
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING in Spring 2021 (CL1099FB2)

Course Code	CL1099FB2	Professor(s)	Daniel Medin
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-111
Class Schedule	F: 13:45-15:05 in G-113 F: 16:55-18:15 in RMOTE-00 T: 16:55-18:15 in RMOTE-00 T: 16:55-18:15 in G-207	Office Hours	F 12-1 and by appointment
Credits	4	Email	dmedin@aup.edu
Semester	Spring 2021	Office Tel. Ext.	576

Course Description

In this class we consider (mostly) Francophone authors who have used narrative, essays, journals, correspondence, and playfully inventive forms to examine the self. The course is both critical and creative in emphasis: critical, since students develop skills of reading analytically, learning about the relationship of text to context and content to form; creative, since students practice autobiographical writing in genres deployed by their assigned authors. They thereby become more attentive readers of themselves while improving their ability to articulate this knowledge in writing. Authors studied may include Saint Augustine, Michael de Montaigne, Madame de Sévigné, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Xavier de Maistre, Jules Renard, Vincent van Gogh, Jules Renard, Joe Brainard and Lorna Goodinson.

Course Learning Outcomes

Information Literacy: Students will comprehend how information is produced and valued in order to discover, evaluate, use, and create information and knowledge effectively and ethically. In FirstBridge, students will demonstrate the conversational nature of scholarship, and recognize their potential role and responsibilities as contributors to that conversation. For each discipline taught in FirstBridge, students will identify reference works, journals, databases and/or major works in history, in order to start effective research in the field.

Life at University: Students will acquire the study skills, time management, and interpersonal skills needed to meet the demands of university-level academic work at a Liberal Arts College individually or as a team. Students will value the multiple meanings of place through experiential learning at AUP and beyond in the Parisian or global context.

Students will read literary works from different genres and places attentively.

Students will formulate remarks on which words or phrases create the force of passages from such texts.

Students will articulate the relationship between word choice and impact on the reader.

Students will identify ways that concepts explored in films and in creative texts are communicated differently.

Students will relate choice of medium to purpose and effect of message.

Students will identify a message that they think needs to be more widely or effectively heard.

Students will explain which medium they think is best adapted to conveying the message in question.

General Education

CL1091 STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

- To explore autobiographical writing in the West, from the dawn of Christianity to the present.
- To recognize how differences of form affect how the self can be told.
- To become acquainted with the methods of several disciplines in the humanities, both scholarly (history, art history, comparative literature, philosophy) and creative (fine arts, creative writing).
- To cultivate attentiveness and sharpen powers of observation.
- To complement Hervé Vanel's Art History course: "Debunking the Myth of the Great Artist."

FIRST BRIDGE LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Students will enhance their information literacy, acquiring an understanding of how information is produced, and discovering how to evaluate, create and use it effectively and ethically. Students will develop an awareness of the conversational nature of scholarship and be able to identify appropriate secondary sources to conduct effective research.
- Students will develop public speaking and presentation skills in order to participate effectively and appropriately in academic discussion and as community leaders, in a professional and engaging manner that can convey complex information.
- Students will be able to appreciate place as a site of knowledge, to interrogate the multiple meanings of place and develop a more informed and sensitive understanding of interactions between people and their physical environment.
- Students will learn to formulate questions that can lead to greater learning and productive individual and group research projects.

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- Students will strengthen the concrete skills and aptitudes to be successful at AUP and beyond, such as study skills and time management, the mindsets that lead to lifelong learning, and desired classroom behaviors and interpersonal skills.

INTEGRATIVE INQUIRY LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Local and Global Perspectives: Students will enhance their intercultural understanding of languages, cultures, and histories of local societies and the global issues to which these relate.
- Aesthetic Inquiry and Creative Expression: Students will engage with artistic or creative objects (e.g., visual art, theatrical works, film) in different media and from a range of cultural traditions.

Course Outline

Schedule

Specific assignments and/or dates may be added, removed or modified over the course of the semester.

Jan

Week 1

T19 Introduction to CL1099: Discussion of topic, syllabus, assignments, course policies, etc.

F22 Augustine: *Confessions*, Book I, Childhood, 3-23*

Week 2

T26 Augustine: Book II: Sin, 27-37; from Book IV: Friends, 61-74*

RS: Childhood, memory, identity (Louise Bourgeois documentary)

F29 Augustine: Book VIII: Vocation, 161-182*

Week 3

Feb

T2 Montaigne: *Essays*, "To the Reader," "Of the Power of the Imagination," "Of Friendship"*

RS: Art and life: Is biographical narrative fiction? (1) (*Lust for Life*: Van Gogh film directed by Vincent Minnelli)

F5 Montaigne: "Of the Inconsistency of Our Actions," "That Our Desire Is Increased by Difficulty"*

Week 4

T9 No class

F12 Mme. de Sévigné: *Selected Letters**

Week 5

T15 Schama: "Van Gogh: Painting from inside the Head" 298-319*

RS: Art and life: Is biographical narrative fiction? (2) (*The Power of Art: Van Gogh*)

F19 Schama: "Van Gogh: Painting from inside the Head" 319-351*

Week 6

T22 Rousseau: *The Confessions* 17-38*

RS: Art and life: Is biographical narrative fiction? (3) (*Van Gogh: A Life Devoted to Art*)

F26 No class (Break)

March

Week 7

T2 De Maistre: *Journey around My Room* 3-26

(RS) Louvre or Orsay

F5 De Maistre: 51-78

Week 8

T9 De Maistre: 51-78; Wunnicke: "Around My Room and Back Again"*

F12 Van Gogh: *The Letters of Vincent van Gogh* 340-366

Week 9

T16 Van Gogh: 366-389

(RS) Gaughin and Van Gogh at Musée d'Orsay

F19 Van Gogh: 389-416

Week 10

T23 Van Gogh: 416-440

F26 Renard: *Journal 1887-1910**

Week 11

T30 Brainard: *I Remember* 7-70

(RS) TBD

April

F2 Brainard 71-140; workshop on using library resources for a research paper

Week 12

T6 No class

F9 Brainard: 141-166; Perec: from *I Remember**; Ruefle: "I Remember, I Remember"*

Week 13

T13 Goodinson: *From Harvey River*

(RS) TBD

F16 Goodinson

Week 14

T20 Goodinson

F23 Goodinson

Week 15

T27 Review

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
The Letters of Vincent van Gogh	Vincent van Gogh	Penguin	9780140446746	Yes
Voyage around My Room	Xavier de Maistre	New Directions/Norton	9780811222105	Yes
From Harvey River	Lorna Goodison	Atlantic	9781843549963	Yes
I Remember	Joe Brainard	Granary	9781887123488	Yes

Attendance Policy

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the undergraduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Center where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments. Proficiency in English is monitored at various points throughout the student's academic career, most notably during the admissions and advising process while the student is completing general education requirements, and during the accomplishment of degree program courses and senior theses.

Grading Breakdown

1. Participation: 15%
2. Oral presentation: 10%
3. Response Papers: 20%
4. Final project: 25%
5. Midterm: 10%
6. Final exam: 20%

1. Participation

Students will be graded on their presence and their active contribution to the class; exceptional engagement and/or improvement may affect the final grade.

2. Oral Presentation

By the end of the second week of class, you must select an assigned reading from the syllabus to present. The first part of your presentation should include an introduction to the day's assignment. Represent the text as concisely as possible, and its pertinence to themes that appear elsewhere in the course. Devote the last 5 minutes to your own take on the work, and prepare questions or topics to launch discussion. Presentations should be informative yet brief, and run for no longer than 10 minutes.

3. Response Papers

A total of *two* detailed response papers (500-600 words each) about items assigned for reflective seminar will be assigned over the course of this semester. Each one is due within one week of the excursion. These essays are designed to center your attentiveness—to help you *see* and *think* more about a particular object or site. Students are urged to write about material that elicits a strong response. You must hand in at least one response paper *before* the midterm.

4. Final Project

Produce an autobiographical document marked in some way by the approaches of our assigned authors. The final paper should be 2000-2500 words in length and written in unjustified, double spaced 12-point Times New Roman font. Additionally, it should include a 3-page reflective essay about the process of preparing this document, and address parallels to autobiographical documents studied this semester. ***An emailed attachment of the complete project must be delivered at least 60 minutes before class begins on its due date. A hard copy of the same is due at the start of class on the same day.***

5. & 6. Midterm, Final Exam

The midterm and final may take the form of either “gobbets” (extracts from all texts studied during the semester for identification and comment), oral interviews, essays, or some combination of the above. They will in all cases test your mastery of assigned readings.

You are expected to own the version of the texts listed above. Neglecting to bring the assigned work to class on a regular basis will lower your participation grade substantially. ***You may be quizzed on the content of assigned readings without warning.*** Students who do not complete the assigned readings should anticipate failing the course.

Other
