

**ENC1145: Topics in Composition**  
**The Art of Self-Formation**  
Section 3309  
Class # 13073  
**Fall 2021**

**Instructor Name:** Victor Imko

**Course meeting times & locations:** MWF Period 6 at TUR 2354

**Office Location and Hours:** Tuesdays 11 – 1 pm location TBD

**Course website:** Canvas

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

**Course Description:**

What makes a person? Is it a specific set of circumstances, a certain kind of temperament, or some chance interplay between the two? In this class we'll read stories in which characters (and authors) actively reflect on the ways in which they're formed.

We'll begin by reading *Hamlet*, examining the Prince of Denmark's claim that his melancholy is caused not by his precarious position at court but by hidden depths of feeling: "I have that within which passes show." We'll then study how eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors like Goethe and Flaubert adapted this idea of "interiority" to the realist novel, a genre typically associated with social adventure and stock characters. Finally, we'll explore the various ways in which contemporary writers like Vivian Gornick, Elizabeth Gilbert, and Jia Tolentino have integrated novelistic strategies of self-interrogation into nonfiction forms like memoir and the personal essay.

The focus of this class is equal parts academic and aesthetic. We will consider texts in their specific literary-historical contexts, which will sometimes require that we read supplementary scholarship. We will also pay close attention to form and style, and will experiment creatively in our own writing. Assignments will include weekly discussion preparation notes, a presentation, and a creative final.

**COVID Statement:**

In response to COVID-19, the following practices are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- The university expects you to wear approved face coverings during class and within buildings even if you are vaccinated. Please continue to follow healthy habits, including best practices like frequent hand washing. Following these practices is our responsibility as Gators.
  - Sanitizing supplies are available in the classroom if you wish to wipe down your desks prior to sitting down and at the end of the class.
  - Hand sanitizing stations will be located in every classroom.

- If you sick, stay home and self-quarantine. Please visit the UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website about next steps, retake the questionnaire and schedule your test for no sooner than 24 hours after your symptoms began. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 (or email [covid@shcc.ufl.edu](mailto:covid@shcc.ufl.edu)) to be evaluated for testing and to receive further instructions about returning to campus. UF Health Screen, Test & Protect offers guidance when you are sick, have been exposed to someone who has tested positive or have tested positive yourself. Visit the [UF Health Screen, Test & Protect website](#) for more information.
  - Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.
  - If you are withheld from campus by the Department of Health through Screen, Test & Protect you are not permitted to use any on campus facilities. Students attempting to attend campus activities when withheld from campus will be referred to the Dean of Students Office.
- Continue to regularly visit [coronavirus.UFHealth.org](http://coronavirus.UFHealth.org) and [coronavirus.ufl.edu](http://coronavirus.ufl.edu) for up-to-date information about COVID-19 and vaccination.

### **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:**

#### **To purchase:**

- William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- Gustave Flaubert, *Sentimental Education*
- Erica Jong, *Fear of Flying*
- Vivian Gornick, *Fierce Attachments*
- Elizabeth Gilbert, *Eat, Pray, Love*

#### **Provided on Canvas:**

- Vivian Gornick, introduction to *The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative*
- Stephen Greenblatt, introduction to *Hamlet* from *The Norton Shakespeare*
- Margreta de Grazia, “Modern Hamlet” from *Hamlet without Hamlet*
- James Hardin, introduction to *Reflection and Action: Essays on the Bildungsroman*
- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, excerpts from *Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship*
- Franco Moretti, “The World of Prose” from *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*
- David Shields, excerpts from *Reality Hunger: A Manifesto*
- Rachel Cusk, “*Eat, Pray, Love*” from *Coventry: Essays*
- Jia Tolentino, “Reality TV Me” from *Trick Mirror: Reflections on Self-Delusion*

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

#### **Writing:**

- 12 of 15 Discussion Preparation Notes (500 words each; 10 pts each): These weekly critical responses will respond to the week’s reading and provide a framework for our discussions. You may miss three.
- Creative Final Proposal (200 words; 5 pts): To prepare for your final project, you will write a proposal that includes a clear articulation of your chosen critical question and a preliminary outline of your paper.
- Creative Final (1800 words; 50 pts): As a final project, students will consider a critical question of their own choosing, in consultation with me, and explore it through narrative. You will write a creative examination of a topic we’ve covered in class – selfhood, interiority, socialization, coming of age, etc. – using the conventions of a genre we’ve studied: drama, bildungsroman, autofiction, memoir, or personal essay. If you prefer, you may write a literature review that surveys scholarship (at least five high-quality sources) on a primary text we’ve read.

### **Participation:**

- Class Participation (15 pts): You will earn class participation credit based on your preparedness and presence for active and mindful participation in discussion and in-class writing exercises.
- Presentation (10 pts): Each student will lead class discussion once. This is your opportunity to shape the critical conversation and tailor it to your own interests. You will be expected to give a summary of the essay/book excerpt, offer your point of view on the main ideas using evidence from the text to support your claims, and have at least four questions with which to sustain discussion.

Assignment	Word Count	Points
Discussion Preparation Notes (12)	500 each = 6000 total	10 each = 120 total
Creative Final Proposal	200	5
Creative Final	1800	50
Presentation	N/A	10
Class Participation	N/A	15
Total:	6000	200

### **Course Policies:**

1. You must complete all assignments to receive credit for this course.
2. *Attendance:* You are allowed **three** absences without explanation or excuse. Subsequent unexplained or unexcused absences will result in a penalty to your final grade. **If you accrue 6 unexcused absences, per department policy, you cannot pass the course.**

If extenuating circumstances prevent you from attending class or from completing assignments, please contact me via email as soon as you are able. Together, we will devise a plan for completing your assignments and making up missed meetings.

The above course-specific attendance policy is in keeping with the UF attendance policy, which can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>:

“Students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives as defined by the instructor. Absences count from the first class meeting.

In general, acceptable reasons for absence from or failure to participate in class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays, and participation in official university activities such as music

performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused. Other reasons also may be approved.

Students shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the material or activities covered in their absence.

Students cannot participate in classes unless they are registered officially or approved to audit with evidence of having paid audit fees. The Office of the University Registrar provides official class rolls to instructors.

If a student does not participate in at least one of the first two class meetings of a course or laboratory in which they are registered, and they have not contacted the department to indicate their intent, the student can be dropped from the course. Students must not assume that they will be dropped, however. The department will notify students if they have been dropped from a course or laboratory.

The university recognizes the right of the individual professor to make attendance mandatory.

After due warning, professors can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.”

3. Please arrive to our class on time and be ready to begin exactly at 12:50 pm. **Three late arrivals** (more than 5 minutes and without advanced notice) **will count as one absence. Late arrivals to class will affect your participation grade.**
4. *Classroom Behavior:* Be respectful and attentive to your colleagues and to me during class discussions. In particular, be respectful of your colleagues’ diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and beliefs. Listen and respond to others as you would like to be listened and responded to—for me, that means substantive, respectful responses that respect your colleagues’ preparation and analysis.

Please be focused on our class and refrain from using cell phones and completing other work during our time together.

5. *UF’s policy on Sexual Harassment:* The University of Florida is committed to providing a safe educational, working, and residential environment that is free from sexual harassment or misconduct directed towards any and all members of the community: <https://titleix.ufl.edu/about/title-ix-rights/>
6. *Paper Format & Submission:* All assignments should be typed in 12 pt font with standard margins. All critical writing should follow MLA style guidelines. Submit all assignments on Canvas as specified in each assignment’s instructions.

7. *Late Papers/Assignments*: Acceptance of late papers/assignments will be at my discretion and dependent on circumstances. **Here, as with absences, advance notice is highly preferred.**
8. *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*. Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
9. *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism*. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge: “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 Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions.>

As specified by the current UF Student Honor Code: A Student must not represent as the Student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another.

**Plagiarism** includes but is not limited to:

- a. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
- b. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the Student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the Student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
- c. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
- d. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the Student did not author.

In short, show respect to yourself, your colleagues, and me by submitting original work earnestly and honestly produced by you for all assignments. **If you use previously written work as inspiration for a creative project, notify me before submission. Turn-It-In will be enabled for all assignments.**

10. Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/>), which will provide appropriate documentation to give your instructor early in the semester.
11. *Students who are in distress* or who are in need of counseling or urgent help: please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto:umatter@ufl.edu) or 352-392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to you. UF’s Counseling and Wellness Center offers additional support: 352-392-1575, or contact them online: <https://counseling.ufl.edu/>
12. For information on UF Grading policies, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

13. *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. To request a grade appeal form, please email Ms. Blount at [cblount@ufl.edu](mailto:cblount@ufl.edu). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
14. *Course Evaluations.* Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations. Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages requesting that you do this online: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>
15. *Policy on environmental sustainability.* Whenever possible, I will use paper-sparing electronic media to distribute our course materials. Consider purchasing used copies of print texts. If you do not elect to keep your print books, consider sharing them with others after the semester ends. (For example, you could donate them to the Alachua County [Friends of the Library](#) annual book sale.)

**Syllabus and Schedule:**

See table on next pages.

Date	Week	Reading for class	Assignments Due on Canvas by 9:00 a.m.
<b>Unit I: Self-Performance</b>			
8/23 – 8/27	Week One	Monday: Syllabus Review Wednesday: Gornick (on Canvas) Friday: In-class writing exercise	
8/30 – 9/3	Week Two	Monday: <i>Hamlet</i> Acts 1-2 Wednesday: Greenblatt (on Canvas) Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 8/30: Note #1
9/6 – 9/10	Week Three	Monday: <i>Hamlet</i> Acts 3-5 Wednesday: de Grazia (on Canvas) Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 9/6: Note #2
<b>Unit II: The Bildungsroman</b>			
9/13 – 9/17	Week Four	Monday: Goethe (on Canvas) Wednesday: Hardin (on Canvas) Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 9/13: Note #3
9/20 – 9/24	Week Five	Monday: <i>Sentimental Education</i> Part 1 Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 9/20: Note #4
9/27 – 10/1	Week Six	Monday: <i>Sentimental Education</i> Part 2 Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 9/27: Note #5
10/4 – 10/8	Week Seven	Monday: <i>Sentimental Education</i> Part 3 Wednesday: Moretti (on Canvas) Friday: No Class	Mon 10/4: Note #6
<b>Unit III: Autofiction</b>			
10/11 – 10/15	Week Eight	Monday: Shields (on Canvas) Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 10/11: Note #7
10/18 – 10/22	Week Nine	Monday: <i>Fear of Flying</i> to ch. 10 Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 10/18: Note #8
10/25 – 10/29	Week Ten	Monday: <i>Fear of Flying</i> to end Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 10/25: Note #9
<b>Unit IV: Memoir</b>			
11/1 – 11/5	Week Eleven	Monday: <i>Fierce Attachments</i> to p. 101 Wednesday: Discussion Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 11/1: Note #10



11/8 – 11/12	Week Twelve	Monday: <i>Fierce Attachments</i> to end Wednesday: Discussion Friday: Individual Conferences	Mon 11/8: Note #11 Thu 11/11: Creative Final Proposal
11/15 – 11/19	Week Thirteen	Monday: Individual Conferences Wednesday: <i>Eat, Pray, Love</i> Book 1 Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 11/15: Note #12
11/22 – 11/26	Week Fourteen	Monday: <i>Eat, Pray, Love</i> Book 2 Wednesday: No class Friday: No class	Mon 11/22: Note #13
11/29 – 12/3	Week Fifteen	Monday: <i>Eat, Pray, Love</i> Book 3 Wednesday: Cusk (on Canvas) Friday: In-class writing exercise	Mon 11/29: Note #14
<b>Unit V: The Personal Essay</b>			
12/6 – 12/10	Week Sixteen	Monday: Tolentino (on Canvas) Wednesday: Discussion Friday: No class	Mon 12/6: Note #15
			Thu 12/16: Creative Final

### **Grading Scale:**

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
186-200	180-184	174-178	166-172	160-164	154-158	146-152	140-144	134-138	126-132	120-124	0-118
4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	0.67	0.00

### **Grading Rubrics:**

Above all else, I expect you to seriously undertake any work required for this course and to always demonstrate a sincere and earnest attempt to produce your best effort. I will make my specific expectations for individual assignments clear to you when the assignments are introduced. For discussion preparation notes, presentations, and the creative final, I will provide grading rubrics on Canvas that are tailored to each specific assignment.

Class participation points will be awarded based on your preparation for and engagement with the course material, including both assigned readings and your colleagues' critical responses when required. I expect you to come to meetings prepared for thorough, substantive, and engaged discussion, and I will show you the same respect by being well-prepared, too.

Please ask me for clarification on any assignment instructions, criteria for evaluation, or course policies at any time during the semester.

### **Teaching Philosophy:**

This course prioritizes sustained daily engagements with the reading over short bursts of intensive work. A substantial portion of your final grade will therefore be determined by your performance on day-to-day preparation, including your reading notes and participation. A primary goal of this model is to foster scholarly habits of research and analysis. The classroom is a discussion-based seminar environment in which students are largely responsible for framing, generating, and exploring questions. My role in the classroom is not primarily to convey information, but to moderate and deepen a discussion driven by students. I therefore expect substantial, focused, and demonstrable preparation on the part of students prior to each class meeting.