

## English 497 – Life Writing

Fall 2014

This class is an introduction to creative writing featuring, but not restricted to, memoir and creative nonfiction. Students will spend time reading and producing short written assignments in one or two genres and will produce a portfolio of edited work at the end of the semester. In addition, students will read from their work in a final, open reading.

Students taking the class for undergraduate credit will be expected to produce 4,000-5,000 words (16-20 pages).

Students taking the class for graduate credit will be expected to produce 6,000-7,000 words (24-30 pages).

The class is team-taught with English faculty members and guest speakers doing individual “modules.” Vivian Freeman will be the assistant instructor, trouble-shooting any problems that arise.

Text: *Old Friend from Far Away* by Natalie Goldberg (Free Press, 2007)

### Tentative Syllabus

Aug. 28 – Dunbar-Odom – Introductions, ground rules, getting started. Reading assignment for next week: Introduction, read pages 1-15, page through the book and find one of the exercises you want to write about and write for 10 minutes. Bring your writing to class.

Sept. 4 – Donna Dunbar-Odom – Discuss last week’s reading assignment, literacy narratives, brainstorming, plan a literacy narrative. Reading assignment for next week: pages 33-39, 51-58. Your literacy narrative will be due next week: 6 pages (undergraduate) or 8 pages (graduate) about your learning to read and/or write.

Sept. 11 – Dunbar-Odom – Discuss last week’s reading assignment, and be ready to read sections of your literacy narrative aloud.

Sept. 18 – Shannon Carter – In this second unit, we turn to the storytelling potential of images and archival materials like family recipe cards, report cards, etc. Today we begin with photographs— discussing examples, then working to incorporate images into your own creative work. Next week, we dig more deeply into other types of archival materials as they might serve your developing literacy narrative. Before next time, (1) gather at least two artifacts (photographs, report cards, schoolwork, other texts, especially ones referenced in your literacy narrative, etc); (2) be ready to share a brief justification for your selections.

Sept. 25 – Carter—Today, our primary goals include (1) locating relevant artifacts to enhance your literacy narrative; (2) developing creative solutions where the desired artifacts may be unavailable. To

that end, I have asked an archivist from our Library to introduce you to some of the collections that may be most relevant to your work. Next we'll share artifacts you've brought in from your own personal collections and other sources as per last week's assignment. The last portion our time together will be spent working in groups to complete the final assignment for Unit 2: Multimodal Literacy Narrative--a significant reimagining/revision of your literacy narrative that incorporates at least three different artifacts to the benefit of the project as a whole. With this multimodal project, please include a reflective memo (undergraduate: one page; graduate: three pages) that describes the decisions you made throughout the process.

Oct. 2 – Carter—Discuss last week's assignment and be ready to share selections from your multimodal literacy narrative

Oct. 9 – Question and Answer with Jim Ainsworth

Oct. 16 – Dean Salvatore Attardo – Italian memoir

Oct. 23 – Silver Leos – readings and Q&A about publishing *Memories of Old ET*

Oct. 30 – Hunter Hayes – Short fiction and publishing

Nov. 6 – Hayes (ASSIGNMENT????)

Nov. 13 – Noah Nelson – Backpack Journalism, Michael Johnson – creative nonfiction

Nov. 20 – Tabetha Adkins – editing workshop

Nov. 27 – Thanksgiving

Dec. 4 – Hayes – peer review to select pieces for online publication