

**Instructor Name: Srimayee Basu**

**Course meeting times & location: MWF 8 & CBD 212**

**Office Location and Hours: TUR 4325; Friday Periods 6 & 7 and by appointment.**

**Course website: Canvas**

**Instructor Email: sbasu@ufl.edu**

### **Course Description:**

This course studies life-writing as a literary mode to understand what it means to construct oneself through writing as a personal and social entity. Some of the questions that we shall pose in our discussions include: How do autobiographies, memoirs, and personal essays complicate the distinction between fiction and non-fiction? Does transcribing the self textually make it more stable, or does narrative's fluidity point to the inherent fluidity of the self? Is life-writing merely a manifestation of individualism, and if not, what are the ways in which we can understand it as a dialogue between the author-narrator and his/her history and society? Students will read selections from the works of Saint Augustine, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas De Quincey, Benjamin Franklin, Frederick Douglass, Gertrude Stein, Virginia Woolf, Maya Angelou, Lyn Hejinian, Primo Levi, Wole Soyinka, and Marjane Satrapi. In this course students will rhetorically analyze works of life-writing to understand their aesthetic and political dimensions. They will also apply this understanding to their own ability to translate identities and life experiences into narratives for a range of academic and professional purposes.

### **General Education Objectives:**

- This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) *or* Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).
- *Composition courses* provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing intensive. They require multiple drafts submitted to your instructor for feedback before final submission.
- Course content should include multiple forms of effective writing, different writing styles, approaches and formats, and methods to adapt writing to different audiences, purposes and contexts. Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims and evidence, and to analyze writing for errors in logic.
- The University *Writing Requirement (WR)* ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

### **General Education Learning Outcomes:**

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication and critical thinking:

- **Content:** Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- **Communication:** Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- **Critical Thinking:** Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

### **Required Texts:**

Jean Jacques Rousseau, Selections from *Confessions* (PDF on Canvas)

Selections from *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (PDF on Canvas)

Thomas de Quincey, Selections from *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater* (PDF on Canvas)  
Benjamin Franklin, Selections from *Poor Richard's Almanack* (PDF on Canvas)  
Frederick Douglass, Selections from *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (PDF on Canvas)  
Virginia Woolf, "The Decay of the Essay"  
Gertrude Stein, Selections from *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (PDF on Canvas)  
Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*  
Primo Levi, Selections from *Survival in Auschwitz* (PDF on Canvas)  
Wole Soyinka, *You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir*  
Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*  
Lyn Hejinian, Selections from *My Life*  
Selections from *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*, a peer-reviewed open textbook series for the writing classroom (PDFs on Canvas)

**Assignments** (see below for Grading Rubric):

**Short in-class writing assignments (4 short in-class writing assignments; 250 words, 20 points each):** These will be prompt-based writing assignments aimed at training you to write persuasive, expository, narrative, and literary response essays. The prompts will be based on primary texts that have been discussed in class till that point in the semester.

**Writing about yourself for professional purposes (500 words; 100 points):** A substantive "about me" essay for a hypothetical professional website.

**Midterm Paper (1000 words; 300 points):** Taking cue from one of the texts and translating a significant personal experience into an essay, reflecting on how it shaped your understanding of yourself and certain important social and/or political issues.

**Final Research Paper (2000 words; 500 points):** A final project examining the rhetorical and structural elements of self-construction in one of the primary works in the syllabus.

**Class Participation (20 points):** These are points associated with your punctuality with assignments, attentiveness during class, and engagement during class discussions.

### Course Policies:

1. You must complete all *assignments* to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* Attendance is required. Each student is allowed four absences with no penalty. 50 points will be deducted from a student's final grade for each subsequent absence. If a student misses six periods during a semester, he or she will fail the entire course. For classes in which there is a double block, attendance will be taken twice. Only those absences involving university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, and religious holidays will be exempt from this policy. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with the instructor prior to the date that will be missed. Students are responsible for keeping track of their own attendance record. Documented extenuated circumstances such as major illness will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
3. Students who enter class after the start of class are late and are marked as tardy. Three instances of tardiness count as one absence. Additionally, if you arrive more than 15 minutes late to class, you will be counted as absent for that period. Tardiness disrupts the class so make it a habit to be in your seat when class begins.
4. *Paper Format & Submission:* Students will submit their essays through Canvas. Because I use the reviewing feature in Microsoft Word, papers must be saved in a Word-compatible format, generally .doc or .docx, or .rtf. You should save your papers using your last name and the assignment name as the filename. Submit through the assignment tab by attaching the document to the assignment page. If you are experiencing technical difficulty with the website, print a hard copy of the paper and bring to class and/or email me your assignment. However, you will still need to attach the assignment once the website is running again.
5. *Late Papers/Assignments:* Students should turn in essays on the day they are due—even if they cannot make it to class. Computer or email problems are not valid excuses for late work; save documents frequently and on multiple disks. Late work will not be accepted. Any other work that is not turned in by

class time on the due date will not be accepted and will automatically count as a zero. Exceptional circumstances will be considered on a case-by-case basis and require documentation.

6. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
7. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>.
8. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.
9. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>
10. *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
11. *Course Evaluations.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
12. Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>.
13. *Classroom behavior and netiquette:* Common courtesy is mandatory in our classroom. Silence all cell phones, pagers, alarms, and so on when you enter the classroom; unexpected noises interrupt everyone's concentration. *If a student is found text messaging in class, he or she will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day.* Sleeping, holding private conversations, and reading other material are also inappropriate behaviors during class time.
14. *Laptop Policy:* Students will not need to use a laptop for this class for anything but assigned texts, so please put it away before class begins and take it out only for accessing Canvas or Course Reserves. E-readers will be allowed; this does not include cell phones, which must be put away and on silent during class. Other devices, such as laptops and tablets, will be allowed on a provisional basis.
15. *UF's policy on Harassment:* UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitment-staffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

Syllabus			
Wk	Day	Reading/Viewing Material	Due
1	1/8	Course Introduction; Syllabus Overview	
	1/10	Jean Jacques Rousseau, Selections from <i>Confessions</i>	
	1/12	Rousseau continued	
2	1/15	Selections from <i>The Confessions of St. Augustine</i>	
	1/17	Workshop on writing a Persuasive Essay "Composition as a Write of Passage" by Nathalie Singh-Corcoran from <i>Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing</i> , Volume 2	
	1/19	In-class Persuasive Writing assignment based on prompt	Due by the end of class (1/19)

3	1/22	Thomas de Quincey, Selections from <i>Confessions of an English Opium-Eater</i>	
	1/24	De Quincey continued	
	1/26	“Critical Thinking in College Writing: From the Personal to the Academic” by Gita DasBender from <i>Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 2</i>	
4	1/29	Benjamin Franklin, Selections from <i>Poor Richard’s Almanack</i>	
	1/31	Franklin continued	
	2/2	Workshop on writing an Expository Essay	
5	2/5	In-class Expository Writing assignment based on prompt	Due by the end of class (2/5)
	2/7	Frederick Douglass, Selections from <i>Life and Times of Frederick Douglass</i>	
	2/9	Douglass continued	
6	2/12	““I Was Born:” Slave Narratives, Their Status as Autobiography and as Literature” James Olney. <i>Callaloo</i> No. 20 (Winter, 1984), pp. 46-73	
	2/14	Workshop on writing about yourself for professional purposes;  Bring examples of 2 compelling “about me” descriptions from the web. These should be substantive and demonstrate innovativeness and rhetorical efficiency of the kind that you would like to replicate in your own writing.	
	2/16	Virginia Woolf, “The Decay of the Essay”	Professional “About Me” essay due (2/16)
7	2/19	Woolf continued	
	2/21	“I need you to say ‘I’”: Why First Person Is Important in College Writing by Kate McKinney Maddalena	

		<i>Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1</i>	
	2/23	Gertrude Stein, Selections from <i>The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas</i>	
8	2/26	Stein continued	
	2/28	“Self-Consciousness and the Modernist Temper” James Sloan Allen <i>The Georgia Review</i> Vol. 33, No. 3 (Fall 1979), pp. 601-620	
	3/2	Workshop on the Midterm Paper	
9	3/5	Spring Break	
	3/7	Spring Break	
	3/9	Spring Break	
10	3/12	Workshop on writing Literary Response essays Maya Angelou, <i>I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings</i>	
	3/14	In-class Literary Response writing activity with prompt Angelou continued	Due by the end of class (3/14)
	3/16	Lyn Hejinian, <i>My Life</i>	
11	3/19	Hejinian continued	
	3/21	Primo Levi, Selections from <i>Survival in Auschwitz</i>	
	3/23	Levi continued	Midterm Paper due (3/23)

12	3/26	Viewing selections from the Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University	
	3/28	Workshop on writing a Narrative Essay Read “Narrative Essays” on the Purdue OWL website <a href="https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/04/">https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/685/04/</a>	
	3/30	In-class Narrative Writing assignment based on prompt Viewing an episode of <i>This American Life</i> in class	Due by the end of class (3/30)
13	4/2	Workshop on Final Research Paper Read “Writing a Literary Analysis” on the Purdue OWL website <a href="https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/697/1">https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/697/1</a>	
	4/4	Wole Soyinka, <i>You Must Set Forth at Dawn: A Memoir</i>	
	4/6	Soyinka continued	
14	4/9	Drafting a thesis question and topic sentences Read “Thesis Statements” on the online page of the UNC Chapel Hill Writing Center. <a href="https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/thesis-statements/">https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/thesis-statements/</a>	
	4/11	Marjane Satrapi, <i>Persepolis</i>	
	4/13	Satrapi continued	
15	4/16	“Frames and Mirrors in Marjane Satrapi’s <i>Persepolis</i> ” Babak Elahi <i>Symplokē</i> Vol. 15, No. 1/2, Cinema without Borders (2007), pp. 312-325	
	4/18	Evaluating secondary sources Read “Evaluating Sources: Overview.” <a href="https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/553/01/">https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/553/01/</a>	

	4/20	Peer Reviewing drafts of the Final Research Paper with a rubric	
16	4/23	Revisions “Reflective Writing and the Revision Process: What Were You Thinking?” by Sandra L. Giles <i>Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volume 1</i>	
	4/25	Wrap up and Course Review	Final Research Paper due 4/27

### Grading/Assessment Rubric

#### Grading Scale

Letter Grade	GPA	Percentage (Point %)
A	4.0	93–100
A-	3.67	90–92
B+	3.33	87–89
B	3.0	83–86
B-	2.67	80–82
C+	2.33	77–79
C	2.0	73–76
C-	1.67	70–72
D+	1.33	67–69
D	1.0	63–66

D-	0.67	60–62
E	0.00	0–59

### Grade Meanings

**A** Student did what the assignment asked at a superior level, meeting all the composition objectives required of the assignment. Additionally, his or her work shows originality, creativity, and demonstrates that the student 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** Student did what the assignment asked at a quality level, meeting most of the composition objectives required of the assignment. Work in this range needs revision; however, it is complete in content, is organized well, and shows special attention to style.

**C** Student did what the assignment asked, but overlooked some of the composition objectives. 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** Student 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 students who do not do the work or do not come to class.

However, if a student’s work is shoddy, shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, and/or an inability to meet the composition objectives, he or she will receive a failing grade.