WAYS TO RAINY MOUNTAIN

Inventive Modeling: Autobiography / Creative Nonfiction (Spring 2018)

**If you missed the first class, see me immediately after this class.**

English 4330-001 Office Hrs.: T/TH: 2-3:30, and by apt; 405 Carlisle

Instructor: Dr. Roemer Phone: 817-272-2729; email: roemer@uta.edu

mentis.uta.edu/explore/profile/kenneth-roemer en.wikipedia.org/wiki/kenneth\_roemer

T/TH 12:30-1:50; 202 Preston Hall English Dept. Office: 203 Carlisle; 817-272-2692

GOALS / MEANS / ASSESSMENT

1. To improve writing ability: focus on creative nonfiction prose, especially narrative, descriptive, and autobiographical writing with an emphasis on gathering and integrating written and oral sources. (Note: some students have complemented their prose with poetry, graphics, and music.)

2. To help students enhance self-awareness by discovering relationships between listening, reading, and writing: focus on connections between stories and facts relating to family, community, and place.

Means and assessment: study of N. Scott Momaday’s composition processes in the creation of *The Way to Rainy Mountain* (WTRM); an essay exam on these processes (see below); composing a personal version of WTRM (see below).

ASSUMPTIONS

1. One of the best ways to improve writing is to discover the relevance of reading and

writing to identity creation.

2. Modeling (with appropriate variations) the processes and forms used by Momaday is one way to approach this discovery process. (See "Inventive Modeling: Rainy Mountain's Way to Composition." *College English* 46 [1984]: 767-82.)

3. Students enrolled in this class have “mastered” “basic” writing skills and ethics (see library.uta.edu/plagiarism) for ethical use of sources. (Make an appointment with the Writing Center, 4th Floor Library, if you need “refreshers” on writing: [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl).) If you visit the Center, be sure to show the tutor this syllabus.

4. The degree of learning and enjoyment gained in this course depends to a large degree on students’ ability to conduct work independently.

5. Students can benefit greatly from the class and group discussion and workshops and discussions outside the class. The course is solitary and communal, and the community extends beyond the classroom to family members and friends.

6. More than 20 graduates of this class have seen parts of their work in print and one published an autobiographical work (St. Martin’s Press) inspired by the course. But this course is not geared specifically toward publication. The form is too unusual for most publishers. The goals indicated above are the primary aims of the course. Still, the skills learned in this course should be useful to students hoping to publish.

REQUIRED READING /LISTENING

-- Momaday’s *The Way to Rainy Mountain*. Albuquerque: U of New Mexico P, 1969.

-- Course Packet from UTA’s Bookstore (materials related to WTRM and nonfiction)

-- Written and oral sources necessary for composing each student’s collection.

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE, READING AND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Even though the first sections of the course focus on nonfiction writing in general and WTRM, students should be thinking about possibilities for their collection and appropriate written and oral sources from the first day of the course. Starting this process early is important especially for students who have to use Interlibrary Loan, contact relatives, or travel to relevant locations.

The due dates and stages of composition listed below represent minimum requirements. Some students may prefer to turn in drafts earlier or exceed the stated requirement (e.g., turn in more than three sections on March 20).

Pay close attention to this schedule and announcements. Sometimes we meet as a class; sometimes there are required conferences; sometimes the conferences are optional; sometimes there are no class meetings.

Students will maintain a portfolio for all in-class and out of class writing.

Abbreviations: (P) = course packet; (S/U) = the assignment will be graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory; unsatisfactory written work will have to be rewritten; (G) = the standard A, B, C, D, F grades. (See the approximate weights for grades below.)

Introductions to the Course, Creative Nonfiction, and Your Selves

The course, the Identity Experiment, and Creative Nonfiction 1/16, 18

Past student collections displayed; Identity Experiment described

*Readings*: (P): Gerard; Nguyen & Shreve; Miller & Paola; Wyatt; Morris

Roundtable on Creative Nonfiction (Professors Kopchick, Morris) 1/23

Identity Experiment Due (G) 1/23

The Rainy Mountain Model

The Text: Close readings of Specific Sections 1/25

Focus on the form, especially sections IV, VII, XVI, XVII, and XXIX

*Reading*: WTRM

The Text: Form 1/30, 2/1 Continue discussions of specific sections plus the prose and poetic frames, graphics, and book design.

*Readings*: WTRM; (P): Henley

The Contexts: Biography, Place, Culture, Literature 2/6

Reading/Viewing: WTRM; PowerPoint; (P): Schubnell; Roemer (Kodaseet

Interview, Appendices A and B)

The Contexts: Composition Processes 2/6, 8

Readings: (P): All the selections in the “Touchstones of Inspiration” section

Study Sheet for Exam and Guidelines for Landscape/Focus Report Distributed 2/8

Essay Exam on WTRM (G) [Exams returned on 2/15] 2/13

Inventive Modeling

Short Class & Required Conferences to Discuss Landscape/Focus Report 2/15, 20

**Requirement**: Bring your Landscape/Focus report (S/U)

Class Discussion of Landscape/Focus Selections 2/22

**Requirement**: Be prepared to offer a brief (approximately three-minutes

presentation that describes and justifies the selection) (S/U)

Distribution of Guidelines for different types of oral and written sources

Class Discussion: Combining Poetry and Prose: Professor Tim Richardson 2/27

Independent Work: Gathering sources, writing preliminary drafts 3/1

Conferences are not required, but students can make appointments to ask

questions and present ideas for sources.

UTA’s 23rd Scholarship Benefit Powwow, Bluebonnet Ballroom, UC 3/3

Required Conferences to Discuss List of Oral and Written Sources 3/6, 8

**Requirement**: Typed list of sources and a brief description of why they are

appropriate for your collection. (S/U) The “Results” page from the Library’s plagiarism tutorial (library.uta.edu/plagiarism) must be stapled to the back

of the report.

Spring Break 3/12-18

Class Discussion of Sources and their Relation to the Three or more “Voices” 3/20

**Requirements**: (1) Be prepared to offer a brief (two-minute) presentation

on the sources and how they relate to your three or more voices (S/U).

(2) Bring a draft of at least three sections for work shopping. (3) Turn in

your draft of at least three multi-voice sections by 5 PM. (G)

Organizing large creative nonfiction works: Professor Amy Bernhard 3/22

Required Conferences: to Discuss Drafted Sections and Possible Organization 3/27, 29

**Requirement**: Written description/justification of possible organization of the entire collection (S/U)

Class Discussion of Collection Organization 4/3

**Requirement**: (1) Be prepared to off a brief (three-minute) presentation that

describes and justifies your tentative organization. (S/U) (2) By 5 PM, turn in an

outline of the collection preceded by a justification for the order selected. (S/U)

Required Conferences Focusing on Organization, but, if needed, questions about

other elements of the writing/researching 4/5, 10

Requirement: There is no specific requirement for this meeting, but students

can bring “troublesome” sections to discuss.

Independent Work: Complete Draft of 15 to 30 sections, including the three (or more) sections already evaluated. 4/12,17

**Requirement**: The draft must be turned in to my office or the English

Department Office by 5 PM, 4/17.

Required Conferences to Discuss the Draft and Ideas for Framing and Possible

Graphic Martials and Collection Design 4/19, 24 **Requirement**: A brief written statement describing, framing, graphics,

and design (S/U)

Class Discussion: Framing, Graphics, Design (examples of collections from previous

Classes displayed) 4/26 **Requirement**: (1) Be prepared to offer a brief (two-minute) presentation on these

Elements. (S/U) (2) Bring a sample of the framing material for work shopping.

Turn in Framing Material By Noon, Friday, 4/27

**Requirement**: Framing material, accompanied by a paragraph justification of

the framing strategy. (S/U)

Class Discussion: Framing Drafts Returned; Discussions about Final Revisions,

Acknowledgements, Simple Citation and Work Cited Formats

Requirements: Bring questions about design or any other element of the

collection.

Desperation Optional Conferences 5/3

**Requirement**: Turn in Two Copies of Final Draft By Friday, 5/4, by 5 PM

Celebratory Gathering: Final Drafts Returned 5/10

Requirement: (1) Bring your ungraded writing assignment from the first day of

Class. Consider how the opinions you expressed then have or have not

changed. (2) Celebrate the creation of an identity in words.

(Note: since there is not a final exam in this course, you do not have to show

up at 11 AM. We will gather at the usual 12:30 time.)

IDENTITY EXPERIMENT (Due 1/23)

I will describe this assignment and provide an example on 1/16.

Grading Criteria

A = two sets of contrasting columns with excellent detail defining the identities

B = two sets with sufficient detail

C = Two sets, contrasts not clear, some detail

D = Two sets, contrasts unclear, vague language

F = One set, contrasts unclear, vague language

0 = Not turned in on time

ESSAY EXAMINATION ON WTRM (2/13)

The questions require applications of our discussions of interrelationships among the voices and on how Momaday transformed his sources. I will distribute a study sheet the class before the exam.

Grading Criteria

Emphasis on how well students focus on the question, support all their claims with appropriate examples from the selections chosen, and the logic of their answers.

GRADING

The list below indicates the approximate weights of the assignments.

Identity experiment (G) 5%

Essay examination (G) 10%

Oral and/or Written (S/U) Assignments 20%

Landscape/focus description/justification

List/justifications of sources/justifications

Outline/justification of organization

Framing description/justification

Draft of at least three sections (G) 10%

Framing materials (G) 10%

Draft of 15 to 30 sections (G) 20%

Final Draft (G) 25%

100%

I expect improvement between drafts. If one draft received a B, and there is no improvement in that material in the next draft, the grade will be lower than B.

WARNINGS: (1) Under normal conditions, no late assignments will be accepted. (2) Every five unexcused absences will result in a half grade drop for the semester grade. (3) Students wanting to drop the course must follow current University drop procedures. (4) Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be handled according to University policies.

ENCOURAGEMENTS: (1) Consistent and constructive class participation will positively impact semester grades. (2) I reward improvement; the grading weights reflect this. (3) I am more than willing to accommodate students with disabilities. At the beginning of the semester, these students must provide me with the appropriate documentation from the Office of Students with Disabilities (817-272-3364). (4) UTA follows non-discrimination policies, including Title IX regulations. (5) Helpful Offices on campus include: Veterans Affairs (817-272-3373); College Hotline academic and personal advising (817-272-6107), and Campus Police 9817-272-3003. (5) There are convenient Preston Hall exits at the east and west sides of our second-floor class room. (6) For detailed information about these and other university policies consult: <https://www.uta.edu/search/?q=Syllabus+Template#gsc.tab=0&gsc.q=Syllabus%20Template&gsc.page=1>

INFORMATION ABOUT GUEST LECTURERS

1 2 3 4

*Mother* From wealthy family Worked as a maid Prolific author Poor speller

(chauffer, maids; her Had to dig clams Pratt Art Inst. Hated oil painting

grandparents rented to feed her children Won city Removed from

Carnegie Hall for her Newspaper work for awards city position

mother to perform) 8 cents a line

*Father* His father owned the Willing to teach 7 Loved German Research engineer

Packard that carried courses and drive literature (worked on anti-

Lindberg in his ticker- a school bus for Published author gravity project)

tape parade $25 a week Talented comic Rarely read books

Graduated from Harvard illustrator

*Lecturer* Harvard graduate Worked for $10 Nominated for a Poor speller

Traveled to 10 countries a week in Gallup, NM Pulitzer Slow reader

During the ‘90s spent Farmhand (hay & sod) His books in- Cannot draw well

$300,00 on his His first car cost $1 clude his photos 4.0 GPA in college

children’s education (it was a stolen car) and poetry science courses

Wife gave away billions Wife was a minimum- His song has Offered football

of dollars wage cashier been animated scholarship