

EN2721: THE ART OF LIFE NARRATIVE

Effective Term

Semester A 2022/23

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

The Art of Life Narrative

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

2721

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

GE2407 Reading Lives, Writing Selves: Autobiography and Culture

Part II Course Details

Abstract

' The Art of Life Narrative' is an English course that aims to introduce students to the theory and practice of life narrative in diverse forms. Combining a thematic focus on questions such as identity, gender, history and language with discussion

of forms, students will read a variety of texts, such as autobiographical essays, memoir, diary, graphic narrative and documentaries, produced in different cultural and historical contexts. This course adopts a discovery-based approach and emphasizes students' self-reflexivity and engagement with their own life when exploring, as well as composing, life narratives of the others and those of their own.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Recognize formal elements—structures, narrative perspectives, style, rhetorical strategies, etc.—in life narratives and explore how they may represent issues of contemporary interest.		x	
2	Analyze the theoretical, aesthetic, and creative aspects of life writing evidenced by the particular structures, styles, and thematic elements in each text.	x	x	x
3	Apply critical thinking and reading skills in the interpretation of diverse life narratives, highlighting their local and global significance, and identifying connections among different traditions.	x	x	x
4	Reflect on their own learning processes and engage with their own life experience when composing their own creative and critical work.	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

TLAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures Critical introductions to essential concepts and theories open the discussions of specific texts. Students will also be asked to contribute to the discussion.	1, 2	

2		<p>Group Life Writing Project</p> <p>Students will form small groups to build a webpage/blog to engage with one of the key themes of life writing – ‘memory and place’ . They will combine texts and images to engage with a place of their choice. They will share their group project in class.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	
3		<p>Critical essay</p> <p>Students will demonstrate their understanding and application of their theoretical readings, as well as their knowledge of critical and creative concepts, by writing reasoned discussion of particular texts or issues</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	
4		<p>In-Class Reading and Creative Responses</p> <p>Students will compose a range of critical reading and creative responses throughout the course. They will deploy creative concepts, narrative techniques and critical reading skills that they acquire in classes to short writing tasks and group discussions.</p>	2, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks
1	<p>In-Class Reading and Creative Responses</p> <p>Students will compose a range of short in-class reading and creative responses to selected texts and topics throughout the course. They are also expected to participate in in-class discussion and activities.</p>	2, 4	25	Individual Work
2	<p>Critical Essay (1200-1500 words)</p> <p>Students will write a critical essay on a topic relating to the genre of life writing. They will demonstrate their understanding and application of their theoretical readings by critically analysing one or two literary text/s.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	40	Individual Work
3	<p>Group Life Writing Project</p> <p>Students will form small groups to build a webpage/blog that engages with the theme 'memory and place' in relation to the life stories of their own as well as those who dwell and/or work in the city. Students will need to share their project with the whole class upon completion.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4	35	Group Work

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Critical Essay

Criterion

Argumentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Thesis is clear and appropriate for the writing task. There is a sense of originality in the way the writer has answered the question. Ideas are well supported and conclusions reveal a progression of ideas

Good (B+, B, B-)

The responses contain sharp ideas that are clearly expressed, original, and thoughtfully supported.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Elements of B and D

Marginal (D)

The topic is clear but there is little originality in the way that the writer has answered the question. Ideas are not always supported. There is little sense of progression as the paper develops.

Failure (F)

The essay appears to be off topic or only loosely related to the task. The writer may have misunderstood the question.

Assessment Task

Critical Essay

Criterion

Language

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction.

Marginal (D)

There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear

Failure (F)

Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.

Assessment Task

Critical Essay

Criterion

Engagement

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Sophisticated critical reading and interpretative skills apparent.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The discussion of the primary texts is appropriate and sufficiently detailed. There is a sense of the writer critically engaging with the texts.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Elements of B and D

Marginal (D)

Some discussion of the primary texts, but mostly in general and broad terms. The selection of primary texts may not be appropriate for the task. Citation methods are not clear or inconsistently applied.

Failure (F)

Very little if any engagement with the primary texts

Assessment Task

Critical Essay

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The written assignments are extremely well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Good (B+, B, B-)

The written assignments are well presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The written assignments are adequately presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Marginal (D)

The written assignments are poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Failure (F)

The written assignments are very poorly presented in terms of font, layout, spacing, headings, and citation

Assessment Task

In-Class Reading and Creative Responses

Criterion

Engagement and Support

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a very detailed understanding of the course readings. Demonstrates creative and original thought; show a deep self-reflexivity and engagement with the self. Specific and accurate support

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant texts with some specific support. Demonstrates some creative and thoughtful ideas; gives a sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrates fairly good understanding of relevant texts, but lacking in detail. There may be some inaccuracies. The sense of self-reflexivity needs to be strengthened.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrates a superficial understanding of relevant texts. Support is not always detailed or accurate. Little attempt to engage with the self; a lack of self-reflexivity.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content. Failed to demonstrate any attempt to engage with one's self.

Assessment Task

In-Class Reading and Creative Responses

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas of the response are sharp, creative, and compelling.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The response is coherent and contains some elements of creativity and originality.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Main ideas are mostly clear but the response may be lacking in terms of specific or original ideas.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are not always clear and the response appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

The response appears to be off topic or ideas are generally incoherent.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas are original, thoughtful and demonstrates a strong engagement with the genre of life writing.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The main ideas are thoughtful and contains elements of originality. It demonstrates an engagement with the genre of life writing.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

There are some interesting ideas, though the project appears to be lacking in terms of original/thoughtful ideas. It demonstrates an attempt to engage with the genre of life writing.

Marginal (D)

The project appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance. It has a minimal engagement with the genre of life writing.

Failure (F)

The project ideas are generally incoherent, or irrelevant to the chosen topic. Failed to engage with the genre of life writing.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Engagement and Support

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are very well expressed and supported. Demonstrates a deep sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self and the others.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are well-articulated and supported. Demonstrates a good sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self and the others.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are to a large extent conveyed. Demonstrates a sense of self-reflexivity and an attempt to engage with the self and the others.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are unclear. A weak sense of self-reflexivity and little attempt to engage with the self and the others.

Failure (F)

Failed to convey the main ideas of the project. Failed to give any sense of self-reflexivity or engagement with the self and the others.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The life writing project is extremely well-presented. The chosen approach succeeds in bringing out the major features and ideas of the project.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The life writing project is well-presented. The chosen approach to a large extent brings out the major features and ideas of the project.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The life writing project is to a large extent clearly presented. The chosen approach may not bring out all the key features and ideas of the project.

Marginal (D)

The life writing project is not effectively presented. The chosen approach is not effective in bringing out the key ideas of the project.

Failure (F)

The presentation appears to be incoherent and is in lack of consideration.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Autobiography, life writing, narrative, identity, culture, history, language, memory, experience, place

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Eva Hoffman, <i>Lost in Translation</i>
2	Orhan Pamuk, <i>Istanbul: Memories of a City</i> (selections)
3	Spiegelman, Art, <i>MAUS Complete</i> (graphic novel)
4	Woolf, Virginia, <i>Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings</i> (selections)
5	Other primary texts will be distributed by the instructor before the start of the course
6	Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. <i>Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives</i> (Second Edition). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. (selections)
7	Bill Roorbach. <i>Writing Life Stories</i> . Ohio: F&W Publications, 2008. (selections)

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Anderson, Linda. <i>Autobiography</i> . London: Routledge, 2001.
2	Eakin, Paul John. <i>How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves</i> . Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
3	Engel, Susan. <i>Context is Everything: The Nature of Memory</i> . New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1999.
4	Olney, James, ed. <i>Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical</i> . Princeton: Princeton University, 1980.
5	Gornick, Vivian. <i>The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative</i> . New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
6	Zinsser, William. <i>On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction</i> . New York: HarperCollins, 2006. (selections)