids that are used in an interesting way. The focus chosen is original.	The presentation is interesting, but unoriginal and there's a presence of visual aids that somewhat support the content. The focus chosen is somewhat interesting, but obvious.	Presentation is not unique or interesting, but uses of visual aids in a somewhat interesting way. Little or no interest is conveyed in the focus chosen.
Research and Content Depth	Thorough and detailed research, with	Adequate research with mostly	Minimal research or reliance on	Limited or poor research. Few accurate

	accurate facts and a nuanced understanding of the subject. Insightful exploration of sources or historical contexts, displaying originality or creativity.	accurate content. Some detail or analysis is missing, but the project is grounded in relevant sources or historical contexts.	overly general or superficial content. Basic understanding, but lacks depth and complexity.	details, or major inaccuracies in the content.
Critical Thinking Reflection	Demonstrates deep critical thinking with clear reflection on how the project achieves its intended effect or analysis. Shows an understanding of complexities and potential implications.	Reflective thinking is present, but lacks full depth or complexity. Shows awareness of the project's potential impact or historical significance.	Basic or limited reflection, with little insight into the project's broader impact or implications.	Minimal reflection or critical thinking about the project's purpose or significance.

Weekly Schedule:

08/26/25 Instructions and Syllabus Discussion

Chapters: NA

09/02/25 Assigning Weeks for Discussion Leaders

Chapters to finish for class: 1-5 (approx 41 pages)

Discussion Questions for today:

- How does the bleak, wintry landscape in the opening chapters shape our first impressions of Feyre's life and her struggles?
- What do the details about Feyre's home and family reveal about their socioeconomic status and their relationships with each other?

- Early on, Feyre establishes rules for herself (about promises, survival, providing). How do these rules reflect her worldview and values? What personal “rules” do you think help people survive difficult times in real life?
- Was Feyre right to kill the wolf, or do you think she should have made a different choice?
- How do your first impressions of Feyre shape the way you see her story unfolding? Do you find her relatable?
- If you lived in Feyre’s world, would you be more curious about the fae, or more cautious?
- Do you think hardship makes Feyre stronger, or does it unfairly trap her in a role she never chose?

09/09/25 NO CLASS (I am at a conference)

Chapters to finish while I am away: 6-8 (approx 38 pages)

09/16/25 Discussion Leader(s) 1

Chapters to finish for class: 9-13 (approx 41 pages)

09/23/25 Discussion Leader(s) 2

Chapters to finish for class: 14-18 (approx 44 pages)

09/30/25 Discussion Leader(s) 3

Chapters to finish for class: 19-22 (approx 40 pages)

10/07/25 Discussion Leader(s) 4

Chapters to finish for class: 23-27 (approx 40 pages)

10/14/25 Discussion Leader(s) 5

Chapters to finish for class: 28-32 (approx 40 pages)

10/21/25 Paper Due Discussion Leader(s) 6

Chapters to finish for class: 33-36 (approx 38 pages)

10/28/25 Discussion Leader(s) 7

Chapters to finish for class: 37-40 (approx 40 pages)

11/04/25 Discussion Leader(s) 8

Chapters to finish for class: 41-46 end of book (approx 46 pages)

11/11/25 (Holiday) NO CLASS

Chapters: NA

11/18/25 Discussion Leader(s) 9 (Can talk about anything from the entire book)

Chapters: NA

11/25/25 Thanksgiving Week No Class

12/02/25 Final Presentations and Final Projects Due

Academic Policies:

Underlined text hyperlinked to resources needed.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in the course are consistent with university policies. See UF Academic Regulations and Policies for more information regarding the University Attendance Policies.

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. See the “Get Started With the DRC” webpage on the Disability Resource Center site. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. (Exception: Honors Quest I and II sections require a C). Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points. This may be achieved by including a link to the University grades and grading policies.

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. Students can complete evaluations in three ways:

1. The email they receive from GatorEvals
2. Their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals
3. The central portal at <https://my-ufl.bluera.com>

Guidance on how to provide constructive feedback is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

The University's Honesty Policy regarding cheating, plagiarism, etc.: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. See the UF Conduct Code website for more information. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

In-Class Recording: Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a

person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Academic Resources:

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.

Library Support: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call 866-281-6309 or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.

Academic Resources: 1317 Turlington Hall, Call 352-392-2010, or to make a private appointment: 352- 392-6420. Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138 | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.

Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.

UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources:

UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.