

Autobiography in American Performance and Literature

Quest 1: The Examined Life

THE 1431: Class # 28129, Section PER4

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2022
- M, W, F | Period 4 (10:40 AM - 11:30 AM)
- [📍ROG 0129](#) - Frazier Rogers Hall, Room 129
- Canvas Website: <https://elearning.ufl.edu/>

Instructor

- Dr. Manuel Simons (they/them/their)
- Office Hours: M, W 3:00 - 5:00 PM and other times by appointment
- [📍YON 0100](#) - Yon Hall, Room 100 or via Zoom
- Email: bmanuel.simons@ufl.edu or via Canvas
- Phone: 352-273-0500

Teaching Assistant

- Jacob Titus
- Office/Hours TBA on Canvas
- Email: jacob.titus@ufl.edu or via Canvas

Course Summary

The course explores the ways in which modern and contemporary American artists and writers have utilized self-examination as the basis for artistic creation. Often merging the factual with the theatrical or dramatic, autobiographical performance and literature personalizes the values, incidents and relationships that shape human experience and give life meaning.

Course Description

Why do we tell stories, and why do we enjoy having them imparted to us? It is perhaps one of the most basic human desires to examine experiences, provide form to them, and relate them to others. It may be posited that the digital era has provided individuals with greater access to storytelling and narrative—in all its variant forms and delivery mediums—than ever before. This era has also seen the

increased positioning of ‘Self’ as the subject of dramatic narratives, ranging from the loosely autobiographical to the openly confessional.

This course explores the ways in which American artists and writers have utilized self-examination as the basis for artistic creation. The course examines the use of autobiography in theatre, film, and literature from the mid-twentieth century to the present. This course will explore such questions as:

- What social or cultural factors provide the context for the autobiographical exploration?
- What risks and rewards do artists and writers take in placing themselves as subjects of public works?
- While a Socratic form of self-examination is a life-long process, what situations or life events may lead to an intensified period of introspection?
- Is there a difference in experiencing an intensely autobiographical work as part of a live, collective audience as opposed to a solitary reading?
- Does autobiographical work encourage self-examination on the part of the viewer/reader?
- What narrative techniques have artists and writers used to relate personal experience, and what are their effects?

These questions and others will be examined through an analysis of specific literary and performance works, short critical essays, class and small group discussion, formal analytical writing, less formal reflective writing, and an out-of-classroom experiential encounter with live theatre performance.

Quest and General Education Credit

- Quest 1
- Humanities (H)
- Diversity (D)
- Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words

This course accomplishes [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives and select *student learning outcomes* (SLOs) of the subject areas listed above. SLOs are the abilities, skills, and knowledge that students will develop by the conclusion of a given course or program of learning.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

By the conclusion of this Quest 1 course, students will be expected to be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain the social and historical contexts, themes and methodologies used in an examination of self and the human condition, with attention to how they characterize diversity as a dynamic concept related to human difference. (*Addresses **Content SLOs** for Gen Ed Humanities & Diversity & Quest 1*)
2. Analyze and evaluate autobiographical literary texts and performances by a diverse group of artists and writers that depict how social inequities and constraints of different groups are constructed and mediated in the United States. (*Addresses **Critical Thinking SLOs** for Gen Ed Humanities & Diversity*)
3. Identify, describe, and explain the methodologies of literature, film, and theatre as they affect the use of autobiography in American performance and literature from mid- twentieth century to the present. (*Addresses **Critical Thinking SLOs** for Gen Ed Humanities & Quest 1*)

4. Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of performance and literary techniques for conveying meaning and purpose to human experience. (*Addresses Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities & Quest 1*)
5. Relate the use of autobiographical literature or performance to one's student experience at UF and after. (*Addresses Connect SLOs for Quest 1*)
6. Create a short literary or stage narrative based on an examination of personal experience. (*Addresses Critical Thinking SLOs for Quest 1*)
7. Formulate and present clear and organized responses to course material in both written and oral formats relevant to the humanities disciplines employed in the course. (*Addresses Communication SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities & Quest 1*)

Students will accomplish the above SLOs via thorough and thoughtful engagement and participation in this course, which includes all components described in this syllabus.

Required Readings and Materials

Reading: There are no textbooks assigned for this course. Instead, shorter readings are assigned throughout the course and available via the class Canvas website. *An important requirement of the course is that students bring to every class a copy of the reading due on the corresponding class date(s).*

Viewing: Film and video viewings are also assigned in this course. Some films/videos will be available via links on the class Canvas website. Other assigned films/videos will be available through the UF Libraries' Databases.

Accessing UF Libraries' Databases:

- If you are on campus and connected to any UF network, you may access the UF Libraries' Databases list directly from: <https://uflib.ufl.edu/>
- If accessing from off-campus, you must login with your UF ID and password. To do so, visit <https://uflib.ufl.edu/using-the-libraries/off-campus-access/> and choose to access via a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or UF Proxy Server (the latter is easiest for fairly short sessions). Once logged in, select "Smathers Libraries" > "Databases" > and the name of the database (for example, "Academic Video Online" or "Digital Theatre+").

Theatergoing: Attendance to a live theatre or dance production is also an important assignment in this course. An on-campus live performance will be selected. The specific production will be selected once the University and local theater schedules are available. ***Ticket cost will be under \$20.***

Recommended Readings and Materials

The following writing and style manuals are recommended but not required:

- Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers, *A Pocket Style Manual*, 8th Ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2017. \$23.99 Kindle/\$42.84 Spiral Bound. [Available on Amazon.](#)
- Purdue University OWL (Free Online) https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html (MLA style preferred for citing sources used in papers/assignments)

II. Graded Work

Participation

- i. Active participation in class discussions, learning activities, and creative workshops.
- ii. In-class writing geared to help you analyze the material and reflect on learning.
- iii. Reliable and punctual attendance at group work prep sessions outside of class.
- iv. Fostering open, proactive, and productive communication with instructor and classmates; cooperating and working respectfully and harmoniously with instructor and classmates; supporting, encouraging, and including all classmates.
- v. Being accountable for your actions and taking responsibility for yourself and your own learning, (including proactive and productive communication with the instructor and classmates); keeping the promises you make to yourself and other people and doing what you say you will do; being an active, not a passive learner.

These actions will help you accomplish SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 as listed above.

Reading & Viewing Responses

Each week throughout most of this course, students will read an *average* of 25 pages and prepare a short response to the reading. The reading responses will: a.) help students think about and process the *meanings* of assigned readings; b.) prepare students for thoughtful participation in class discussions about the readings; c.) enable students to demonstrate how well they understand the readings, which informs the instructor about aspects of the readings that may be unclear to the class, so that the instructor can address those aspects in a subsequent lesson; and, d.) provide opportunities for students to respond to the readings not only with their minds, but also with their hearts—making personal, emotional, or creative connections to the material.

For each reading response, students will respond to a question or prompt provided by the instructor about the week's readings. The format of students' responses will vary according to the directions provided by the instructor. Sometimes, the assignment will call for a response to be written in one or two paragraphs totaling 200 – 225 words. Other times, the assignment will call for a response to be prepared in a creative or multimedia format (e.g., not only text, but also image or photo, audio, or video).

These assignments will help you accomplish SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 as listed above.

Analytical Essay

Students will write an analytical essay that examines and compares two autobiographical works studied in the course. At least one of the two works examined in the essay must be a text; the second work may be a text or film/video. This essay requires that you put forth a claim or *thesis* and present a compelling argument about the two autobiographical works you choose to analyze. Your thesis will necessarily make a claim that pertains to or involves both autobiographical works. You will use evidence from each of the two autobiographical works to support all the main ideas and key points of the argument you make throughout the essay. Your entire argument, including all the evidence you provide, “builds a case” to prove your thesis to be true.

This essay is 1,000 – 1,200 words and will count toward the 2,000-word UF Writing Requirement pending a grade of C or higher in the course.

This assignment will help you accomplish SLOs 2, 3, 4, and 7 as listed above.

Autoethnographic Essay

The word autoethnographic is the adjective form of the word autoethnography. According to rhetoric and composition scholar Danielle Gray (2018), “autoethnography is a study of oneself in order to understand one’s culture.” By examining and analyzing our own experiences, we can gain insight into and draw conclusions about one or more of the cultures that have helped to shape who we are. Each of us are, in fact, members of many cultures and subcultures. In this context, for example, one’s race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic status, gender, or sexual orientation may define one’s cultural affiliation(s). However, one’s culture (or subculture) may also be defined as what one likes to do, where one lives, what one values. For example, one may be part of gaming culture (like *Minecraft* or *Halo* culture), skater culture, music-related culture (like Hip Hop culture or being a “Dead Head” or techno culture), university or sports-related culture (like Gator culture!), or Texan culture or New Yorker culture. Clearly, there are many kinds of culture.

For this assignment, you will write an essay that examines or investigates your own experience (particular moments, relationships, events, etc.) and analyzes what your lived experience reflects about a culture (or subculture) of which you are a member. As with the Analytical Essay described above, this essay requires that you craft a thesis and present a compelling argument about what it means to participate in a culture based on one’s own experience from within that culture. Gray (2018) provided examples of this type of analysis as a rich description of “what it’s like to be ‘x’—a first generation college student or a multi-racial teen from Bellingham, WA, or a female softball player, or an aspiring jazz musician, or a survivor of a terrible car accident, [or] a *World of War Craft* player” or a member of another kind of culture (Gray, 2018). To support your argument, you will draw upon evidence gathered from research into your own experience and at least 2 autobiographical works examined within or outside of this course. You will need to provide enough evidence to support all the main ideas and key points of the argument you make throughout the essay. Your entire argument, including all the evidence you provide, “builds a case” to prove your thesis to be true.

This essay is 1,000 – 1,200 words and will count toward the 2,000-word UF Writing Requirement pending a grade of C or higher in the course.

This assignment will help you accomplish SLOs 1, 2, 5, and 7 as listed above.

Group Presentation

Students will work in small groups to present a 7 – 8-minute presentation based on one of our course readings. As a group, students will imagine or re-imagine a video or stage adaptation of an excerpt of one of our course readings. The format and specifications for these presentations will be discussed further in class and written directions will be provided. An informative handout devised by the group will accompany the presentation and be distributed to the entire class. After the presentation, each student will submit a written self-assessment detailing their specific contributions to the project. The instructor will provide students with guiding questions to be answered in their self-assessments. This project will not be considered complete until the instructor receives the post-presentation self-assessment. Please note: The instructor will afford some class time for groups to work together on the preparation of their presentations. However, groups will also need to do some work outside of class to prepare their presentations.

This assignment will help you accomplish SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 as listed above.

Culminating Project: Memoir Video or Performance

This project represents the culmination of your learning in this course. Using the knowledge and techniques you have gained in this course, you will adapt or reimagine your autoethnographic essay into a video or live performance. During the semester, we will create a rubric of the criteria for a successful adaptation/reimagination, and your project will need to meet these criteria. You are encouraged to think outside of the box (or transform the box or do away with the box altogether) and to take healthy, creative risks to develop a project that is meaningful and powerful for you and your audience.

This assignment will help you accomplish SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 as listed above.

Assignment Evaluation

Assignment	Total Points	Percentage of Grade
Participation	150	15%
Reading Responses (10)	200	20%
Essays (2)	250	25%
Group Presentation	150	15%
Culminating Project	250	25%
TOTAL	1000	100%

Grading Scale

For information on how UF assigns grade points, visit: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>

Grade	Percent	Score
A	93.4 – 100	934-1000
A-	90.0 – 93.3	900-933
B+	86.7 – 89.9	867-899
B	83.4 – 86.6	834-866
B-	80.0 – 83.3	800-833
C+	76.7 – 79.9	767-799
C	73.4 – 76.6	734-766
C-	70.0 – 73.3	700-733
D+	66.7 – 69.9	667-699
D	63.4 – 66.6	634-666
D-	60.0 – 63.3	600-633
E	0-59.9	0-599

Writing Requirement

Satisfactory completion of this course confers 2,000 words towards the UF Writing Requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet learning outcomes of content, communication, critical thinking, and connecting, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

Course grades have two interconnected components: Writing Requirement credit and the overall course grade. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must earn an overall course grade of C or higher AND satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Formatting Written Assignments

Written assignments will be submitted as MS Word (.doc) or Rich Text Format (.rtf) documents to the course site on Canvas. PDFs will NOT be accepted. Papers should be formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. You must include a word-count at the top of the first page. Include your name, course number, date submitted, word-count, and an engaging and appropriate title for each essay.

The Writing Studio

The Writing Studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the Writing Studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Grading Rubrics

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off-topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive, so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Participation Assessment Rubric*

	HIGH QUALITY	COMPETENT	IMPROVEMENT NEEDED	SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT NEEDED
CONTRIBUTION	Student volunteers one or more analytical, well-reasoned, or insightful comments, questions, or observations in every (or almost every) class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are relevant to the topic and supported with evidence from the readings (or other compelling evidence that may support or contradict ideas or concepts in the readings).	Student usually volunteers at least one analytical, well-reasoned, or thoughtful comment, question, or observation per class meeting. Arguments, claims, or positions are usually relevant to the topic and mostly supported with evidence from the readings (or other compelling evidence that supports or contradicts ideas in the readings).	Student volunteers a reasonable or thoughtful comment, question, or observation in some class meetings. Student sometimes does not volunteer or participate in discussion, though they may contribute when the instructor calls upon them. Arguments, claims, or positions are sometimes not entirely relevant to the topic or sometimes not supported with evidence from the readings.	Student rarely or never volunteers a comment, question, or observation. Student may participate if the instructor calls upon them, but otherwise the student rarely or never contributes to class discussions. If they do participate, comments are usually off-topic or unsupported by readings.
LISTENING	Student always listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor whenever they are speaking or presenting. Always or nearly always responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Often reminds group of comments made by someone earlier that are pertinent.	Student usually listens to and makes collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Usually responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Student is rarely distracted and is consistently attentive in class.	Student sometimes does not listen to or make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Only sometimes responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Student is sometimes distracted, or their attentiveness is inconsistent.	Student often does not listen to or does not make collegial eye contact with peers or instructor when they are speaking or presenting. Rarely or never responds to or productively builds upon peers' comments or questions. Student is often distracted or inattentive.
CONDUCT	Student shows respect for all classmates and instructor, both in speech and manner, and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Does not dominate discussion. Student challenges, critiques, or analyzes ideas respectfully, and encourages and supports others to do the same. Student always works with all classmates and instructor in a cooperative, professional, and supportive manner.	Student generally shows respect for all classmates and instructor and for the method of shared inquiry and peer discussion. Participates regularly in the discussion but occasionally has difficulty accepting challenges to their own ideas or occasionally may lack diplomacy or consideration when challenging or critiquing others' ideas. Usually cooperative, professional, and supportive.	Student sometimes shows little respect for a classmate(s), the instructor, or the process as evidenced by speech and manner. Student may sometimes be uncooperative, apathetic, or unsupportive of other members of the class; may sometimes demonstrate rudeness, insensitivity, or lack of support or lack of consideration for other members of the class.	Student shows a lack of respect for members of the class or the process. Often dominates the discussion or disengages from the process. When contributing, can be argumentative or dismissive of others' ideas, or may resort to ad hominem attacks.

*Participation rubric adapted from Relearning by Design, Inc., 2000 and Eberly Center for Teaching Excellence, Carnegie Mellon University, 2022.

III. Course Schedule

Week	Topic/Inquiry Question	Class Date	Assignments Due
1	Who are we?	W 8/24	Course introduction and overview
		F 8/26	Discussion: How do artists discover their voice? How do you discover your own voice? "Finding a Voice" One Writer's Beginnings (pp.79-83), Eudora Welty; Materials to Bring: Please bring in an existing piece of writing that feels personal to you and inspires you in some way. Texts can include: a passage from a book, poem, song lyrics, etc.
2	Why Autobiography?	M 8/29	RESPONSE DUE Lecture: Where do we experience autobiography in contemporary literature, arts, and culture? Truthworker Theatre Uses Hip-Hop and Social Justice , Brooklyn Made; "Caged Bird" Maya Angelou; "Flower Child" Nitty Scott feat. Kendrick Lamar (Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Identity); "Letter to the Free," Common at the White House, October 2016
		W 8/31	Discussion: How do you connect to autobiography? What legacies live in contemporary autobiography? Why is autobiography so enduring and ubiquitous? Native American Hoop Dance and Hip-Hop, from Minneapolis to Albuquerque KQED Arts; Dancing an Indigenous Future with Albuquerque's Native American Hip-Hop Scene KQED Arts
		F 9/2	Be ready to move and write. We will be writing and dancing while closing up this week's exploration of Hip Hop.
3	What compels people to examine the self?	M 9/5	NO CLASS: U.S. Holiday
		W 9/7	RESPONSE DUE In-Class Screenings: <i>Moonlight</i> (Excerpt) and <i>Moonlight</i> writer on its origin and critical success Discussion: What are the catalysts for the creation of autobiographical works? Excerpts from Moonlight Screenplay Directed by Barry Jenkins -Adapted from the play "In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue" by Tarell Alvin McCraney "Hoping the Songs Lead Him to Freedom" Only listen to "In Performance: Choir Boy," which is the NY Times video above the theatre review. "Hoping the Songs Lead Him to Freedom" Only listen to "In Performance: Choir Boy," which is the NY Times video above the theatre review.
		F 9/9	Creative Workshop: Dipping into the creation of visual autobiographical works such as comic strips or graphic novel-style works.

Week	Topic/Inquiry Question	Class Date	Assignments Due
			Fun Home (Chapter 1), Alison Bechdel Alison Bechdel's "Fun Home": The Coming-Out Memoir That Became a Hit Broadway Musical (Excerpts from a Democracy Now! special)
4	How do people figure out who they are?	M 9/12	RESPONSE DUE Zariya Allen - Somewhere in America (Nationality & Identity) inAmerica (I Was Born With Two Tongues) (Race/Ethnicity & Family) Hyphenation (I Was Born With Two Tongues) (Race/Ethnicity & Gender)
		W 9/14	Chicana Dance Crew Blends Tap and Mexican Footwork KQED Arts Pachuquismo Clips from Brava Theater! THE POLITICS OF AESTHETICS: LAS PACHUCAS AND THE ZOOT SUIT
		F 9/16	Radio play version listening excerpts: Zoot Suit , La Theatre Works production for radio.
5	How do people tell stories about who they are?	M 9/19	Adrian Piper Confronts Racism concepts: repetition, point of view, motivation/obstacle Screenings/Slides/Videos from Performance Artists 1940s-1970s Various Artists: Maya Deren, Meshes of the Afternoon , 1943 Yoko Ono: Cut Piece , 1965 Lorraine O'Grady: Mlle Bourgeoise Noire Adrian Piper: Mythic Being , 1973 Vito Acconci: Vito Acconci, Security Zone, 1971 Recommended Reading : MOMA Learning, Yoko Ono
		W 9/21	RESPONSE DUE Guillermo Gomez Peña & Coco Fusco: The Couple in the Cage: Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West , 1992-1994 The Yes Men, Bhopal Disaster - BBC - The Yes Men , 2004 Watch the Yes Men Impersonate Shell, Make 'Last Iceberg' Snow Cones , 2015 Shirin Neshat, Turbulent Pope.L, member, 1978–2001 & Artist Stories
		F 9/23	Exploring Metaphor: Please bring a simple personal object (like a favorite hat) which we will use to explore the concept of metaphor and autobiography.
6	What do stories of self suggest about notions of human difference?	M 9/26	ANALYTICAL ESSAY DUE Introducing Dael Orlandersmith (Extreme Exposure: Solo Performance Texts-Canvas) concepts: inciting incident, moral/ethical choices, complication, crisis/climax, resolution
		W 9/28	Viewing Due: Finish Until the Flood (2018) Submit 1-2 Discussion questions on canvas by 9:00 PM (9/29). We will break into small groups for first 15-20 minutes of class to explore these questions and then regroup to summarize our findings.

Week	Topic/Inquiry Question	Class Date	Assignments Due
		F 9/30	Reflecting on the Flood: Post a link to a musical piece that reflects your relationship to watching <i>Until the Flood</i> this week (CANVAS).
7	Why listen to marginalized voices?	M 10/3	RESPONSE DUE Lecture/Discussion: (Dis)ability as a Lens: How do artists create stories that reflect the experiences of people with disabilities? Can a story promote inclusion? And what is meant by 'inclusion'? Nancy Mairs, "Young and Disabled," <i>Waist-High in the World: A Life Among the Nondisabled</i> , pp. 124-45 (Canvas) Working in the Theatre: Sign Language Theatre , American Theatre Wing (30 minutes) Lens on Theatre: Spring Awakening , Deaf West Theatre, 2015 Dance/NYC Disability Task Force (Excerpts)
		W 10/5	In-Class Screenings: Axis Dance Company, Oakland, Making Contemporary Dance Inclusive for All; Infinite Flow Dance: An Inclusive Dance Company; "Gravity" Wheelchair Dance by Marisa Hamamoto & Piotr Iwanicki Discussion: What does diversity mean? Why does it matter? How have this week's readings and viewings impacted our answers to these questions?
		F 10/7	NO CLASS: UF Homecoming
8	What can we discover about the workings of autobiography through the adaptation process?	M 10/10	Group Presentation Work Session
		W 10/12	Group Presentations Due: Part 1
		F 10/14	Group Presentations Due: Part 2 Post-Presentation Reflection
9	Can the arts promote healing and social change?	M 10/17	RESPONSE DUE Lecture: How does a community tell its own story? The Laramie Project , Moisés Kaufman, (Please watch at least the first 30 minutes...or more!)
		W 10/19	Discussion: What purpose does autobiographical theatre work serve in prison settings? What methods does it employ? What are its outcomes? Rhodesa Jones and The Medea Project Marin Shakespeare Company , Shakespeare in Prison. Spend 20-30 minutes to engage this virtual theatrical experience: The Manic Monologues (best viewed on a laptop or desktop) 'The Manic Monologues' co-founders produce plays to help dismantle stigma around mental health care and conditions In-Class Screenings: A/LIVE INSIDE , DU Prison Arts Initiative, University of Denver, 2020 (I will share specifically selected excerpts in class)
		F 10/21	Creative Workshop: Reflection on core questions raised in performances: How do you define humanity? Can you think of a time when you witnessed humanity?
10	Can we discover who we are on the page, stage, or screen?	M 10/24	RESPONSE DUE Paula Poundstone, "Introduction" (pp. 1-3) and "The Get Over Here and Help Experiment" (pp. 242-67), <i>The Totally Unscientific Study of the</i>

Week	Topic/Inquiry Question	Class Date	Assignments Due
			<i>Search for Human Happiness</i> Excerpt from Poundstone's " Look What the Cat Dragged In "
		W 10/26	Trevor Noah, " Hip Hop Censorship Is Wrong "
		F 10/28	Please bring a favorite funny memory and/or thought on someone you find funny. We will find various ways to share and reflect on the art of humor.
11	Do the arts help us find meaning and purpose? How?	M 10/31	RESPONSE DUE And Everything Is Going Fine: The Gray In-Between , Criterion Essay; Excerpts from <i>Freak</i> by John Leguizamo Julia Sweeney, <i>Letting Go of God</i>
		W 11/2	Discussion of Culminating Project Requirements
		F 11/4	Creative Workshop: Exploring the art of confessional monologues with writing prompts and improvisation. Breaking into smaller groups as desired.
12	What relationship exists between autobiography and autoethnography?	M 11/7	AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC ESSAY DUE
		W 11/9	Discussion of Culminating Project Requirements
		F 11/11	NO CLASS: U.S. Holiday
13	What discoveries or conclusions can we draw from an examination of ourselves and our lives?	M 11/14	<i>The Examined Life</i> , Excerpt, 2008 documentary by Astra Taylor with Dr. Cornel West--What is Dr. West asking? Listen: Beethoven: Sonata No.32 in C Minor
		W 11/16	RESPONSE DUE Maya Angelou, " Living Well, Living Good " (pp. 61-6), " Power of the Word " (71-6), Wouldn't Take Nothing for My Journey Now ; and James Hollis, " Live the Examined Life: Live the Questions, Not the Answers, " Living an Examined Life: Wisdom for the Second Half of the Journey , pp. 115-18
		F 11/18	Creative Workshop: What will the finished painting of your life look like? What wisdom will it convey to its viewers? What legacy will you leave behind?
14	How do we reflect upon the self?	M 11/21	Lecture/Discussion: What methods of self-reflection do artists use? Which ones can we use? How can this inform your culminating project?
		W 11/23	NO CLASS: U.S. Holiday
		F 11/25	NO CLASS: U.S. Holiday
15	Where have we been? Where are we going?	M 11/28	Culmination Project Work Session 1
		W 11/30	Culmination Project Work Session 2
		F 12/2	We will creatively construct a discovery document to mark the coming end of the course and the ideas we have uncovered and generated. Together, we will devise and design a discovery map.
16	Who are we?	M 12/5	RESPONSE DUE Culmination Project Work Session 3
		W 12/7	Course Reflection Session: Who are we now versus who we were on the first day of the course? What knowledge, skills, and abilities have we acquired or sharpened? How have we transformed?

Week	Topic/Inquiry Question	Class Date	Assignments Due
		F 12/9	NO CLASS: UF Reading Day
	FINAL	W 12/14	3 – 5 pm Culminating Project Due

IV. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

The experiential learning component will involve attending a live theater performance on campus and writing one of your weekly responses about the experience. The instructor will provide further specifics in class well in advance of the assignment.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

The self-reflection component is woven throughout the course in many of our activities, discussions, and in class writing. Specifically, however, you will write a self-reflection that connects learning in this course to your life experience at UF and beyond. This writing will occur during a class session devoted to reflection towards the end of the semester.

V. Course Policies

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Attendance and punctuality matter greatly and count from day one of this course.

A total of 2 unexcused absences are permissible with no penalty in this course. We can call these our 2 “freebies”. After the second freebie, the student’s overall course grade will be lowered one full letter grade (10 points) for EACH additional unexcused absence.

To be considered excused, an absence must be accompanied by appropriate official documentation (except religious holidays/observances, which do not require documentation). Only the following types of absences can be excused (and only if official documentation is provided):

- Illness—doctor's note must be on official letterhead with doctor name, address, phone number, noting date and time of visit and diagnosis verifying absence from class is warranted and doctor’s signature.
- Serious family emergency
- Special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, professional conferences)
- Military obligation
- Severe weather conditions

- Participating in official university activity (e.g., music performance, athletic competition, debate)
- Court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena)
- Religious holiday/observance (documentation not required for this type of absence)

To help organize accommodations, students should inform instructor by the end of the second week of classes or religious holidays/observances of their faith that will conflict with class attendance this semester.

If you must miss a class meeting for any reason you must notify the instructor and any group partners PRIOR to the missed class; this does NOT “excuse” your absence; it is simple professional courtesy.

If absent, it is YOUR responsibility to obtain information about missed course content, which may include information or directions for upcoming assignments; class buddies, study partners, or small study groups are strongly recommended; reach out to your classmates and build community.

Three instances of lateness count as one unexcused absence (unless the lateness is excused with an acceptable reason AND official documentation). Attendance will be recorded at the beginning of each class period. Any arrival after the official start time of the class as published on ONE.UF will be considered late.

Be aware that the UF policy on absence states:

The university recognizes the right of the instructor to make attendance mandatory and require documentation for absences (except for religious holidays), missed work, or inability to fully engage in class. After due warning, an instructor can prohibit further attendance and subsequently assign a failing grade for excessive absences.

All requirements detailed above for class attendance and make-up exams/assignments and other work in this course are fully consistent with university attendance policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Due Dates

All written assignments are due at the start of the class period on the date listed on the course schedule.

Submission of late assignments without penalty requires a valid and documented reason, such as an excused absence. Otherwise, 1/3 of a letter grade for the assignment will be deducted for EACH school day that the assignment is late (holidays and weekends excepted).

If an assignment is missed due to an excused absence, then the assignment will be due by the next class period following the excused absence. An assignment missed due to unexcused absence cannot be made up.

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time, to participate with a positive attitude, and to conduct themselves in a professional manner that is always respectful to the instructor and fellow students.

Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion must be avoided.

Cell phones are not permitted in the classroom. Phones must be turned off or silenced (and not on vibrate) and phones must be stored entirely out of sight completely inside a pocket or bag; a visible cell phone or cell phone use will count as lateness to class (3 instances of lateness = 1 absence). Cell phone use in class is disrespectful to the instructor and fellow students.

Do not gather your things or pack up your bag until the official end time of the class; doing otherwise is disrespectful to the instructor and fellow students and will count as lateness to class (3 instances of lateness = 1 absence).

You may consume only small, hand-held snacks with a wrapper (like a protein bar or apple slices in a baggie). You may consume only beverages with a very secure lid. You must properly dispose of all trash. Do not ever leave trash in the classroom; doing otherwise will result in the termination of food and beverage privileges for everyone in the class.

An open line of communication between us is of the utmost importance. *Always feel free to communicate with me*; my job is to guide and support you in learning. If you have a question, concern, confusion, or problem relevant to this course, please don't worry, don't fret, and don't go to other people before you come to me. Reach out to me and I will help.

PLEASE COMMUNICATE WITH ME.

Canvas and Email

All students in this course are required to use Canvas, UF's official learning management system. Students will access Canvas frequently for updates to the course schedule, to access assignment information and materials, to turn in assignments, and for other important course information.

All students are required to have an active UF email account (@ufl.edu), which they check at least once a day (or more often, if possible). State laws require that all emails related to a course must come from students' UF accounts rather than personal accounts (such as Gmail or Yahoo).

Emails to the instructor should be respectful and use professional standards of language and communication. The instructor will make every effort to respond to student emails within 24 hours during weekdays and within 48 hours during weekends and holidays.

Both Canvas and UF email are extremely important modes of communication between student and instructor, and the instructor will use Canvas and UF email to communicate crucial course information to students.

To resolve technical issues with email or Canvas visit the [UF Computing Help Desk website](#) or email helpdesk@ufl.edu or call 352-392-HELP (4357).

Content Alert*

In this course, we will cover content and materials that some may find difficult. It is important that in a process of learning and intellectual development we do not shy away from engaging with materials that may be controversial or challenging. In class, if you need to step away briefly as we are examining particular content, you may do so without penalty, but please remember that you are responsible for any information covered in your absence.

Content in the humanities sometimes includes works and discussions that address themes, situations, actions, or language that can be offensive to some students on the grounds of sexual explicitness, profanity, violence, or blasphemy. As UF is devoted to the principle of academic and artistic freedom, it is not the University's practice to censor controversial works on any of these grounds. Part of the student's work is to learn how to investigate and analyze content that may convey perspectives that differ from their own views. Learning can be challenging and uncomfortable, at times. Our goal is to establish a learning environment that is both a safe space (physically, emotionally, mentally) AND a brave space where we can experience new ideas, take healthy and creative risks, and grow as scholars and human beings. If you have questions or concerns about these issues, then please communicate privately with the instructor as early as possible in the semester.

*Content Alert adapted nearly verbatim from the syllabi of Tiza Garland, Associate School Director and Associate Professor of Theatre, School of Theatre and Dance, University of Florida.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may NOT publish recorded class lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does NOT include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services.

A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states:

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.”

The Honor Code specifies several potential violations, including *plagiarism*. Section 3.E. prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A Student must not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. Stealing, misquoting, insufficiently paraphrasing, or patch-writing.
2. Self-plagiarism, which is the reuse of the student’s own submitted work, or the simultaneous submission of the student’s own work, without the full and clear acknowledgment and permission of the Faculty to whom it is submitted.
3. Submitting materials from any source without proper attribution.
4. Submitting a document, assignment, or material that, in whole or in part, is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment the student did not author.

Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in the referral of the student to the Dean of Students for consideration of academic and student status sanctions.

Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TA in this class.

The Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code may be read in their entirety at:
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>

VI. Campus Resources

ACADEMIC AND CAREER

- **E-Learning Technical Support:** Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- **Career Connections Center:** Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- **Library Support:** Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- **Teaching Center:** Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- **Writing Studio:** 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- **Student Complaints On-Campus:** [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage](#) for more information.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

- **U Matter, We Care:** If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit [U Matter, We Care website](#) to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- **Student Health Care Center:** Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need or visit the [Student Health Care Center website](#).
- **Sexual Assault Recovery Services:** Visit [Student Health Care Center](#) or call 352-392-1161.
- **University Police Department:** [Visit UF Police Department website](#) or call 352-392-1111 (or 911 for emergencies).
- **UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center:** For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; [Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website](#).
- **Food Insecurity:** [Visit UF's Food Pantry website](#) or call 352-294-3601 or email fieldandfork@ufl.edu for help if you are experiencing food insecurity.
- **Veterans and Military-Affiliated Students Resources:** Visit the [UF Collegiate Veterans Success Center website](#) or call 352-294-7233 or email vetsuccess@dso.ufl.edu for resources, community, and support.
- **Other Concerns and Needs:** See this [comprehensive list of concerns](#) with links to UF resources for help and support.

**The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus and/or course schedule as deemed necessary.
Students will be notified via email and/or in class of any substantive changes to the syllabus.**