

Oxford College of Emory  
English 101-9A: Ethics of Life Writing and Memoirs  
Spring 2010  
Humanities 201; MWF 9:35-10:25

Dr. Jeff Galle  
Office & hours: Seney 407;  
M-F, 2:00-3:30; and appts.  
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### **Required Texts**

Eakin, Paul John, ed. *The Ethics of Life Writing*.  
Burroughs, Augusten. *Running with Scissors*.  
Frey, James. *A Million Little Pieces*.

### **Course Description**

English 101 is a writing course, and the approach we will take is to gain a good deal of experience in two genres, autobiographical and biographical writing. Life writing includes both of these genres, as well as other genres like travel writing.

This course in life writing possesses several features—readings about the decisions that writers make in writing their own life story or the life of another person, discussion of the ethics involved in what to include and exclude, and readings from two ‘bogus’ memoirs that will illustrate the interesting (if fictional) writings of people who have purported to be writing true accounts of their lives.

We plan to include a TPSL (Theory-Practice Service Learning) project with Newton County High School students and the historical archives in Woodruff Library of Emory University. We plan to work with historical documents written by former Emory students, learn how to publish them on the web using .xml language, and then teach the Newton County High School students how to do this as well. This component involves the coordination of scheduling with Newton County High School teachers.

### **Course objectives**

1. Relative to various rubric criteria, student writing will improve.
2. Students will gain knowledge of life writing.
3. Students will gain knowledge of issues and decisions that writers make in writing versions of their own or another’s life.
4. Students will gain knowledge of historical letters, the questions they raise, and the technology used to place them in an electronic format.
5. Students will sharpen their skill in teaching other students how to work with historical documents, how to publish them on the web, and how to analyze the documents for related issues.

### **Assignments in General**

1. Short assignments on these readings will frequently be done out of class and submitted through Blackboard. Each student will have responsibility of leading/facilitating class discussion of readings (after the first two weeks).

2. Six essays (800-1200 words), most of them working with the autobiographical materials of your own that we develop and/or the material you have generated from the materials of the course. 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 reflections on your writing.
3. One formal paper (10 pages) requiring outside sources, MLA documentation, an in depth treatment of an issue, and an oral presentation to class on the paper. Topics to be decided upon as we discuss the various issues raised by the course content.
4. A final exam with questions covering content of the course, including the genre of life writing, the bogus memoirs, and the issues related to the historical documents.

### **Grading of the Assignments and Assigned Weights of Each**

Assignments/facilitation	15%	(mult. 1-pg assns; facilitation; TPSL)
6 essays	60%	(essentially one ~ every two weeks)
Formal Paper	15%	
Final exam	10%	

\*\*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.

### **Readings, Assignments, Due dates**

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

<u>READINGS/ASSIGNMENTS</u>	<u>DUE DATES*</u>
January 13, 15: “Why is it that I never . . .” (for Friday discussion of rubric and grading) Syllabus and course outline Eakins: Introduction	
January 18 <i>Martin Luther King Holiday</i>	
January 20, 22 Eakins: Chapters 1, 2	Essay 1
January 25, 27, 29: Eakins: Chapters 3, 4	
February 1, 3, 5	Essay 2

Eakins: Chapters 5, 6		
February 8, 10, 12		
Eakins: Chapters 6, 7		
February 15, 17, 19		
Eakins: Chapters 8, 9		
February 22, 24, 26		Essay 3
Eakins: Chapters 10, 11		
March 1, 3, 5		
Scissors:		<u>Complete reading by March 1</u>
Issues, assignments, and discussion		
March 8-12	Spring recess	
March 15, 17, 19		Essay 4
Scissors: issues, assignments, and discussion		
March 22, 24, 26		
Scissors: Issues, assignments, and discussion		
March 29, 31, April 2		Essay 5
Little Pieces:		<u>Complete reading by March 29<sup>th</sup></u>
Issues, assignments, and discussion		
April 5, 7, 9		
Little Pieces: Issues, assignments, and discussion		
April 12, 14, 16		Essay 6
Little Pieces: Issues, assignments, and discussion		
April 19, 21, 23		Formal Paper Due
Review of Life writing issues, MLA style sheet, rubric, final drafting of research paper, preparation for final exam.		
April 26	Last day of class for MWF classes	
April 28	Reading Day	
April 29 – May 5	Final Exams Week	EXAM

### **Other Responsibilities and Related Matters**

1. **Portfolio Pilot Project.** Oxford has begun a student portfolio project this semester with a pilot project for all writing classes. We will work together on creating a portfolio of your writing. Extra credit points will be awarded upon completion of this project.
2. **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.
3. **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.
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 day that an essay (or other work) is late, I will deduct a letter grade from that paper (or other work).
5. **Mr. Mark Swails** is our library support person, and he will be leading training sessions for you at different points in the semester. So attending these sessions during class time is required.