

Preliminary Web Course Description

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: ENGL*3090	Course Title: Writing autobiography and creative essays	Date of Offering: FALL 2019
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Course Professor: Lawrence Hill	Course Format: Creative Writing Workshop
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Brief Course Synopsis:

This course will be taught inside the Grand Valley Institution for Women, a federal penitentiary in Kitchener, ON. Half of the students will come from the University of Guelph and the other half will be prisoners. Students will write creative essays and autobiographical portraits, share them with peers, evaluate their peers' work, and submit one revision. Each week, students will read an excerpt of a professionally published creative essay or autobiography, and assess it from intellectual, ethical and especially artistic perspectives. Is the material engaging, dynamic, authentic and believable? What sort of risks is the writer taking? Which writing styles prove most effective, and why? Students will learn from each other experientially by studying and sharing in a prison setting.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

Writing Exercise (800 – 1,000 words): 10 %
Personal Reflection or Opinion Piece (800 – 1,500 words): 20 %
Autobiographical Portrait (2,500 – 3,000 words) : 25 %
Revision of Autobiographical Portrait: 15 %
Peer Evaluation: 15 %
Workshop Participation: 15 %

Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

Students will read the work of their peers and use a course pack drawing from:

Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body, Roxane Gay (HarperCollins, 2017)

A Mind Spread Out on the Ground, Alecia Elliott (Doubleday, 2019)

The Best American Essays, Jonathon Franzen (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016)

No Friend But the Mountains: Writings from Manus Prison (House of Anansi Press, 2019)

The Classic Slave Narratives, Henry Louis Gates Jr.(Signet Classics, 2012)

Café Babanussa, Karen Hill (HarperCollins, 2016)

Southern Selves: A Collection of Autobiographical Writings, Ed. JH Watkins, Vintage (1998)

Other information that you wish share about the course (optional):

List the distribution requirements that this course fulfills:

