

Honors Seminar V & V1: Creative Non-fiction

The Honors College, Florida International University

IDH 3034-3035-

IDH 4008 U06 —

Instructor: Elizabeth Hanly,

Tuesdays: 2:00p.m. –4:45 p.m. **Classroom: DM 193**

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Overview:

"To survive we tell stories," says Umberto Eco, philosopher, medieval scholar and novelist. This is a course in storytelling, in writing and reading creative nonfiction. It is a course in finding the stories that are all around us all the time. This course is as much about developing one's skills in listening and reflection as it is about writing. Students will divide their time between telling their own stories (personal essays) and telling the stories of others (oral history). Work along the lines of NPR's "The Story" and "The American Life" will be produced. Students would acquaint themselves with those shows; they would read some of the giants of the creative non-fiction genre, including Joan Didion and James Baldwin, as well as anthologies edited by John D'Agata and Philip Lopate. My goal: to guide the students to recognize the heart of a narrative and to ease their way towards understanding how to construct a story or essay around that heart.

Course Outcomes: At the end of this course, students will recognize the heart of a narrative. Or in more concrete terms, students will understand how to write both more succinctly and with more power. Students will have developed skills in interviewing techniques. Students will have developed more interest, let alone understanding of The Other as he/she lingers over and writes the story of the life experience of many "Others."

Global Learning Outcomes:

Global Awareness- Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.

Global Perspective- Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.

Global Engagement- Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems and be able to articulate the causes and contributions to these problems through the paradigm of aesthetics, values and authority.

Global Learning Co-curricular Activity

Students will perform at least twenty hours of Community Service per academic year either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.

Creative Non-fiction

Since time immemorial, stories have been the way humankind tells itself what it knows and values. As students read the great essayists of today's America, let alone Latin America, Africa and Asia, they will examine how those writers understand the human condition in this country and the wider world. As students write their own essays, their own understanding will be deepened. Finally, as the students gather their oral histories ---they may be undertaking topics as varied as the experiences of the Russian midgets who settled Sweetwater to how small children deal with loss to how veterans from Cuba's war in Angola remember their experience-- - they will inescapably understand the interrelatedness of humankind.

Required Reading:

Students will be responsible for purchasing and reading the following books during the spring semester:

- Phillip Lopate: "The Art of the Personal Essay." (ISBN:0-385-42339-X)
- John D'Agata (ed): "The Next American Essay." (ISBN:1-55597-374-2)
- Joan Didion: "Vintage Didion." (ISBN: 1-4000-3393-4)

Students will be provided with additional short reading assignments (PDFs) and/or listening or viewing assignments (available on the internet) as particular class interests and issues develop.

Course Requirements:

Participation (20%) The course will be conducted as a seminar. You are expected to come to class prepared and participate fully in the discussions.

Personal Essays (40%). You will write three personal essays of about 750 words each. The first essay will be on a memory that will not let you go. The second essay will be a second essay on the same topic. The third essay will be on a topic of your choosing, although I must approve the topic.

Semester Oral History Project (40%) Students will chose an individual, or series of individuals and tell their story through the written word and/or edited voice recording and/or video/slide presentation. All topics must be approved by me. Students may work individually or in small teams.

Please note:All written work must consistently adhere to a writing style manual of the student's choice (e.g., Chicago, Turabian, MLA, etc.). You are advised to carefully proofread *all* papers before submitting them. (Students with deficient writing skills should consult the university's free tutoring services: *On-Campus Learning Center*: PC 247; *Online Learning Center*: w3.fiu.edu.)

You are expected to adhere to the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) of The Honors College and Florida International University

Grading Scale

This scale displays the minimum number of points that you need to earn for each letter grade.

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
93	89	85	80	75	70	65	60	55	50	45	<45

Class Schedule

- **8-21-17**--Intro to Course, including discussion of assignments and expectations.
Written assignment: 2-3 page essay on "a memoir that will not let you go." Reading assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 306-363.
- **8-28-17**--Critique of "memory" papers. Discussion of Reading Assignment.
Introduction to interviewing techniques. Written assignment: Essay developed from in-class interview. Reading Assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 377-418.

- **9-4-17--** Critique of essay. Discussion of Reading Assignment. More of interviewing. Another round of in-class interviews. Written assignment: Second essay developed from in-class interview. Reading Assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 423-480.
- **9-11-17 --**Critique of essay. Discussion of Reading Assignment. Introduction to Oral History. . Reading Assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 520-577.
- **9-18-17--** Further discussion of Oral History. Guest lecturer on radio as an end itself and as a paradigm. Reading Assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 587-657.
- **9-25-17 --**Class begins short oral history project. "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 693-716. Initial essay due the following week.
- **10-02-17 --**Discussion and initial oral history interviewing experience. Reading Assignment: "The Art of the Personal Essay" pp 716-771. Another piece of the oral history project due the following week.
- **10-9-17--**Discussion of where chosen semester projects stand and how better to perhaps implement them. Reading Assignment: "Vintage Didion"pp1-100.
- **10-16-17--** Workshop on semester projects. Reading Assignment: "Vintage Didion"pp101-196.
- **10- 23-17 ---**Workshop on semester projects. "The Next American Essay": pp 21-45; pp123-137.
- **10- 30-17--**Workshop on semester projects. "The Next American Essay": pp 181-225; 293-333.

- **11-6-17**-- Return to the personal essay. Discussion of former essays in the light of oral history experience. Written assignment: personal essay. "The Next American Essay": pp 181-225; 293-333.
- **11-13-17** --Critique of those essays. Written assignment: personal essay. "The Next American Essay": pp 391-467.
- **11-20-17** --Final discussion of personal essay for the semester.

Attendance/Classroom Etiquette:

Class attendance is an important component of your grade. You will be allowed one unexcused absence or one unexcused instance of tardiness, no questions asked, with no penalty. Note, this is one absence OR one lateness, not one of each (the logical OR function, not the logical AND function). Any additional absence will incur a 12 point penalty per occurrence. Additional lateness occurrences are penalized as follows; 0-5 minutes: no penalty, 5-20 minutes: 6 points, >20 minutes: 12 points. If you notify your professor before class, these penalties may be excused for emergency situations at the discretion of the professor. If you do not notify the professor before class, there is no possibility of waiving the penalty. Since professors will only consider waving the penalty for extreme emergencies, we suggest that you save your one excused absence until the end of the semester.

The use of laptops, cellular phones, or any other devices for voice or text communication is prohibited.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

FIU Academic Misconduct Statement

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellence in teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity

to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct that demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Honors College Student Handbook.

Academic misconduct includes:

- *Cheating* – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources, or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations or other work; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. Cheating violates both University and College codes.
- *Plagiarism* – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source, and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including Internet sources, commits plagiarism. Plagiarism violates both University and College codes.
- *Unacceptable behavior* – Students who show repeated or egregious disrespect for classmates or instructors, are disruptive, or consistently violate course rules are subject to the sanctions of the Honors College.

Registration in this course implies an acceptance of and compliance with the Honors College policies for students and the FIU Code of Academic Integrity. Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

FIU Code of Academic Integrity – <http://www.fiu.edu/~dwyere/academicintegrity.html>

FIU Honors College Plagiarism Policy –
http://honors.fiu.edu/current_policy_plagiarism.html

Religious Observances

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students whose religious practices coincide with class requirements or scheduling. Please make sure to notify your instructor at the beginning of the semester of which dates you will be absent or any anticipated problems with completing course work.

Physical, Mental and Sensory Challenges

Every effort will be made, where feasible and practical, to accommodate students who are so challenged. Should you require accommodations, contact the Disability Resource Center, if you have not done so already.

Honors College Requirements

Student Portfolios

The Honors College will be using a portfolio method to assess students' learning outcomes. The portfolio method allows for maximum flexibility in gauging student learning. Students decide (with instructor consultation) what "artifacts" or assignments to include for consideration in their portfolios to demonstrate successful achievement of each of the student learning outcomes over the 4-year Honors experience. Portfolios provide a rich context for students to show what they have learned and to explain their learning process. Because the Honors curriculum is meant to be thought-provoking and reflective, student self-assessment through portfolios will facilitate learning and provide in-depth assessment. Each course will include at least one assignment that could potentially fit portfolio requirements. For more information on the student learning outcomes and constructing a portfolio for your senior year, see honors.fiu.edu/portfolios.

Academic Misconduct Procedures and Penalties

In The Honors College, the term "honor" refers both to academic accomplishment and character. Students in Honors should therefore adhere to and be held to the highest standards of personal academic accountability. Academic dishonesty in any form, including plagiarism, is antithetical to the very definition of being an Honors student at FIU. Consequently, an Honors College student found responsible for academic misconduct will be dismissed from the College.

An Honors faculty member may bring charges of academic misconduct against an Honors student if the faculty member suspects plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct. The faculty member will decide whether to pursue informal resolution, file formal resolution charges, or take no further action, and will follow the procedures outlined in the Honors College website.

Please refer to the following documents for additional information:

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Citizenship Requirements

All members of the Honors College are expected to be active citizens of the College, the university, and the community at large. To be a committed Honors College student is to take advantage of enhanced learning opportunities and to assume a leadership role in the world. All College members are expected to participate in the community-building activities listed below:

1. Attend one Honors Excellence Lecture per academic year and one Honors Colloquium per semester (fall and spring). (Attendance will be taken).
2. Participate in the Honors College Convocation each Fall. (Attendance will be taken).
3. Attend at least three Honors Hour sessions per semester or enrichment events specified by the Honors College as satisfying this requirement. (Attendance will be taken).
4. Perform at least *twenty* hours of Community Service per academic year (summer excluded) either through the Honors College service partnerships (Sweetwater, Overtown Youth Center, etc.) or through other community service projects and/or events. If you want to apply this service to your graduation portfolio, be sure to document your hours.

GL Learning Outcomes

GL Learning Outcomes for IDH 3034-5

- Global Awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.
 - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.
- Global Perspectives: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.
 - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.
- Global Engagement: Students will be able to demonstrate a willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving.
 - **Course Learning Outcome:** Students will be able to develop solutions to local, global, international, and/or intercultural problems related to aesthetics, values, and authority.

Assignments must be able to assess the students’ ability to demonstrate these outcomes. We will be collecting them at the end of the academic year (spring).

<p><u>Global Awareness:</u> Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural issues, trends, and systems.</p> <p><u>Course Learning Outcome:</u> <i>Students will demonstrate knowledge of the interrelated global dynamics (social-cultural, political, economic, etc.) that shape aesthetics, values, and authority in diverse cultural contexts.</i></p>	<p><u>Assessment Activity/Artifact:</u> <i>Gathering of oral history in Miami: a semester long project</i></p> <p><u>Evaluation Process:</u> <i>Rubric scale 1-5</i></p> <p><u>Sampling:</u> <i>All students in the course will be assessed.</i></p> <p><u>Minimum Criteria for Success:</u> <i>Students will receive a 3 or better on a 5 point rubric.</i></p>	<p><i>Clearly report results. The results should match the format dictated by the criteria for success (e.g., if using percentiles as the criterion, include percentages when reporting the results).</i></p>
<p>Use of Results for Improving Student Learning</p>		

Using the results as a foundation, list strategies that will lead to student learning improvements. Focus on strategies that are sustainable and feasible.

Global Learning Student Learning Outcome	Assessment Method	Assessment Results
<p>Global Perspectives: Students will be able to develop a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural problems.</p> <p>Course Learning Outcome: <i>Students will be able to analyze the multiple global forces that shape their understanding of aesthetics, values, and authority — economic, political, sociological, technological, cultural, etc.</i></p>	<p>Assessment Activity/Artifact: <i>Gathering of Oral History in Miami</i></p> <p>Evaluation Process: <i>Rubric, scale of 1-5</i></p> <p>Sampling: All students in the course will be assessed.</p> <p>Minimum Criteria for Success: <i>Students will achieve a 3 or better on a 5-point rubric.</i></p>	<p><i>Clearly report results. The results should match the format dictated by the criteria for success (e.g., if using percentiles as the criterion, include percentages when reporting the results).</i></p>
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