

Oxford College of Emory University

English 185-9A: CRW and Life writing
Fall 2012
Pierce Hall 206; MWF 9:30-10:35

Dr. Jeff Galle
Office & hours: Seney 401
M-F, 2:30-3:30; & by appt
jgalle@emory.edu; 4-4571

Required Texts*

In Fact: The Best of Creative Nonfiction, Lee Gutkind, ed.

The Liars' Club, Mary Karr

The Glass Castle, Jeannette Walls

Modern American Memoirs, Annie Dillard, ed.

*Our books are listed here in the order they will be read. We will also use the internet to select several creative nonfiction essays that we will use in class discussion as well.

Course Description

English 185 is a writing course, and the approach we will take is to read a series of essays/books in the genre of life writing with the purpose of studying the way that authors construct their own stories in order to better equip you to write your own creative nonfiction life writing essays.

This course in life writing possesses a number of features—the reading and class discussion of the texts mentioned above, a series of personal essays that you will write in multiple drafts, a research paper on a particular issue in life writing and that is developed in conversation with me, and a service learning project at an area facility.

Each class is important because part of every class will involve student led class discussion.

Course objectives and learning outcomes

The student who successfully completes this course will

1. Develop skill in oral and written expression. (IDEA objective #8)
2. Learn how to find and use research resources for answering questions or solving problems (IDEA objective #9)
3. Acquire an interest in learning more by asking questions and seeking answers (IDEA objective #12)
4. Gain knowledge of the genres of life writing.
5. Gain knowledge of issues and decisions that writers make in writing versions of their own or another's life.

Assignments in General

1. Short assignments (including quizzes) on these readings will be required daily.

2. We will rotate (a signup sheet provided) the responsibility of leading/facilitating class discussion of readings (after the first two weeks).
3. Six essays (900-1400 words), most of them developed from working with the autobiographical experiences and/or the material generated from discussion of course materials. The essays will be primarily expository, but there may be elements of creative nonfiction as well. One of these essays, the last one, will take the form of a reflection on your writing and your service work completed at the local institution where our service learning project takes place.
4. One formal paper (8-10 pages) requiring outside sources, MLA documentation, an in depth treatment of an issue, and some form of oral presentation of the findings to the class. Topics to be decided upon as we discuss the various issues raised by the course content.
5. A final exam with questions covering content of the course, including the genre of life writing, the issue of sustainability, and the issues related to service learning.

Grading of the Assignments and Assigned Weights of Each

Assignments/quizzes/daily discussion	10%
5 'regular' essays*	50%
Oral presentation**	10%
Research Paper	20%
Final exam	10%

*Essay 6 is a required and very important Reflective Essay/TPSL essay which is ungraded but should reflect your decisions and growth as a writer and your work in service.

**The oral presentation will provide an opportunity for each student to discuss in depth her or his work with some aspect of the memoir or life writing. This assignment is open-ended for the reason that we have a wide array of assignments in this class. A rubric will be available for guidance in putting the presentation together.

Grading

All assignments will be assigned a letter grade, and I will use + and – to enable students to have more precise feedback as the quality of each particular letter grade. Hence, on a 100 point scale, an A- would fall in the low 90s, and a B+ in the high 80s, for example. Using a 12-point scale, each letter grade with + or – has a value as well.

Other Responsibilities and Related Matters

1. Attendance. Be present and on time. I take roll the first thing as class begins, and always mark as absent those who are not in the room.

You may miss three class meetings, but I will deduct points (5 pts per absence) from your class participation grade after the third absence. Students who are late must assume responsibility to be certain the attendance record is changed to reflect their attendance.

2. Honor Code. We will discuss this important issue in class, and we will cover plagiarism at that time. But please be aware that your writing is to be your own, and any other person's writing must be acknowledged through citations in the proper form. Please consult the Oxford College Handbook if you have any questions regarding the Code or the Honors Council. Work will be submitted through SafeAssign.
3. Service Learning duties. Kim David in the Office of Student Development for Community Service will work with our class to arrange the place and transportation for this important part of the course. (This work may provide the topic for one of the personal essays as well).
4. Late essays and other work. Work should be turned in on time so that I will be able to give you feedback on that assignment when the class is discussing the assignment. The longer period of time after we discuss an item that goes by, the less relevance and usefulness that assignment will have. For every class day that an essay (or other work) is late, I will deduct a letter grade from that paper (or other work).
5. We will have a personal library support person, and she will be leading training sessions for you at different points in the semester. So attending these sessions during class time is required.
6. Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford and Emory faculty/staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.

Readings, Major Assignments*, Due dates

*Short assignments and facilitation of discussion are not placed on the calendar because those decisions will be made in class.

ASSIGNMENTS

Essay DUE DATES

August 29: Syllabus; Self-introduction by impromptu pgph

31: *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections)

Sept 5: *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections)

7: *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections)

Sept 10 *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections)

12 *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections)

14 *In Fact: Best of Creative Nonfiction*, Gutkind (selections), ESSAY 1

Sept 17	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 1-46	
19	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 47-96	
21	(AGLS, Portland, OR) Class: Introduction of Research Process	
Sept 24	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 97-157	
26	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 158-211	
28	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 212-271	<u>ESSAY 2</u>
Oct 1	<i>The Liars' Club</i> , Mary Karr, 272-320	
3	<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls, 1-50	
5	<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls, 51-101	
Oct 8	<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls, 102-154	
10	<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls, 155-217	
12	<i>The Glass Castle</i> , Jeannette Walls, 218-288	<u>ESSAY 3</u>
Oct 15 – 16	Midsemester Break	
17	Research topic selection and develop: Librarian	
19	Developing the Research bibliography	
Oct 22	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections)	
24	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections)	
26	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections)	
Oct 29	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections)	
31	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections)	
Nov 2	<i>Modern American Memoirs</i> , Ed. Annie Dillard (selections),	<u>ESSAY4</u>
Nov 5	return to <i>In Fact</i> , Gutkind, (selection)	
7	return to <i>In Fact</i> , Gutkind, (selection)	
9	Discussion of research projects	
Nov 12	return to <i>In Fact</i> , Gutkind, (selection)	
14	return to <i>In Fact</i> , Gutkind, (selection)	
16	return to <i>In Fact</i> , Gutkind, (selection)	<u>ESSAY 5</u>
Nov 19	Preparations for Oral Presentations, example	
21 – 23	Thanksgiving Recess	
Nov 26	Oral Presentations in class	
28	Oral Presentations in class	
30	Oral Presentations in class	
Dec 3	Oral Presentations in class	
5	Oral Presentations in class	

7 Oral Presentations in class

Dec 10 (last day for MWF classes): Research papers due; Reflective Essay due

Dec 12: Reading Day

Dec 14: 9:00-12:00, Final Exam for 9A classes

Notes on the Research Paper process in stages

1. Issues in Life Writing list will be discussed in class during the first book.
2. First library research class will introduce you to the genre of life writing in terms of research resources.
3. As we read individual essays and/or book chapters, examine them for issues in life writing that appeal to you.
4. Peruse the *American Memoirs* book for an author you want to study in greater depth.
5. Then, in conversation with me, develop a topic fairly early in the semester and begin reading for your research paper.
6. The research paper process involves a number of distinct stages, each of which involves a particular task. We will use several online resources to discuss each of these stages as we organize the paper into useful and doable stages. You will have several short assignments on these stages—the exploratory essay/pgphs, the bibliography, the outline, etc.