

GRANDE PRAIRIE REGIONAL COLLEGE

SOCIOLOGY 2950
AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(Winter 2012)

3 University Transfer Credits

THIS COURSE DOES NOT TRANSFER TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA. HOWEVER, CREDIT IS GIVEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY, ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY, UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF VICTORIA
STUDENTS SHOULD CONFIRM FOR THEMSELVES THAT THE COURSE IS ACCEPTABLE TO RECEIVING INSTITUTIONS THAT INTEREST THEM.

Course Prerequisite: SO1000

Course Description: In contemporary western culture the personal asserts itself vigorously through theatre, music, film, books, comics, and now, in a more accessible significance, technology. Facebook, YouTube, chat lines, and an array of similar outlets, indicate our search for referents of individual lives. This course opens a door to the varieties of representation of ourselves. It explores the meanings of autobiography, and how social contexts endorse, foster, inhibit, or valorize it.

Mode of Delivery: Discussion, Lectures, Film Analyses

Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave your cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response from you is required. Otherwise, texting or use of phones will result in you having to miss that particular class. Please do not put me in a position of having to do this.

Instructor: Alan Segal ASegal@gprc.ab.ca

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays: 14.00 – 14.25
After each of my Tuesday and Thursday evening courses.
By Appointment

Office: C410, 539-2011

Required Reading:

Reading Autobiography: A Guide For Interpreting Life Narratives (Second Edition) - Sidonie Smith & Julia Watson

The Book Of Revenge - Dragan Todorovic

Life - Keith Richards

Mark Twain's Autobiography 1910-2010 - Michael Kupperman

Son Of Hamas - Mosab Hassan Yousef

Plagiarism: In an academic setting, presenting others' work as your own is a serious violation. However, referencing articles and books and online academic products do not prevent you from building on their ideas and speculations. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, consult Page 50 of Grande Prairie Regional College's Admissions Guide.

Assignments:

All work must clearly stipulate your name and course number, and identify which assignment it is. Written assignments must be sent only by email. *Only assignments sent through your GPRC email accounts are acceptable.* Nothing will be assessed if it arrives via a different email account. The receipt date and time that accompanies your email messages will count as the official submission time for the work you're handing in. No attachments are acceptable. Cut and paste your work and send it as a regular email message.

All assignments will go to gprcassignments@gmail.com

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas in sociology, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have said on a topic. Important as this is, other authors' ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific detail that helps you to ask questions about the topic you have selected. My assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. Research is one kind of investigation. Deciding what questions are worth raising is an important part of analysis. Conclusions can be valuable but aren't obligatory for any of my assignments. Grammar is important to communicating precise meaning. Therefore, while it will not be valued as highly as content, it will be evaluated and therefore can affect your mark.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS EXCEPT THE JOURNALS ARE SUBJECT TO LATENESS PENALTIES OF ONE GRADE LEVEL PER CALENDAR DAY BEYOND THE DUE DATE. JOURNALS WILL BE REDUCED BY ONE GRADE LEVEL FOR EACH TWO-DAY LATENESS PERIOD. THERE IS ALSO A ONE-GRADE PENALTY FOR ASSIGNMENTS THAT ARE LESS THAN THE MINIMUM LENGTH.

Midterm Essay: (F, D- to A+)

An essay of 1000 words minimum that presents your autobiography, life history, etc. You will reflect on the aptness of the different forms of representation communicated to you through the main text

and lectures. And you will consider how you might change your autobiography, if at all, were you to utilize different autobiographical forms and concepts. No research is necessary beyond what is assigned for the course. Due Date: Last class before the winter break.

Final Essay: (F, D- to A+)

One essay based on an autobiography of whatever form. You will draw on concepts from the main text and lectures for the course, to analyze your selection. Your purpose will not be to summarize the selection, but to offer a substantive sociological analysis of it. The minimum length for this assignment is 2800 words. All research must be cited according to MLA style.

Two Journals: (F, C+ to B)

Each journal is to be at least 400 words. Anything pertinent to autobiography and its manifestations, ideas introduced in class discussions or lectures, class interaction, personal experience, etc., is suitable. Observations about, and suggestions for, the course are also suitable. No research is necessary or expected. The journals are an informal type of communication with me. Grammar and general writing clarity are expected in all written assignments in university courses. While recognizing that we speak and write informally when communicating our personal observations, the journals should be coherent and as articulate as possible. Evaluations will reflect this expectation.

Discussion Bonus: (A, B, C, D)

Everyone may (but not necessarily will) receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to the Moodle discussion forum also will be considered class participation. You will be eligible for a bonus mark only if you display commitment to the course by reading and completing the required assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark. If you are absent for more than 2 classes, you will not receive a bonus grade. The bonus mark offers an A, B, C, or D. No plus or minus signs will be used. If you receive a bonus mark, it will be added to your overall grade total prior to working out a final mark. Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 4 classes. The bonus will not result in more than a 3-level rise in final grades.

Tabulating Grades:

The total Grade Points available from your assignments is 12.6. All marks will be totaled and divided by this number. A percentage will be derived based on this calculation, and the percentage will be reconverted to a final grade according to the grid below.

NOTE: No class averaging will be done.

Grade Equivalency:

A+	95-100%
A	90-94%
A-	87-89%
B+	83-86%

B	80-82%
B-	77-79%
C+	73-76%
C	65-72%
C-	60-64%
D+	55-59%
D	50-54%
D-	45-49%

NOTE: On the College's marking grid there is no D-. Therefore no such final mark will be recorded. However, for the course assignments, I will use D- as an additional non-failing mark.

NOTE: Some postsecondary institutions may not accept a final grade of D and D+.

Discussion Sequence

1: Course Outline / Introduction

2: Chapters 1, 2, & 9 - Reading Autobiography:

Narratives, definitions, and subjectivity are introduced to you in relation to autobiography. What are they and why should we consider them sociologically pertinent to autobiography?

3: Chapters 3 & 5 - Reading Autobiography:

What are autobiographical acts? Might there be any self-referencing experience that would not rank as an autobiographical act?

4: Chapter 6 - Reading Autobiography; Mark Twain's Autobiography.....

6: Chapters 4, 7, & 8 - Reading Autobiography

7: The Book of Revenge to Page 185

8: The Book of Revenge – Pages 186-386

9: Lecture: Sigmund Freud, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Homi Babha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Judith Butler

10: Son of Hamas

11: Lecture: Colonialism, Postcolonialism, Race, Gender, Sexuality, Myth

12: Life