



English 103: Writing a Life: Biographies/Personal Narratives

7.5 Weeks Online

Semester:

Day(s):

Time(s):

Classroom:

Instructor:

Office Hours:

Office Location:

Phone Number:

Email:

INSERT
Professional
Headshot Here

Prerequisite/Co-Requisites: None

Course Description

Biographies, autobiographies, diaries, and personal narratives are all ways of telling the narrative of a life. In this course, students will examine how writers take a life lived and turn it into a story. They will read biographies, autobiographies, and biographical narratives. The focus will be on reading widely and on intense engagement with the texts. Students will have the opportunity to create book lists, book talks, and/or web pages to explore their interpretations of biographical materials.



Course Goal

Students will understand the memoir genre and know how to craft a story, from beginning to end, out of a real-life experience.



Required Text

Baraka, A. (n.d.). Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note.

Bukowski, C. (1978). *Women*. N.p.: Harper Collins.

Colvin, S. (2014). *All Fall Down* [CD].

Colvin, S. (2012). *Diamond in the Rough*. New York, NY: Harper Collins.

Gregory, D. (n.d.). Shame. Hernandez, M. (2014, December 30). 9 Tips for Dealing with the Emotions When Writing a Memoir. In *Huffington Post*.

Larson, T. (2007). *The Memoir and the Memoirist: Reading and Writing Personal Narrative*. Athens, Ohio: Swallow Press.

Morrison, T. (1995). *Inventing the Truth*. Zinsser, W. (Ed.), *The Site of Memory* (pp. 183-200). New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.

Nettles, J. (n.d.). *This Angel*. On That Girl [Online sound recording]. Olds, S. (1987, May). After Making Love in Winter. In Poetry Foundation. Show, Don't Tell (n.d.). In *Daily Writing Tips*.

Popova, M. (n.d.). Anais Nin on Abortion and Women's Reproductive Rights: A Prescient Lament from 1940. In *Brain Pickings*.

Zousmer, S. (2009, November 3). 5 Ways to Start Your Memoir on the Right Foot. In *Writer's Digest*.

Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Methods

<i>Learning Outcomes</i>	<i>Assessment Methods</i>
Read and summarize works in the memoir genre	Discussion boards and reading quizzes
Identify the uses of historical perspective, research, and interviews in written texts	Discussion boards
Articulate figurative language in writing	Evaluation of final draft of writing assignments
Write a memoir	Evaluation of final draft of writing assignment
Practice a writing process	Evaluation of drafts throughout course



Grading Policy

Your performance in this course is assessed using multiple, varied methods in the areas listed below and based on the expectations as described in the syllabus and outlined in assessment scoring guides or rubrics. If you do not understand the expectations, it is your responsibility to ask the instructor questions.

Discussions	15%
Week One Assignment 1	5%
Week Two Memoir Assignment	10%
Week Two Assignment 2	5%
Week Three Assignment	10%
Week Four Memoir as Blog Assignment	10%
Week Four Assignment 2	5%
Week Five Narrative Assignment 1	10%
Week Five Assignment 2	5%
Week Six Memoir Assignment	10%
Week Seven Memoir Assignment	15%
Total:	100%

The Course Outline / Class Schedule contains due dates.



Coursework Expectations

This section of the syllabus contains a listing with brief descriptions of the assessment methods for this course. They are designed to align with the student-learning outcomes and provide you with varied ways to demonstrate mastery of the course content. ***Additional instructions and related scoring guides or rubrics are posted to Blackboard.***



Course Requirements: This is a different kind of writing class – but a writing class nonetheless. You are expected to write well and write often. That is how this class is like other writing classes you may have taken. Where it differs is that you will be writing about yourselves in a subjective manner, as opposed to the objectivity of traditional academic writing. What this means is you need to be willing to be open and honest and go well beneath your surface to find and write about things that will have meaning to you and others. Your experiences and, thus, your writing will be unique. This is an exciting opportunity to grow both as writers and as people.

Course Outline*

Week	Topics	Readings	Activity	Assessment
1	Beginning the Journey – Integrity and Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larson 1-20 Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watch Henry Miller and Anais Nin videos Participate in discussion Read all assigned readings Complete Week One assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit One Assignment
2	Construction and the Outward Influences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zousmer Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> View lecture on the writing process Participate in discussion Read all assigned readings Complete memoir assignment Complete McCourt video clip assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit Two Assignment 1 Unit Two Assignment 2
3	Show don't Tell -- Building a Scene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sharon Olds' Poem: "After Making Love in Winter" (as part of this week's discussion) View presentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assigned readings Participation in unit discussion based on Olds' poem and video. Complete unit two assignment. Watch video interview with Sharon Olds. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit Three Assignment
4	Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larsen, 21-32 Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in class discussion Watch video interview Create memoir as blog Write summary of Colvin quotation and lyric 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit Four Assignment 1 Unit Four Assignment 2
5	Getting Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toni Morrison. "The Site of Memory" (link) Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read peers' blogs from last week and comment in discussion board. View Junot Diaz video Weekly Readings Write personal narrative essay View lecture on Narrative structure Write critique of Toni Morrison essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion: Comment on blogs Unit Five Assignment 1 Unit Five Assignment 2
6	From Self-Indulgence to Polished Memoir	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gregory "Shame" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in week's discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit Six Assignment

Week	Topics	Readings	Activity	Assessment
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baraka, "Preface..." Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read assigned readings Complete week's written assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
7	Reflection and Breaking Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Anaïs Nin on Abortion and Women's Reproductive Rights: A Prescient Lament from 1940" Blackboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post to DB Complete week's written assignment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussion Unit Seven Assignment

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*



Class Policies



Class Meetings: Arrive on time and be prepared for class with materials (e.g., pen, paper, laptop, textbook, assignments). Please refer to the course outline for schedule of meeting dates and holidays. Regular attendance and participation in class is expected. If you expect to be absent or late for a class meeting, email me **before** the beginning of class. If you need to leave class early, speak with me **before** the class session.



Blackboard: Blackboard contains class materials such as PowerPoints, worksheets, media, and links for submitting assignments. Be sure to **check Blackboard often** to stay up to date on announcements, new course materials, and other important information. **All assignments must be submitted on Blackboard.**



Late Assignments: Deadlines are an integral part of all professional careers. You must manage your time and complete all coursework thoroughly and on time (e.g., quizzes, exams, papers, projects, discussion board posts). Per department policy, any work submitted to the instructor after the due date will result in a zero for that particular assignment. Late assignments or make-up exams are not permitted except when there are documented extenuating circumstances (i.e., medical and family emergencies), and the instructor has been notified 24 hours before or after the deadline. In circumstances in which the instructor permits a make-up assignment or exams, the format of the task is at the discretion of the instructor.



Laptops and Tablets: Laptops and tablets are welcome in the classroom for academic purposes.



Cell Phones: As a courtesy to your classmates and the instructor, please set cell phones to vibrate. If you must take or make a call, please step out of the classroom to do so.



Course Decorum: Course Decorum: We will create a positive learning environment in this course. There is an expectation of respect and professionalism. The professional conduct policy includes, but is not limited to:

1. Attending each class session, including arriving promptly and leaving at the designated time; notifying me prior to class should an exception be needed.
2. Working on only this class during class time.
3. Planning outside activities to avoid conflicts with the activities outlined in the syllabus.
4. Being an attentive, engaged, and active participant in class activities and discussions.
5. Demonstrating respect for instructors, peers, and self and treating others in a professional manner.
6. Abiding by Goodwin's academic integrity policies.



Communication and E-mail: Students are expected to communicate in a professional manner (i.e., verbal, written, and electronic). I will send course updates and announcements through Blackboard so please **check your Goodwin e-mail account regularly.**



APA Style: This course follows APA style format for all written assignments. All written assignments must be produced using software that is compatible with Blackboard. Assessment of written assignments will include use of APA format, writing, grammar, quotations, and references. Academic Writer is also available at <https://goodwin.libguides.com/academicwriter> to help with APA formatting.



Expectations for Written Work: The following are basic expectations for all written work:

1. One-inch margin for all sides of the page (e.g., top, bottom, left, and right side of the page).
2. The font is 12 point.
3. The paper is double spaced.
4. The first page of the paper includes:
 - ✓ Your full name
 - ✓ The date of submission

Goodwin University Policies and Services

This course adheres to all policies outlined in the Goodwin University catalog.

General academic policies of Goodwin University may be found on the university web site at and in the university catalog at

<http://www.goodwin.edu/academics/catalogs.asp>.

Student services information may be found on the Goodwin University website at <https://www.goodwin.edu/student-affairs/> and <http://www.goodwin.edu/library/>.