

ENGL 4333: Genre: Life Writing

Spring 2017
TR 11am-12:20pm
Preston Hall 103

Professor: Dr. Desiree Henderson
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-3:30 and by appointment

Course Description: The study of life writing poses a number of challenges. Life writing often disrupts expectations regarding individual identity, straddles the boundaries of public and private, raises questions about truth and authenticity, and resists conventional interpretative methods. In this course, students will analyze two genres, the diary and the memoir, and consider the motives behind and forms of self-narration. Students will be introduced to theories and methods that define the contemporary study of autobiographical writing. We will focus on American women writers with an emphasis on diverse voices and perspectives in order to explore the intersections between race, gender, sexuality, and nation that compel many authors to write their lives. This course has a service learning component that allows students to apply their knowledge in real world environments.

Learning Outcomes: By the end of the semester, students should be able to do the following:

- Explain and apply prominent theories and methods related to the study of autobiographical literature.
- Make connections between individual life writing practices and the scholarly study of life writing.
- Put into practice the application of knowledge in real world situations.
- Write original and well-informed literary analysis of life writing texts.

Required Books:

Mary Boykin Chesnut, *Mary Chesnut's Diary*. Penguin Classics; ISBN-13: 978-0143106067
Zikala-Sa, *American Indian Stories*. Penguin Classics; ISBN-13: 978-0142437094
Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*. Penguin Classics; ISBN-13: 978-0143106777
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts*. Vintage; ISBN-13: 978-0679721888
Norma Cantu, *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera*. U New Mexico Press; ISBN: 978-0826318282
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*. Houghton Mifflin; ISBN-13: 978-0618871711

E-Book Policy: If you access the required reading in e-book format, you are expected to have the same edition of the books as listed above. Other editions will not have the same supplementary material or the same page numbers, greatly hindering your ability to complete assignments and participate in the class discussion.

COURSE POLICIES

Grade Policy/Requirements:

Short Writes (3)	5%
Teaching Presentation	5%
Write Your Life	10%
Service Learning Project	15%
Essay 1	20%
Essay 2	20%
Essay 3	25%

Descriptions of major assignments and examinations with due dates: Major assignments include two essays (4-5 pages each) and one revised/expanded edition of a previous essay (7-8 pages). Students will also complete a life writing assignment; a group Teaching Presentation; and a group Service Learning Project. Due dates are indicated on the Reading and Assignment Schedule below. All requirements and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

Service Learning Requirement: We are partnering with the Mid-Cities Care Corps, which serves senior citizens by providing them with in-home care and support. Working in small groups, students will be meeting with and interviewing MCCC clients in order to write their life stories. This assignment requires students to put in at least 9 volunteer hours outside of class time. For more information see the Service Learning assignment prompt on Blackboard.

Attendance Policy: At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, my policy is as follows:

Attendance is mandatory and late arrival is not acceptable. I will take attendance in every class.

Perfect Attendance	Students who attend every class (have 0 absences and no late arrivals) will have 2 additional points <i>added</i> to their final course grade. Any absences, including excused absences, will exclude the student from these bonus points.
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Allowed Absences	Students are granted 3 unexcused absences during the semester without penalty.	
Unexcused Absences	Any additional absences will result in a loss of points as detailed below. <i>Points will be deducted from the student's final course grade.</i>	
	# of Unexcused Absences	Points Deducted
	1-3	0
	4	3
	5	5
Excused Absences	<i>DO NOT claim excused absences until you have exceeded your 3 allowed absences.</i> In order to claim an excused absence, you must submit written confirmation (copy of doctor's note, written excuse, etc.) that clearly states your name and the date(s) you were absent. Do not submit absence paperwork over email. Only a limited number of excused absences will be granted.	
Excessive Absences	Excessive Absences (6 or more) will result in an automatic F in the course.	

Expectations for Out-of-Class Study: Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional **nine hours** per weeks of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

Late Policy: All analytical and reflection essays will be accepted late with a deduction of 5 points per class day and 10 points per weekend, except Essay 3, which will only be accepted late with evidence of a family or medical emergency. Short writing assignments (short writes) will not be accepted late.

Technology in the Classroom Policy: I reserve the right to ask students to put away laptops, tablets, e-book readers, and/or phones. Typically I will do so if we are doing work for which access to technology is neither useful nor beneficial or if technology use is causing distraction. I encourage students to educate themselves about the effect that technology use has upon the learning process, including the cognitive overload that occurs when people try to multitask using their phones or other devices. Some information worth reflecting on:

“The Net’s cacophony of stimuli short-circuits both conscious and unconscious thought, prevents our minds from thinking either deeply or creatively ... The more we use the web, the more we train our brains to be

distracted.” – Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* (2010)

Studies show that just having a cell phone visible in a room—even if the phone is not in use—made people less likely to develop a sense of intimacy with others or to be able to participate in meaningful conversations.

– Przybylski and Weinstein, “Can you Connect with me Now? How the Presence of Mobile Communication Technology Influences Face-to-face Conversation Quality.” *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 2012.

“Task switching,” such as switching between taking notes and checking a text message, appears to be a swift and seamless process but, in fact, it comes with cognitive costs including a “resumption lag” as the brain struggles to refocus on the original task. It may take the brain as long as 25 minutes to regain focus after a very brief interruption.

– Clark, “The Impact of Digital Multitasking on Student Learning” <http://tinyurl.com/gsys2cg> and Dzubak, “Multitasking: The Good, The Bad, and The Unknown” <http://tinyurl.com/h4j5u3p>

Library & Research Assistance: University-level research requires university-level sources. Appropriate sources include scholarly and peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and credible news magazines and newspapers. The UTA Library <http://library.uta.edu/> offers a plethora of resources and subject specialists to help you select and locate appropriate sources. Find library staff at the Service Zone on the first floor of the UTA Central Library, by phone at (817) 272-3395, by text at (817) 727-8395, email at AskUs@uta.edu, or the chat widget on the library’s homepage, <http://library.uta.edu/>. For a list of useful guides to help you start your research, visit: <http://libguides.uta.edu/>.

Your librarian is Diane Shepelwich, dianec@uta.edu. Diane is available through email, individual or group meetings, or phone appointments. If you need help getting started with your research or course assignment or have questions along the way, please contact Diane for personalized research assistance.

The English Writing Center (Central Library room 411): The Writing Center Offers free tutoring in 20-, 40-, or 60-minute face-to-face and online sessions to all UTA students on any phase of their UTA coursework. Our hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mon.-Thurs., 9 am-3 pm Fri. and Noon-6 pm Sat. and Sun. Register and make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Classroom Visits, workshops, and specialized services for graduate students are also available. Please see www.uta.edu/owl for detailed information on all our programs and services

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period

through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wwweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*, *The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA)*, and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a **letter certified** by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: **The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD)** www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671 is also available to all students to help increase their understanding of personal issues, address mental and behavioral health problems and make positive changes in their lives.

Non-Discrimination Policy: *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.*

Title IX Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington (“University”) is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. *For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or*

contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.

I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code in their courses by having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University. Additional information is available at <https://www.uta.edu/conduct/>.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in face-to-face and online classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" are directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback via the SFS database is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. Students' anonymity will be protected to the extent that the law allows. UT

Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law and aggregate results are posted online. Data from SFS is also used for faculty and program evaluations. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: for semester-long courses, a period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located outside and down the stairs. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

Student Support Services: UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include [tutoring](#), [major-based learning centers](#), developmental education, [advising and mentoring](#), personal counseling, and [federally funded programs](#). For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at <http://www.uta.edu/universitycollege/resources/index.php>.

The IDEAS Center (2nd Floor of Central Library) offers **free** tutoring to all students with a focus on transfer students, sophomores, veterans and others undergoing a transition to UT Arlington. To schedule an appointment with a peer tutor or mentor email IDEAS@uta.edu or call (817) 272-6593.

ENGL 4333 Reading & Assignment Schedule

All requirements and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

BB = Available on Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading and Assignments
1/17	Introduction	
1/19	Why Write Your Life?	Read at least one from each category: A. Burnett, "Happiness Hack" (online): http://tinyurl.com/j2k3xs3 Popova, "Celebrated Writers" (online): http://tinyurl.com/z88nvw Williams, "Me! Me! Me!" (online): http://tinyurl.com/jjx3nw7 B. Arthur, "Data Generation" (BB) Mills, "It's Just a Nuisance" (BB) Schiff, "Development's Story" (BB) Stein, "Self-Reflection, Insight, & Subjective Wellbeing" (BB)
1/24	Why Write Your Life?	"Write Your Life" Part 1 due by 11pm Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within" (BB) [read to pp. 24] hooks, "Writing from the Darkness" (BB) Brenman, "Notes from the Resistance" (online): http://tinyurl.com/h8prn5u
1/26	MCCC Volunteer Training	Short Write 1 due in class
1/31	How to Read Life Writing	Felski, <i>The Limits of Critique</i> , Introduction and Chapter 1 (BB)
2/2	How to Read Life Writing	Read at least one: Felski, <i>The Limits of Critique</i> , Chapter 5 (BB) Best & Marcus, "Surface Reading: An Introduction" (BB)

2/7	How to Read Life Writing	Short Write 2 due in class Smith & Watkins, "Life Narrative" and "Toolkit" (BB) Lejeune, "The Autobiographical Pact" (BB)
2/9	How to Read Life Writing	Sinor, <i>Extraordinary Work of Ordinary Writing</i> (BB)
2/14	Service Learning Workshop: Conducting interviews	Short Write 3 due in class
2/16	Mary Chesnut's Diary	Introduction and Parts I-II (pp.1-18) Literary criticism TBA
2/21	Mary Chesnut's Diary	Parts XIV-XVII (pp.199-272)
2/23	Mary Chesnut's Diary	Parts XVIII-XXI (pp. 273-end)
2/28	Emilie Davis's Diary	Online: https://davisdiaries.villanova.edu/
3/2	Civil War diaries	Henderson, "Digitized Archives" Selections from: http://www.diaryindex.com/digitized-diaries/
3/7	Service Learning Workshop: Writing biography	
3/9	TBA	Essay #1 due
Spring Break 3/13-3/17		
3/21	Literature Circle	Each group will read their assigned author: Zitkla-Sa, Antin, Kingston, or Cantu (See Literature Circle & Teaching Presentation prompt for details)
3/23	Literature Circle	"Write Your Life" Part 2 due Zitkla-Sa, Antin, Kingston, or Cantu cont.
3/28	Literature Circle	Zitkla-Sa, Antin, Kingston, or Cantu cont.

3/30	Literature Circle	Zitkila-Sa, Antin, Kingston, or Cantu cont.
4/4	Zitkala-Sa, American Indian Stories	Teaching Presentation: Reading TBA
4/6	Antin, <i>Promised Land</i>	Essay #2 due Teaching Presentation: Reading TBA
4/11	Kingston, <i>Woman Warrior</i>	Teaching Presentation: Reading TBA
4/13	Cantu, <i>Canícula</i>	Teaching Presentation: Reading TBA
4/18	Bechdel, <i>Fun Home</i>	Chapters 1-2
4/20	<i>Fun Home</i>	Chapters 3-5
4/25	<i>Fun Home</i>	Chapters 6-7
4/27	Service Learning: Reflections	Service Learning Life Story, Reflection Essay, and Peer Evaluations due
5/2	TBA	"Write Your Life" Part 3 due
5/4	TBA	
5/9		Essay #3 due by 5pm

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911. Non-emergency number 817-272-3381