

XIDS 2100-03
Memoirs by Women
M/W 3:30-4:45pm
Spring 2017

Professor: Pam Murphy

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Office: TLC 1114-B

Office Hours: M/W 5-6:30 p.m., T/Th 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.; and by appointment

Writing Center: T/TH 12 p.m.-1:30 p.m., by appointment

Course Description:

Over the course of the semester, we will examine life writing (in various formats) by women, considering how self representation moves beyond the limitations of the imagination through recounting and retelling of reality and experience. Drawing on book length and short story memoir, as well as film adaptations of memoir by women, we will consider life writing theory and the ways in which women perceive, present, and write about crises, family, self, history, and experience.

We will focus on short stories and book length memoir as mediums for examining how women represent themselves and their experiences in first-hand accounts. Our discussions will consider questions about self-editing or self-revision, as well as the influence of audience on how life writing is shaped and presented. Film adaptations of memoir by women will allow us to consider how the original voice and presentation of the author is either maintained or altered for the visual audience, and to theorize about what these adaptations signify.

By examining the similarities and differences in which creative life writing by women is represented in text and in film adaptation, students can consider and think critically not only about why certain choices are made in regard to audience, but also about how those choices alter, impact, or enhance the receptions of those texts in various forms. This will be an exercise in both understanding how we as audience read texts across disciplines, as well as how we impact the ways in which authors and directors write or present the texts in various formats.

Specific Course Objectives:

1. Students will appreciate the implications of theoretical and critical approaches to life writing by women.
2. Students will develop enhanced cultural awareness and analytical skills.
3. Students will gain enhanced awareness of the pleasures of reading, thinking about, writing, and discussing memoir and film.
4. Students will understand the relevant social, historical, and aesthetic contexts of the representations of women in creative nonfiction.
5. Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and of the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

General Learning Outcomes of All XIDS Classes:

1. To establish an understanding of the interrelationships among the arts and ideas.
2. To give the student a framework inclusive of the historical settings, cultural forces, and philosophical wellsprings that contribute to the production of artistic works.
3. To experience participating in the performance of a creative, collaborative work of art.

Course Materials:

1. *Written By Herself: Autobiographies of American Women: An Anthology*, Edited by Jill Ker Conway
2. *Lying, A Metaphorical Memoir*, by Lauren Slater
3. *Fat Girl*, by Judith Moore
4. *Autobiography of a Face*, by Lucy Grealy
5. Various shorter texts made available via CourseDen and my website.
6. A notebook/journal to bring to class daily.
7. Access to a printer.
8. Access to *Wild*, Jean-Marc Vallée's film adaptation of Cheryl Strayed's memoir
9. Access to *Eat, Pray, Love*; Ryan Murphy's film adaption of Elizabeth Gilbert's book

Expectations

I expect you to:

- Display a working knowledge of the syllabus
- Attend all classes, arriving on time with relevant materials in hand
- Participate fully and respectfully in class discussions
- Remain attentive and engaged throughout the class period
- Submit quality work, complete and on time
- Communicate promptly with me about any concerns

Ultimately, your success depends on how much time, energy, and effort you are willing to put into the class. I am only in control over one hundred percent of my own effort, but I promise you will always receive my full effort. I hope to have the same from you.

Major Assignments and Grade Breakdown:

Major Assignments and Grading Procedures:

- Response Essay (2-3 pages) 20%
- Class Participation (quizzes, journal, group work) 20%
- Midterm 20%
- Final Exam 20%
- Creative Project 20%

- **Response Essay (20%):** You will be asked to write a 2-3 page researched response concerning a theme/text discussed in class. You will be given formal essay topics that will be posted on my website. This essay must be written in MLA format, be thoughtfully written, and adhere to standard written English. A formal grading rubric is available on my website. NOTE: Since this is a QEP course, you do have access to the Smarthinking free online tutoring service. You can access this on our class Course Den page. If you use this service, please allow 48 hours for a reply.
- **Class Participation (20%):** In this class we will do a variety of in-class activities including quizzes and group work, and you will be expected to maintain a journal for your in-class response writing. In addition you will be expected to:

- A. Write one formal response paragraph, **assigned on Monday, January 23rd**. I will provide the topic for this response. The assignment should be a typed, well-developed paragraph, double-spaced and in MLA format. Your submitted response should include the following:
- 1.) A proper MLA formatted heading:
 - a. Your Name
 - b. Professor Murphy
 - c. XIDS 2100
 - d. Date (25 January 2017)
 - 2.) A centered title (for example: Response Paragraph #1)
 - 3.) A double-spaced, well-developed paragraph responding to the topic.

NOTE: Response paragraphs are due in hard copy and electronically via CourseDen dropbox at the beginning of class on Wednesday, Jan. 25th.

- B. Design a formal presentation about a course text of your choosing, to be presented to the class either April 10 or April 12. Your presentation should address some or all of the following:
- Consider your own questions, as well as the ones posited below:
 - How does the author establish the theme(s) of the text?
 - What literary devices does the text employ? What are the effects?
 - In what ways does the text challenge cultural assumptions about women? In what ways does it promote cultural stereotypes?
 - What does the text reveal about personal negotiations of identity--of self, other, and community?

- **Exams (20% each):** You will be given a midterm and a final exam that measures what you have learned throughout the course. It will be in a traditional format consisting of short answer, identifications, and a brief response essay.
- **Creative Project (20%):** You have two options for this project, which can be submitted in written or video/podcast format:
 1. Consider one of the course texts (or an approved memoir/autobiography/travel text by a woman) and reimagine the text as a film adaptation.
 - a. Provide a brief recap of the text, i.e. its premise, but also its literary devices; HOW is the story told (3/4 page OR two minutes);
 - b. Theorize about why the story is framed and presented the way it is (3/4 page OR two minutes);
 - c. Present a film adaptation proposal that includes suggested actors/actresses AND the details of one particular passage/scene as you would adapt it to the big screen (1.5-2 pages OR 3-5 minutes); who and what is in the scene, where would you shoot it, in what ways would you stay true to the original or veer away from it? WHY would you make these choices?
 2. **OR** Write a short nonfiction story or make a short video or podcast (4 pages / 7-8 minutes) about a personal experience, a historical event, or a family gathering. Use one of the course texts as a point of reference for your own story, paying attention to the author's use of concrete detail, flashback, history, toggling, funneling, dialogue, monologue, metaphor, etc. Make deliberate choices about when to tell and when to show, about not just the meaning of your words but also how they sound, about who your expected audience will be and how you want them to receive and respond to your story. Remember that you can use lies to get at the truth. Be creative and have fun.

QEP (Quality Enhancement Plan)

This is a QEP Course. Clear written communication is important in all disciplines, and increasingly employers are expecting college graduates to be good writers. That's one reason UWG is focusing on improving undergraduate student writing across the core. When you hear about the QEP—UWG's Quality Enhancement Plan—know that what your peers and professors are talking about is WRITING, because we are committed to giving you opportunities across your core curriculum to improve the quality of your writing. Want to know more? Visit the QEP website at <http://www.westga.edu/qep/>

Title IX Reporting

As of July 1, 2016, all faculty and staff at public universities in Georgia became mandatory reporters for sexual assault. We are required to report any incidences of sexual assault, and we are not allowed to maintain the information in confidence with the student. **However, if you do want to talk with someone in confidence, please contact the UWG Counseling Center:**

UWG Counseling Center

Location: 123 Row Hall

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

Phone: (678) 839-6428

Email: counseling@westga.edu

Discussion of Work

I will not discuss an individual's grade during a class session or in front of other students. Please visit me during my office hours or make an appointment to discuss your work—or other questions you have. For several reasons, I will not discuss any work until the day after I have handed back the assignment. This interval gives you the opportunity to look at my comments and to generate specific questions about improving your essay. On your graded essays, you will see my notes in the margins to help you—make sure you read what I've written before you come to see me!

Office Consultations

Students who seek help outside of class, either from me or the Writing Center, are usually the most successful. An office consultation, whether conducted during scheduled office hours or during a scheduled appointment, is a time for you to meet with me to discuss very specific issues, (i.e., a specific essay, a specific in-class or out-of-class assignment, a specific grade, a specific concern as it relates to your writing, etc.). When you schedule an office consultation, you should come in prepared. Please do not come in, for example, with an essay and say you just want to “go over it.” In order for me to be able to give you the help you need, you need to be specific. For example, if you have an essay you are concerned about, write down exactly what concerns you, (i.e., thesis statement, paragraph development, comma splices, proper MLA format, etc.). This list will give us some guidelines during our consultation and will help to generate discussion.

Other Important Consultation Points:

- ☒ I will not proofread an essay for you; that step is part of your writing process.
- ☒ I will not review entire drafts that are emailed to me; instead, you must schedule an appointment during office hours to discuss specific issues with your draft.
- ☒ You are also not allowed to meet with me about an essay on the day it is due; thus all office consultations must occur prior to the assignment due date.

Late and/or Make-Up Work Policy:

- All late essays will be penalized 1/3 of a letter grade per day late (not per class period) and are no longer accepted for a grade past one week of the deadline (unless you make arrangements with me in advance *and* you have a legitimate medical reason for submitting the work after the deadline). Essays are late when they are not submitted to CourseDen prior to the *beginning* of class on the due date. I will NOT grade your out-of-class work until you submit it in HARD COPY.
- If you arrive to class late and miss an in-class quiz or assignment, or if you miss an in-class quiz or assignment due to an absence, you may not make it up.
- I **do not** accept assignments sent to me via email.

Extra Credit and Previous Work

With all of the above in mind, your best method for getting the best grade should be dependent upon your doing all of the essays and work assigned to the best of your ability. Accordingly, remember the following:

- Do not ask for extra credit. There will be none.

- Any work completed for another course **will not be accepted** in this course.

Course Requirements & Policies:

Attendance and Participation Requirements: This is a writing- and reading-intensive course. Consequently, careful preparation and active participation are crucial to your success in this course. I expect you to be present and on time for all class meetings. Readings and homework exercises should be completed in advance of each class. You should be prepared to participate actively by volunteering to share ideas related to class discussions OR by simply asking questions. Remember: if you do not understand something presented in class, ask!

·If you find it unavoidable to miss class, be aware of the following guidelines: Your regular participation in this class is a vital part of its success. **Each student is allotted up to four absences--no more. Upon the fifth absence, you will receive an "F" in the course.** Therefore, if you suspect that outside responsibilities might cause you to miss more than four classes, then you should consider taking the course at another time. Note: The English Department draws no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. March 2, 2017, is the last day to withdraw from class with a "W" (without incurring a WF).

Other Important Attendance Points:

1. Tardies will also be counted as part of the attendance requirements. A student is considered tardy if he/she arrives to class after I do. Note: two tardies will equal one absence.
2. Sleeping or disruptive behavior at any time during the class period will be treated as an absence.
3. I do not make lecture notes etc. available to students who missed class (so please get in touch with a fellow student).
4. Bring ALL required materials to class every day. It is the instructor's prerogative to dismiss students who come to class without the required materials. ****The attendance policy also applies with these kinds of dismissals.****

Disruptive Behavior

Students will be dismissed from any class meeting during which they exhibit behavior that disrupts the learning environment of others. Such behavior includes—but is not limited to—arriving late for class, allowing cell phones to ring, rude actions or behavior, speaking disrespectfully to the instructor and/or to other students, texting, checking email or surfing the web, and using personal audio or video devices. Each dismissal of this kind will count as an absence and will be applied toward the attendance requirements policy above. Repeated instances of disruptive behavior will result in judicial processing. For more information, refer to UWG's disruptive behavior policy.

Email Policy: Be aware that an email asking questions about an essay CANNOT replace an actual meeting with me during office hours. It is difficult to respond to your questions and your needs strictly via email, especially if your questions are general. I welcome any email correspondence you wish to have with me; however, this type of correspondence is best used only when you have a very *specific* question that doesn't require discussion. **Please Note:** The official email communication method will be through campus e-mail (MyUWG). I do not regularly check CourseDen email, so any correspondence sent through that medium will likely result in delayed response time.

Disability Pledge:

- I pledge to do my best to work with the University to provide all students with equal access to my classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc.
- If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make these known to me, either yourself or through Accessibility Services in 272 Parker Hall at (678) 839-6428.
- Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. This is not only my personal commitment: it is your right, and it is the law!
- For more information, please contact Accessibility Services at the University of West Georgia.

Resources for Writing Instruction: 1) I will gladly assist you in the writing process and with any concerns you may have in the course; 2) my website (see Literacy Tools, sample essays, etc.); 3) the University Writing Center (UWC), located in the Parkman Room, TLC 1201. The UWC is a student support center designed to offer writing-related consultation that will help you engage with and improve your own writing. Tutors are specifically trained to avoid appropriating the student's work, and will instead help you identify areas for improvement and will encourage effective revision. For more information on appointments, hours, and policies, visit the Writing Center online at <http://www.westga.edu/~writing>.

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. See also: excessive collaboration.

The University policies for handling Academic Dishonesty are found in the following documents:

The Faculty Handbook, sections 207 and 208.0401:

http://www.west_ga.edu/~vpaa/handrev/

Student Uncatalog: "Rights and Responsibilities"; Appendix E:

<http://www.westga.edu/handbook/1576.php>

Student Uncatalog: "Rights and Responsibilities"; Honor Code:

<http://www.westga.edu/handbook/59.php>

Excessive Collaboration

Students should demonstrate the ability to produce *independent writing* (writing without collaborative assistance of peers, writing tutors, or professionals in the field) that shows an acceptable level of competence. Although classroom activities and out-of-class assignments may highlight collaborative learning and collaborative research, *excessive collaboration* (collaboration that results in the loss of a student's voice/style and original claims to course-related work) is considered another form of academic dishonesty and therefore will not be permitted.

Plagiarism always results in an automatic F for the course, and I will report the case to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Assessment & Guidelines:

- See my website to check the English Department's guidelines for out-of-class writing assessment (rubrics). The following chart will be used when calculating your numerical grade at the end of the semester with regard to letter grades received on out-of-class essays:

A+=98 A=95 A-=92

B+=88 B=85 B-=82

C+=78 C=75 C-=72

D+=68 D=65 D-=62

F=50

(***At times, I will "split" grades to indicate work that falls between two standard grading categories. For example, a student might receive an A-/B+, which translates mathematically to a 90.)

Questions or Concerns:

If ever you have a question, comment, or concern regarding your success in my class, please feel free to:

- Call or visit during my office hours: TLC 1114B; 678-839-4885
- Send me an email: pamm@westga.edu

Please understand that the life of a professor can sometimes be hectic. Therefore, allow me at least 24 hours to return your email or voicemail. If you do not get a response, please do not give up. Feel free to try again. I want to help you succeed in this course.

Students should review the following information each semester, because these statements are updated as federal, state, university, and accreditation standards change:

http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

XIDS 2100-03
M/W 3:30-4:45
PAFFORD 110
Spring 2017 Readings and Assignments

Note: Readings and assignments are due on the day they are listed on the syllabus. Changes or additions to the readings may occur throughout the semester. These will be announced in class.

January

- M 1/9 Fundamentals of reading and interpretation. Analytical Exercise: Denise Levertov's "The Secret" & a segment from Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (part six). Copies of the texts will be provided.
- W 1/11 Syllabus & Policies. Life writing exercise and discussion. **Open Drop ends at 4:00 pm Wednesday, January 11th. No dropping classes with a refund after this date.**
- M 1/16 MLK Holiday: NO CLASS**
- W 1/18 Read selections (see website) from Sidonie Smith's and Julia Watson's *Reading Autobiography* AND from *Women, Autobiography, Theory*. Discussion of Jamaica Kincaid's "A Small Place" excerpt (available on my website). Journaling: free writing in response to readings. Syllabus quiz. Plagiarism discussion. How to succeed in 2100.
- M 1/23 Read *Lying* through page 120). First response paragraph assigned. Discuss text. Place text in conversation with life writing theory.
- W 1/25 Finish *Lying*. Response paragraph due. Practice idea generation. Group writing.
- M 1/30 Identifying literary devices in Slater's text. Discuss how these devices impact audience. Theorize about Slater's choices.

February

- W 2/1 Read selections from *Written by Herself*. Journaling: personal response to one essay. Discussion.
- M 2/6 Read "Film as Text" linked on my website. Watch film scenes and discuss director's choices, cinematography, mise-en-scène, etc. How is the text making meaning? How is it inviting emotional response? How does it establish conflict? How does it call attention to itself as a film?
- W 2/8 Watch *Wild* before class. Journaling: free writing about the film. What is the film's impact on the audience? What is it asking us to think about? How is it representing women? How is it challenging or upholding cultural expectations about women? How are the directorial choices impacting audience? Use of film clips to support, inform, and invite discussion.
- M 2/13 Read passages from Cheryl Strayed's *Wild* (link available electronically via my website). Discussion of how the film stays true to or changes particular passages/scenes. Why do this? What is the impact? What are the implications?

- W 2/15 Group work: building a body paragraph using an instructor-provided topic sentence in response to the film. Discuss group work. Essay one assigned.
- M 2/20 *Read first half of [Fat Girl](#)*. Discussion and in-class response writing.
- W 2/22 *Finish [Fat Girl](#)*. Discussion and in-class response writing. Midterm assigned: to be completed in CourseDen dropbox by 11:59 p.m. on Monday 2/27.
- M 2/27 *Submit midterm by 11:59 p.m. in CourseDen dropbox*. Discuss fragments, run-ons, number agreement, and MLA. Thesis discussion. Essay development discussion. Practice: sample essay assessment. Essay one assigned. Discuss essay timeline: avoiding Mt. Everest.

March

- W 3/1 *Watch [Eat, Pray, Love](#)*. Discuss the film. Talk about the presentation, how it's framed, how it makes meaning. Who is the audience? What does the film suggest about the self and how the self copes with or recovers from disappointment, emotional pain, failure, etc.?
- T 3/2 **Last day to withdraw with a W. Withdrawals after this date will result in a grade of WF.** *Read additional [Elizabeth Gilbert](#) links on my website*. Discuss memoir as self-help text. Echoes of Ben Franklin?
- M 3/6 Individual conferences in lieu of class to discuss essay one progress.
- W 3/8 Individual conferences in lieu of class to discuss essay one progress.
- M 3/13 Writing Day.
- W 3/15 **Essay One Due: turn in electronically via CourseDen prior to the beginning of class AND bring a hard copy to submit AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS.**
- M 3/20 Spring Break.**
- W 3/22 Spring Break.**
- M 3/27 *Read [Autobiography of a Face](#) through page 160*. Reading quiz. Discuss reading. Analytical exercise: selections from the reading. Journaling: free write in response to the text / signs from your reading. Final project assigned.
- W 3/29 *Finish [Autobiography of a Face](#)*. Reading quiz. Discuss reading. Analytical exercise: selections from the reading. Journaling: free write in response to the text / signs from your reading.

April

- M 4/3 Read selections from Meghan Daum's *My Misspent Youth* prior to class today. Discuss authorial choices, intended audience, and initial response to the essays.
- W 4/5 Continue Daum discussion. Craft group responses to specific passages: construct a thesis and two claims. Present either critical analysis of the text itself or critical analysis of the author's use of specific literary devices.
- M 4/10 Class presentations.
- W 4/12 Class presentations.
- M 4/17 Individual Conferences for final project.
- W 4/19 Individual Conferences for final project.
- M 4/24 Final review.
- W 4/26** Writing day.

May

- M 5/1** Course Evaluations. Course outcomes and experience discussion.
- M 5/8 **Final 2-4:30: Final project due electronically ONLY by 11:59p.m. via CourseDen.**

Note well: Grades will be posted to BanWeb by noon on May 15. No grades will be distributed via phone or email.

IMPORTANT: Red font indicates an assignment or prep work to be completed and/or submitted prior to class.