COURSE SYLLABUS 8.23.2015

AML 4213 sec 21CG: Studies in American Literature and Culture Before 1800
Early American Life Writing

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Office Hours & Location (Fall 2015)
Drop In Office hours: Thursdays 1:55-3:10, TUR 4334

Additional office hours by advance appointment: Tuesdays 1:55-2:45, TUR 4334.
One-on-one meetings at alternative times are welcome: just speak to me in class or email me in advance to arrange a time.

Course Description:

Puritans and heretics, ministers and merchants, settlers and displaced American Indians, exemplary citizens and criminals, captives, prisoners, and slaves: how did the diverse populations of early America "compose" themselves and translate the messiness and vicissitudes of their lives into print?

This course will introduce students to a range of early American life writing composed before 1820, including conversion narratives and spiritual autobiographies, captivity and slave narratives, travel diaries and explorer accounts, and secular accounts of exemplary lives. We will pay attention to the forms of "self making" at work in each text, as authors adapt complex personal experiences into legible literary forms.

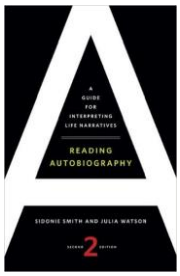
Questions include: What is a "self"? (an exemplary self? an autonomous self?) What forms of 'personhood' were available to a range of aspiring early American authors, male and female, white and nonwhite? And how did the conceptual transformation of "selfhood" (in particular, the rise of self-determining, individualist models of the self) impact the form and function of life writing by century's end?

In short, students will gain facility analyzing the form, function, and development of American life writing, from its earliest origins through the late-eighteenth-century emergence of modern autobiography.

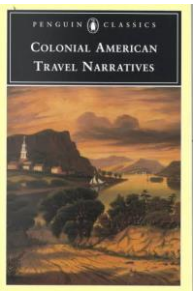
The class meets Tuesdays periods 8-9 (3-4:55), and Thursdays period 9 (4:05-4:55) in TUR 2346.

Required textbooks and materials:
Books are in chronological syllabus order and stocked at the UF bookstore. If you are purchasing elsewhere, please use these ISBN's and obtain these editions:

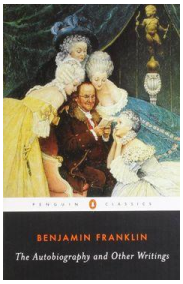
1. ***Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*, eds.** Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson (2010, 2nd ed.)



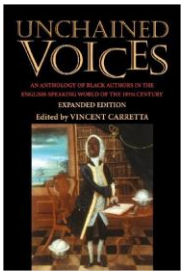
2. ***Colonial American Travel Narratives*, ed. Wendy Martin.** Penguin Classics; ISBN 0-14-039088-X($17)



3. ***Autobiography and Other Writings*, by Benjamin Franklin.** Penguin Classics; ISBN 9780142437605 ($11)



4. ***Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the 18th Century*, ed. Vincent Carretta.** U Press of Kentucky; ISBN 9780813190761($30)



5. Additional readings are posted to our course learning page (ELS-Canvas), or posted in course reserves (ARES), or accessed directly through online databases/archives
6. 6. To access our ELS-Canvas page, you will need a recent version of a compatible internet browser (Chrome 43 or 44, Safari 7 or 8, Firefox 38 or 39), as well as an updated Flash plug-in. (Apparently Internet Explorer has problems.) For details on browser and plugin compatibility, see: https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-1284

   How do I login to e-Learning in Canvas?
   Please go to http://lss.at.ufl.edu and click the blue e-Learning in Canvas button. You will be prompted for your Gatorlink username and password. If you experience any issues with your username and/or password, please contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357

Assignments, Weights, and Grading:

Homework A ("Write Yourself 3 Ways," plus 2-page Reflection on Audience/Rhetoric; see handout on Canvas)	10%
Homework B (4-5 pages; Self Directed Analysis in the Digital Archives: Locate and analyze a gallows confession or slave narrative of interest in the digital archives); see handout on Canvas)	20%
Essay 1 (5-6 pages; see guidelines: Analyze an early American life narrative of interest, drawing from Smith and Watson's "Toolkit"); see handout on Canvas).	25%
Essay 2 (**7-8 page pages; see handout:** Craft an essay that engages directly or indirectly with the arguments about the making of modern selfhood/the emergence of modern autobiography; see handout on Canvas).	30%
Regular participation & preparation (which incorporates group work, homework exercises, peer workshops, show and tells, and/or informal reading reflections).	15%
	100%

You can consult with me at any time if you want an estimate of your course standing.

Grading Expectations for Essays:

A-range essays establish and sustain a complex and original argument that demonstrates sophisticated engagement with the course concerns and the unit's themes, contexts, and assigned readings. A-level essays provide attentive, rich, and original close reading to illuminate the complexities of language and theme in their chosen texts. They are well-organized, well-supported, well-developed, and written in an engaging and clear prose style.

B-range essays are competent and capable; they could be made stronger with either better organization, a more complex thesis or line of development, more sustained examples, a stronger prose style, or less recurrent grammatical or mechanical problems.

C-range essays are passable and often promising, but have multiple key areas that need considerable improvement: thesis strength, argument focus, level of analysis and development, organization, style, recurrent grammatical or mechanical problems that interfere with clarity and ability to persuade.

D-level essays often hold promise, but are not yet "there" as far as conceptualizing, organizing, and sustaining a viable argument in readable prose.

F essays fail to meet the basic criteria of argument, organization, and mechanics, or may be too off topic by failing to respond in any meaningful way to the assignment, or they contain passages that are plagiarized.

Grading Expectations for Homework:

A-range: Homeworks marked excellent are thoughtful, careful, developed, and clearly presented. They show clear engagement with the unit's themes and contexts, strong comprehension of the text, and they offer sustained and original arguments and close readings that successfully illuminate the assignment.

B-range: Homeworks marked very good are competent and capable, but would benefit from either more complex development, fuller explanation or examples, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), or clearer presentation (structure, prose style, mechanics, grammar).

C-range: Promising, but has multiple areas that require considerable improvement: more rigorous engagement with the assignment, stronger development of ideas, improved focus (in identifying the issue or guiding the reader through your analysis), fuller explanation of examples, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), and/or clearer presentation (structure, prose style, mechanics, grammar).

D or below: Off track or inadequate, either because it is too brief, lacks comprehension, is carelessly composed, or presents a superficial response to the topic.

Grading expectations for Course Participation & Preparation:

To earn an "A" for regular participation and preparation, the A level student is consistently prepared and engaged. They have their materials handy and are able to refer to specifics in their materials during class. They are able to make connections from the readings and/or build productive discussion from class discussion. They contribute to the ongoing discussion by responding thoughtfully to others and/or by asking questions that help build useful group understanding. They contribute regularly and are active listeners in small group work. They abide by the attendance policy. f this person was not a member of the class, the quality of the discussion and group work would diminish.

(B range participants mostly meet the above criteria, C range participants occasionally meet the above criteria, D range participants rarely meet the above, F range participants fail to meet the above criteria).

Grading Chart (Letter to Number Conversion):

You'll get a letter grade on all your written work. I will then record the corresponding number in my gradebook. This chart is used to convert letter grades to numeric grades on all your papers and assignments. The parentheses include the range of numbers that apply to the corresponding letter. This chart is also used to determine your final grade in the course:

You'll get a letter grade on all your written work. The parentheses include the range of numbers that can apply to the corresponding letter. (I record the most suitable number in my gradebook). This chart is also used to determine your final grade in the course:

A+	(97-100)
A	(93-96)
A-	(90-92)
B+	(87-89)
B	(83-86)
B-	(80-82)
C+	(77-79)
C	(73-76)
C-	(70-72)
D	(66-69)
F	(65 or under)

In the unlikely event that a student wishes to appeal his or her final grade, the student should consult Prof. Stephanie Smith, Director of Undergraduate Studies. Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/

Extensions, late penalties and late policies:

Assignments will be graded down up to one half grade (i.e. 5 points) for each calendar day they are late. Late work will be graded but will NOT contain detailed instructor's margin comments, just a brief grade justification.

If you feel your situation warrants an extension, you can request an extension; however, I reserve the right to deny the request, especially when poor time management, technology failures, recurrent tardiness, recurrent requests for extensions, or frequent lack of class preparation factor into the need for more time.

Attendance, Participation, Preparation (10%, plus two peer workshops at 2.5% each; total: 15%):

I expect you to attend class regularly, rarely missing class.

You are allowed 3 absences (no notes needed), although it is unusual for students to avail themselves of all 3. Upon a fourth absence, your final grade will be lowered up to one letter. Successive unapproved absences (5th, 6th....) will continue to lower your final grade. Habitual tardiness (i.e. arriving after roll) will be marked as absenteeism. If you miss a double-period day, it counts as one absence. Speak to me in conference if you are facing unusual circumstances that effect your ability to meet these requirements.

A handful of sessions are marked in bold and labeled "attendance required": these days you must attend (unless you have an excused absence that day, like a medical emergency). Skipping these days with an unexcused absence may impact your course participation grade up to 2.5% per major assignment.

The success of the class requires your active presence. A strong class doesn't just happen by chance: it involves each of us committing to creating a learning community attentive to each other's ideas, writing, and the readings. For this reason, participation and preparation are essential. I expect you to be here on time, having thought about the readings, ready to speak about things you noticed or thought about as you read, and ready to listen and respond when put in groups. Be an attentive listener, and share when called upon. Having an off week is to be expected. But if you have a pattern (i.e. consecutive days) of unpreparedness, or you seem to habitually rely on others to carry the weight of the work and discussion, expect your participation grade to be lower than that of your peers.

Also, strive to be conscious of what you can do to facilitate your peers' discussion and your peers' engagement. I value directness (you can share your honest feelings about our readings), but also courtesy: don't walk away from groups during group discussions, keep cell phones silent and off your desk, look at the person speaking, wait for break to leave the classroom (unless you have a bathroom emergency!).

If you miss a class, you are responsible for coming prepared to the next class. Therefore, while you do not need to explain your absence to me, you should either contact me or another student before the *next* class meeting and make arrangements to pick up missed handouts, key announcements, or assignments. (Get notes from a fellow student.) Do not show up in class and ask "what you missed": find that out beforehand and arrive prepared.

Reading Notes, a recommended study skill. Let's face it, we read a lot, and even read attentively, then forget a lot by the time we step in the classroom. Get into the habit of reserving a space in your notes for a momentary pause and reflection when you complete the days assignments, jotting down a few informal ideas to jump start class discussion. This will help your participation and preparation immensely. You might reserve space for: **initial reactions** (things to share at check in; broad responses to the week's readings); **more in-depth reflection points:** these are the things you wish to speak most to in class, or write more about, or to hear others' opinions on; this may include passages from secondary sources that interest you.) If you take copious notes or mark up your texts a lot, you will benefit from taking the time to "pull out" a few thoughtful ideas for class or for assignments from the bulk of your scribblings.

My role will be to provide background and context for thinking about the readings, then step back, prompting you with questions that help you apply and develop your readings, facilitating the ensuing discussions, and incorporating class ideas into the flow of discussion.

Please speak to me if you are having issues that are effecting your attendance or performance. Or if there is something about the class that is bothering you, and you feel it could be addressed/modified.

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:
https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is intellectual theft and fraud. It means passing off someone else's work (including borrowed words and phrases) as one's own. It occurs when one fails to acknowledge the source(s) of ideas, quotations, or information. It also occurs when someone else writes any part of one's paper, even if that person is unknown (i.e. paper bank, webpage). When in doubt, cite.

Plagiarism does not include incorporating feedback from your classroom peers into your essays, as long as you do not another student to significantly revise, contribute to, or change your arguments.

If you have concerns or questions about documenting sources, or wish to report a suspected plagiarism, consult with me in office hour.

All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Violators will be immediately sanctioned. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For UF policies and resources regarding harassment, see: **http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/addressing_sexual_misconduct/**

Additional policies:

If you have a documented disability, come talk to me in an office appointment early in the semester about how this may impact your performance and how I can best accommodate your needs. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

DAILY SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Unit 1: Introduction and Foundations

Week 1: About Life Narrative

Tu 8/25 Course Overview, Requirements, and Expectations.

- ELS Canvas site demo (accessed via http://lss.at.ufl.edu)
- About Life Narrative
- About Homework A
- Preparing for next class

R 8/27 Analyzing Life Narrative, Pt. 1. To prepare for class, read the following:

- ☐ "Autobiographical Acts", pp. 63-90, by Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, in *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*.
- ☐ After reading about the components of autobiographical acts, compare two accounts the famous Captain John Smith gave of his 1607 captivity. The first he recounted (using third person narration) in his account of the Virginia expedition, *A True Relation (1608*), the second comes from his letter to Queen Anne, written in 1616 and later published in the lengthy account of Virginia, *General Historie of Virginia* (1624)

Week 2: Continue discussion of life writing.

T 9/1 *Reading Autobiography*, "Autobiographical Subjects" (on autobiographical subjectivity), pp. 21-61, plus Richard Frethorne, Letters to His Parents from Virginia (1623)

R 9/3 Preparation: Bring a draft of the following homework (Homework "A") to class. You will discuss your ideas and drafts in small groups to strengthen your thinking about the topic:

⇒ **The final version of Homework A is due by Sunday 9/6 by 10pm to ELS**

Unit 2: Early Life Writing

Week 3: Puritan Autobiography

Tu 9/8 Michael Wigglesworth, from the Diary of Michael Wigglesworth (1653-1657)

R 9/10 Thomas Shepard, *Autobiography* (1646) plus Ann Bradstreet, "To my Dear and Loving Children" (1660s),

➢ In class activities using *Reading Autobiography*, creative brainstorming, etc. Bring book.

Week 4: Puritan Autobiography meets Indian Captivity Narratives

Tu 9/15 Mary Rowlandson, *A True History of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson* (1682), in Martin, *Colonial American Travel Narratives*: 1-48.

As you read, reflect on how the experience of captivity "authorizes" the individual to envision their life as part of a larger network of shaping forces and events. Pay attention to where captivity forces a "self under revision" as she changes; sometimes she seems aware of changes; other times, she seems less aware of ways she is adapting and changing, although readers become aware.

R 9/17 Rowlandson, continued. Also bring your copy of *Reading Autobiography*.

- In class activities using *Reading Autobiography* toolkit, creative brainstorming, etc.

Week 5: Travel Narratives

Tu 9/22 Sarah Kemble Knight, *The Journal of Madam Knight* (1704-05, pub. 1825), in Martin, *Colonial American Travel Narratives*: 49-76. Plus scan Martin's introduction for information about travel narratives as a genre and the genre's importance. Think about what kind of audience Knight imagined reading her journal, and what kind of image she was trying to create of herself. Consider how she filters her experiences through her own identity as a woman of middling social and economic position.

R 9/24 Begin William Byrd II, *The Secret History of the Line* (1729, unpublished until 1929), in Martin, *Colonial American Travel Narratives*, 77-122 (through September entry).

Week 6: Travel Narratives, cont'd.

Tu 9/29 Finish Byrd's "Secret History," in *Colonial American Travel Narratives*, plus read the brief excerpt from Byrd's *Secret Diary*.

Reflect on the following: "Gaining access to the interior life of early Americans is no easy matter, given the dearth of private, self-contemplative sources. The challenge is less severe when dealing with New England, since members of the godly elite left behind journals and other confessional writings in which they recorded their inner responses to the world around them and their experiences in it. But the further south one travels, the more elusive become the personal thoughts and attitudes of early Americans. William Byrd's writings (numerous travel journals, three secret diaries, private correspondence, a commonplace book) are a startling exception. Together these sources give a detailed and intimate impression of Byrd's world" (sexual historian Richard Godbeer).

R 10/1 Essay 1 Peer Workshop; Attendance Required. See assignment guidelines for how to prepare and earn full credit for the peer workshop

⇒ **Essay 1 due by Sunday 10/4 by 10pm to Canvas**

Unit 3: Servants, Captives, and Criminals: Further forms of Life Writing

Week 7: *How do marginalized female Quaker indentured servant and "free" black writers adapt either conversion narratives or captivity narratives to write themselves into print?*

Tu 10/6 Elizabeth Ashbridge, *Some Account of the Fore Part of the Life of Elizabeth Ashbridge* (1755).

R 10/8 Read the following short narratives and reflect on the following claim by Rafia Zafar: "By the end of the eighteenth century, African Americans had discovered the utility of this earliest American form [the captivity narrative]."

- ☐ John Marrant, *Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black* (1785), in *Unchained Voices*, pp. 110-133
- ☐ Britton Hammon, *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man* (1760), in *Unchained Voices*, pp. 20-25.

Week 8: Captivity and Conversion Narratives: even further adaptions.

How do criminals adapt the genre of religious conversion and religious confession to write themselves into print?

Tu 10/13 Background on criminal confession narratives; as you read, compare these narratives, the first written in the late Puritan era, the other near the end of the 18th century:

- ☐ Daniel Cohen, "An Overview: The Succession of Genres," from *Pillars of Salt*,
- ☐ Patience Boston, *The Faithful Narrative of the Wicked Life and Remarkable Conversion of Patience Boston* (1738)
- ☐ Rachel Wall, *Life, Last Words, and Dying Confession* (1789).
  - ➢ **Bring laptop or ipad. Locating early American criminal narratives online: early American database in-class exercise.**

R 10/15 Criminals gone wild!: More late-era criminal narratives. Read:

- ☐ Joseph-Bill Packer, *A Journal of the Life and Travels of Joseph-Bill Packer* (1773)
- ☐ Johnson Green, "The Life and Confession of Johnson Green, who is to be Executed" (1786), in *Unchained Voices*, pp. 134-142.

Week 9

Tu 10/20 Early Slave Narratives. Read:

- ☐ Begin Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life . . .* (1789; 1794), in *Unchained Voices*, 185-216 (through Chapter 4).
- ☐ Read also William Andrews, from To *Tell a True Story* (on Early African American autobiography)

R 10/22 Continue Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life*, through pp. 267 (up to Chapter XI), plus continue discussion of Andrews's excerpt.

Week 10

Tu 10/27 Finish Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life*.

- ➢ Hands on Work in Digital Archives: **Bring laptop or tablet to class.**

Th 10/29 Venture Smith, *A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Venture, A Native of Africa* (1798), in Unchained Voices (369-387).

Week 11

Tu 11/3 Read**:** *Life of William Grimes, The Runaway Slave, Written by Himself* (68 pages), located on the Documenting the American South webpage, which produces electronic archives of rare texts; http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/grimes25/grimes25.html

- ➢ Further discussion of Homework B: **Bring laptop or tablet to class.**

R 11/5 Homework B Peer Workshop/Show and Tell. Attendance Required.

⇒ **Homework B (Independent Work with Digital Archives), Due by Sunday 11/8 by 11:55pm to Canvas.**
(Note: Homecoming Weekend, so you may elect to turn it in early, post peer workshop)

Unit 4: "My credentials were in my head": The Emergence of Modern Autobiography

Week 12

T 11/10 Read the following:

- ☐ *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Part 1 (composed in 1771): Penguin Classics edition, Introduction through page 70 (i.e. the end of Part 1).
- ☐ Stephen Carl Arch, excerpt from *After Franklin: The Emergence of Autobiography in Post-Revolutionary America, 1780-1830*.
- Reflect on Arch's argument about three dominant forms of identity available in the late eighteenth century: the notion that selves are typical and formed through imitation; the notion that selves are ideal and therefore formed through emulation; and the notion that selves are original or singular and formed uniquely. Which best capture Franklin's frameworks?

R 11/12 *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, Part 2 (all), and Part 3 (up to page __ of Penguin Classics edition). Cursorily scan through the remainder of *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* (i.e. to end, on page 176). (Note: Part 2 was composed in 1784 and Part 3 in 1788)

Week 13

T 11/17 Read first half of Stephen Burroughs, *Sketch of the Life of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs, Given by Himself* (1811; first published 1798), pages 1-51, plus brief excerpt from Stephen Carl Arch on Burroughs. NOTE: The Burroughs *Sketch* runs long at 100 pages, so you may want to bring a tablet or laptop to class rather than a printout.

R 11/19 Finish *Sketch of the Life of the Notorious Stephen Burroughs*. In class work on Burroughs as a "self made man."

Reflect on Arch's claim that Burroughs marks the emergence of the philosophic, or modern, form of autobiography, whereby the private self is probed for its distinctiveness and originality; for Arch, modern selfhood assumes the self is capable of shaping its own destiny and is grounded not in an "external, stable conception of identity, but instead "welcom[ing] the self as theatrical production . . . always in formation" (114).

Week 14

Tu 11/24 Theories of Modern Self-Making. READ THE FOLLOWING:

- ☐ "Life Narrative in Historical Perspective" in *Reading Autobiography*: A Guide (pp. 103-125)
- ☐ Excerpt from *Teach Me Dreams: The Search for Self in the Revolutionary Era*, by Mechal. We will use the arguments in this reading to think more about Franklin, Burroughs, other writers in this era (including the examples Sobel offers), including our future readings.

R 11/26 Thanksgiving holiday, no class...

Week 15

Tu 12/1 This week we will explore whether female autobiographies also reflect the vast "self-change" project that many theorists argue undergirds the emergence of modern autobiography. READ:

Reflect on the following: Women writers "use self representation and its constitutive possibilities for agency and subjectivity to become no longer primarily subject to exchange but subjects who exchange the position of object for the subjectivity of self representational agency" (Leigh Gilmore, *Autographics*, 12)

- ☐ K. White, *Narrative of the Life, Occurrences, Vicissitudes and Present Situation of K. White* (1809)
- ☐ Introduction by Sharon Halevi. In class work on unit themes/essay directions.

R 12/3 Continued discussion of female autobiography. READ:

- ☐ Elizabeth Munro Fisher, *Memoirs of Mrs. Elizabeth Fisher of the City of New York* (1810), ELS; if needed, review the Introduction to Fisher and K. White by Sharon Halevi assigned last class.
  Like other writers in this unit on the emergence of "modern autobiography," Fisher at times depicts herself as a victim of fate: does this weaken, complicate, or enhance how you define "self making" in this narrative (and/or its "modernity")?

Week 16

Tu 12/8 PEER WORKSHOP. ATTENDANCE REQUIRED. LAST DAY OF CLASS.

- Course wrap (period 1)
- **Peer workshop (period 2). Bring two hard copies of a readable draft of Essay #2.**

⇒ Reading Days are 12/10 and 12/11: I will announce and post updated office hours for reading days on Canvas.

⇒ **Your Final Essay is due electronically by Sunday 12/13 by 10pm to the course ELS drop box.**
There is no final exam.