

ENG 1131 Section 4859: Writing Through Media Spring 2011

Telling the Self: Fictionalizing History, Memory, Identity

Instructor: Lyndsay Brown

Class: MWF 8 (3:00-3:50) CSE E211A **Screening:** M E1-E3 (7:20-10:10) CBD 0110B

Email: viautah@ufl.edu

Office Hours: TUR 4323 F 5-7 and by appointment

Course Website: <http://plaza.ufl.edu/viautah/ENG1131Spring11.html>

Course Blog: <http://enc1131.wordpress.com/>

Course Description

The materials and assignments chosen for this course will ask students to engage in critical analysis and interpretation of how personal experience is turned into a story, and four of the media forms they can take: film, television, novel, and graphic novel. Beginning with the presumption that by turning life into words (whether thought, spoken, written, or filmed) we inherently alter experience, we will then move on to consider the various genres of telling the self: documentary, autobiography, memoir, based-on-a-true-story, biography, etc. By comparing and contrasting form and genre, as well as the motivations and processes behind them, students will come to a deeper understanding about how and why we construct and perform ourselves, and the uses to which such performances can be put.

Course Goals

The goal of this course is to introduce students to various strategies and approaches for analyzing and interpreting different media works. At the same time, students will learn how to adapt these strategies to the process of writing about media through media. Therefore, we will be exploring the conventions of academic writing, formal presentations, and creative work. Assignments will emphasize the importance of critical analysis and interpretation of media works. This course culminates in a creative project, and as such, the endpoint is not simply to understand various forms and methods, and be able to develop persuasive arguments about the value and effectiveness of these narratives, but also to apply such practices in one's own life. With this in mind, the coursework will gradually transform from consuming to creating art, and will include various theoretical and procedural works that describe how such art is produced.

The student learning outcomes for this course are as detailed in the Undergraduate Catalog at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html#requirements>.

Texts

Anderson, Linda. *Autobiography*. *Available on website.

Bechdel, Alison. *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*.

Carver, Lisa Crystal. *Drugs Are Nice: A Post-Punk Memoir*.

Hornbacher, Marya. *Wasted: A Memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia*.

Lane, Jim. *The Autobiographical Documentary in America*. *Available on website.

Robinson, Alex. *Too Cool to Be Forgotten*.

Satrapı, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*.

Thompson, Craig. *Blankets*.

Wilkomirski, Binjamin. *Fragments: Memories of a Wartime Childhood*.

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*.

Assignments

Blog Posts

Students are required to make weekly posts to the class blog, in which they will engage the week's reading and screening. Posts are due by Friday each week at 12 AM EST, and should be a minimum of 500 words (1-1.5 pages). Students are also required to post at least two comments per week to their fellow students' posts. Students are encouraged to post early in the week, so that there is sufficient time to respond.

Group Presentation

Students will be randomly assigned to a small group early in the semester, and will prepare a group presentation on an outside text, using it to 'teach' on the day assigned. A list of optional texts will be provided. Presentations should consider both form and content. After the 15-20-minute presentation, which will be submitted to the instructor in written outline form, the group will answer questions and elaborate on how their text relates to issues from the course. Groups are encouraged to use media (clips, websites) in their presentations; presentations consisting entirely of PowerPoint are not allowed. The instructor must approve the topic.

Presentations will be graded by evaluating four elements: submitted presentation outline, presentation content, performance, and quality of collaborative group work.

Final Project Due 4/18

For the final project, students are encouraged to use what they have learned from the course and create a personal memoir. This could take the form of a website, comic book, video, song, short story, collage or other art form, documentary, script or screenplay, etc. Along with the project, the student must generate a short written supplement (1-2 pages) that explains your process, motivations, and how this object is related to the concerns of the course.

Paper 1 Due 2/14

Students will write a short academic paper examining how a text from the course works as an autobiography/memoir. Two outside sources must be used in this paper; students are encouraged to use secondary sources from the class. (4-5 pages)

Paper 2 Due 3/25

Students will write a short academic paper on a given topic to be determined, most likely examining/evaluating various ways to fictionalize the self in memoir. Two outside sources must be used in this paper; students are encouraged to use secondary sources from the class. (4-5 pages)

Peer Review

On the dates marked for peer review, you must bring a completed draft of your work to class, and be prepared to critique that of your peers. Absences on peer review days will affect your participation grade, and neglecting to submit a full draft will reduce your grade on the final work.

Course Policies

Assignment Formatting

All papers must be word processed in 12-point Times New Roman and double-spaced with 1" margins

on all sides. Format, citations, and documentation must follow MLA style. **Put your name, due date, and assignment in the top left corner of all assignments.** Format the page number in the top right of each page, and title your submissions. When work is submitted electronically, the student's last name **must** be included in the filename. Attempts to pad paper length with overly generous fonts or margins will result in an unprofessional appearance, and your grade will be affected. Papers that are longer than the stated number of pages will not be penalized; however, work must meet the minimum page requirement in order to receive a passing grade.

Attendance

Because much of our work depends upon group discussion of the texts, you should plan to attend every class session. Prolonged absences, even for medical reasons, will not be excused. You may miss up to four classes without penalty EXCEPT that you will lose credit for whatever in-class work you miss. Tuesday class sessions count for two absences. **Every absence over the allowed four will reduce your overall grade by a third of a letter grade.**

Tardiness, like sporadic absences, disrupts the class. Of course, you should come to class on time. If you do arrive late, please come in as quietly as possible and begin work quickly. I understand that lateness is occasionally unavoidable, and thus have no specific policy to penalize for being tardy, but I will speak with you if it becomes a problem. Inform me as early as possible in advance if you will miss class due to a university-approved reason (i.e. varsity athletics, etc.). Similarly, you should inform me in advance if you will miss class to observe a religious holiday. Your first absences (for whatever reason) will count toward your "allowed" ones. If you have a learning disability, hardship, or other special dispensation approved by the Office of Student Affairs, please meet with me to discuss your requirements as early in the term as possible.

Conduct

Students are expected to behave respectfully and professionally when interacting with their instructor and fellow students, whether during discussion, screenings, or via email. Failure to comply with these guidelines will result in a failing grade and/or dismissal from the class.

Conferences

I encourage you to make an appointment to see me during my office hours, especially when you have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on your work. I will review introductory paragraphs via email, but you will have to meet with me to get comments on a draft.

Content

This class may cover material that can be considered offensive. Some of the texts you will be asked to analyze may contain material that is racially, politically, religiously, or sexually controversial. If you are unable or unwilling to participate in mature discussion about material that makes you uncomfortable or even offends you, and will not engage in discussion that goes beyond the simple fact of whether or not you personally were offended, this is not the class for you, and you are recommended to drop the course. Substitute materials will not be provided.

Contesting Grades

If a student has a complaint about a grade on a single assignment, it should be discussed with the

instructor, neither the Director of Writing Programs nor the Chair. A student whose complaints have accumulated and is sure his or her final grade will be lower than desired is to fill out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant. A faculty committee will review the student's work for the semester, and decide on a grade. Their decision is final. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade..

Course Reserves

Films for the course are put on reserve after the screening period at Library West. Should you miss a screening or need to re-watch a film in order to write an essay, the films are on two-hour reserve. You will need to request the title at the checkout desk with the course number, section, and the instructor's last name. Readings will also be put on electronic reserve/ARES throughout the semester. You will need to create a student account (go to the main library page and select course reserves) and then 'join' this course in order to download and view readings. Paper copies will not be handed out, and ARES readings should be brought to class when they are to be discussed.

Deadlines

Late assignments **will not be accepted** unless the student has made specific arrangements with the instructor prior to the submission of the late work. As all work is due by midnight via email, it would be in your best interest to send your documents no later than 11:30 PM.

E-Mail and Course Website

Students are expected to regularly check their University of Florida e-mail account and the course website—regularly here means email at least once every 24 hours, and the website at least twice per week. Students should not expect the instructor to possess the ability to remain in constant contact with the computer; thus, students are asked not to complain that the instructor does not reply to email at once. Course grades cannot, due to University policy, be conveyed via email. Should you have questions or concerns about your grade, set up a conference with the instructor.

Electronic Devices

No cell phones, handhelds, iPhones, or gadgets of any kind will be tolerated; turn these devices off before class begins, and do not use them. The instructor reserves the right to require those who break this rule to leave the classroom, which will count as a day's absence, even if happens in the last five minutes of the period. In the event of a personal situation that requires your cell phone to be on, please notify me before class.

Students are free to use laptop computers and other portable electronic devices in class for the purposes of taking notes during discussion or for in-class presentations. WWW browsing, emailing, chatting, etc. unrelated to class activities is, however, inappropriate and will not be tolerated. In the event of a violation of this policy, I reserve the right to prohibit the use of all electronic devices in class by individual students and/or the class as a whole.

Harassment

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires much contact, collaboration, and dialogue among students, it is essential that each student work to create an environment of respect and tolerance.

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

Personal Student Concerns

At times, students face personal problems that I am unable to help them with. At some point during the semester, you may find that you need assistance with stress management, time management, relationships, depression, family illness, or abuse. If this occurs, please visit <http://oss.ufl.edu/stg/> (for the online guide) or call the Counseling Center at 392-1575. Please do not feel as if you are alone on this campus; there are people devoted helping you with these concerns.

Quizzes

I will occasionally give unannounced quizzes on the readings at the beginning of class. These quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent or late. Quizzes count as part of the participation grade.

Rewrite/Revision Policy

I will accept the revision of one major assignment, which is due three weeks after the paper is returned. The final grade will be an average of the first and second grades that the assignment receives.

Screenings

Attendance at screenings is mandatory. Missing a screening, therefore, will count as a full week of absences unless you can provide proof by the next screening (i.e. by seven days from the missed screening) that you viewed the film on your own, in the form of a written summary of the film with sufficient detail to convince me that it wasn't merely researched online. Since important information about the films is likely to be conveyed at screenings, it is strongly preferred that you see the films in the screening periods. I will not lend out my personal copies of the films.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. The policy in this course is that one case of plagiarism on a single assignment is grounds for receiving no credit for that assignment; should plagiarism occur a second time, the student will fail the course.

For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Statement of Composition (C) or Humanities (H) Credit

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition or Humanities. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggened.html>

Statement of Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For

more information, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement of Writing Requirement

This course can satisfy the UF requirement for Writing. For more information, see: <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/advisinggordon.html>

Submission

All work must be submitted via e-mail by midnight (12 AM EST) the day it is due. I will not accept computer-related excuses for late work after the second week of class. It is wise to make a printout of all submitted work and to have said printouts on hand in the event that a dispute over your grades arises.

Grading

Grade Issues

I will not consider questions about grades during class time or via email. If you have a question about a grade on your paper you may schedule an appointment to meet with me and discuss the grade.

Grade Scale

UF has recently instituted minus grades. As a result, letter grades now have different grade point equivalencies. For more information, see:

<http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>

A:	94-100	C:	73-76
A-:	90-93	C-:	70-72
B+:	87-89	D+:	67-69
B:	83-86	D:	63-66
B-:	80-82	D-:	60-62
C+:	77-79	E:	0-59

Grade Meanings

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers; you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

- A You did what the assignment asked for at a high quality level, and your work shows originality and creativity. Work in this range shows all the qualities listed below for a B, but it also demonstrates that you took extra steps to be original or creative in developing content, solving a problem, or developing a style. Since careful editing and proofreading are essential in writing, papers in the A range must be free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.
- B You did what the assignment asked of you at a high quality level. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.
- C You did what the assignment asked of you. Work in this range needs significant revision, but it is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward but unremarkable.
- D You neglected some basic requirements of the assignment, and completed it at a poor quality level. Work in this range needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the

- organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic.
- E An E is usually reserved for people who don't do the work or don't come to class. However, if your work is shoddy and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Grade Percentage Breakdown

Weekly Posts:	150 points
Participation:	150 points
Paper One:	150 points
Paper Two:	150 points
Group Presentation:	150 points
Final Project:	250 points
Total:	1000 points

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to change this schedule as necessary.

Week 1

W 1/5: Introduction

F 1/7: *Lecture: The Enlightenment and Postmodern Selves*

Week 2

M 1/10: *Lecture: Form, Audience, and Performance*

Screening: *Almost Famous* (Cameron Crowe, 2000, 122 min)

W 1/12: Introduction, course blog instructions, and group assignments, Anderson Introduction

F 1/14: Anderson Chapter 2

Week 3

M 1/17: No Class – Martin Luther King Jr. Day

W 1/19: Anderson Chapter 3

F 1/21: Robinson 1-4

Week 4

M 1/24: Robinson 5-8

Screening: *Sink or Swim* (Su Friedrich, 1990, 48 min), and *Calling the Ghosts* (Jacobson and Jelincic, 1996, 63 min)

W 1/26: Robinson 9-end

F 1/28: Hornbacher 1-2

Week 5

M 1/31: Hornbacher 3-5

Screening: *Dialogues with Madwomen* (Allie Light, 1994, 90 min)

W 2/2: Hornbacher 6-end

F 2/4: *Lecture: Writing the Academic Paper*

Week 6

M 2/7: Lane Introduction and Chapter 1

Screening: *Exit through the Gift Shop* (Banksy, 2010, 87 min)

W 2/9: Lane Chapter 3

F 2/11: **Peer Review: Draft of Paper 1 Due**

Week 7

M 2/14: Lane Chapter 4, **Paper 1 Due**

Screening: *History and Memory* (Tajiri, 1991, 32 min), *Tongues Untied* (Riggs, 1989, 55 min)

W 2/16: Thompson 1-3

F 2/18: Thompson 4-6

Week 8

M 2/21: Thompson 7-end, **Group 1 Presentation**

Screening: *Homicide* (Paul Attanasio, 1993-99), and *The Wire* (David Simon, 2002-08)

W 2/23: No Class
 F 2/25: Wright 1-3

Week 9

M 2/28: **Group 2 Presentation**, Mid-Semester Evaluations
 Screening: *Operation Homecoming: Writing the Wartime Experience* (Richard Robbins, 2007, 81 min)
 W 3/2: Wright 4-8
 F 3/4: Wright 9-end

Week 10

No Class – Spring Break

Week 11

M 3/14: Satrapi *The Veil*-The Party
 Screening: *The Beaches of Agnès* (Agnes Varda, 2009, 110 min)
 W 3/16: Satrapi *The Heroes*-Tunechi
 F 3/18: **Peer Review: Draft of Paper 2 Due**

Week 12

M 3/21: **Group 3 Presentation**, Satrapi *Pasta*-end
 Screening: *A Letter to True* (Bruce Weber, 2004, 96 min)
 W 3/23: Carver 1-14
 F 3/25: **Paper 2 Due**, Carver 15-24

Week 13

M 3/28: No Class
 Screening: *Tarnation* (Jonathan Caouette, 2003, 88 min)
 W 3/30: **Group 4 Presentation**, Carver 25-end
 F 4/1: Discussion of *Tarnation*

Week 14

M 4/4: **Group 5 Presentation**, Bechdel 1-3
 Screening: *She's a Boy I Knew* (Gwen Haworth, 2007, 70 min)
 W 4/6: Bechdel 4-5
 F 4/8: Bechdel 6-end

Week 15

M 4/11: Wilkomirski 1-5, wrap up Bechdel
 Screening: *Catfish* (Joost and Schulman, 2010, 87 min)
 W 4/13: Wilkomirski 6-14
 F 4/15: Wilkomirski 15-end

Week 16

M 4/18: **Final Projects Due**, wrap up Wilkomirski
 W 4/20: Wrap Up

Syllabus Signature Page

University of Florida

Instructor: Lyndsay Brown
Course: ENG 1131 Section 4859
Semester: Spring 2011

I hereby affirm the following:

that I received a copy of the course syllabus for ENG 1131
that I have read and understand its contents, including all policies and requirements
that these policies may be altered by the instructor, but I will be given notice in class and
via the website should they be so altered
that I understand that any special provisions or accommodations must be presented in
advance of any deadlines
and that any accommodations will not be granted retroactively.

Full Name (Print)

Signature

Date