



DEPARTMENT OF ARTS AND EDUCATION

COURSE OUTLINE – WINTER 2016

SO2950 (A3) AUTOBIOGRAPHY – 3 (3-0-0) 45 HOURS

INSTRUCTOR: Alan Segal **PHONE:** 780-539-2011
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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays 14:00 – 15:00. Fridays 12:15 – 12:30 Or by appointment.

PREREQUISITE(S)/CO-REQUISITE: SO1000

REQUIRED TEXT/RESOURCE MATERIALS:

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

Night - Elie Wiesel

Dreams of Trespass - Fatima Mernissi

CALENDAR 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.

CREDIT/CONTACT HOURS: 3 Credits / 3 Hours per Week

DELIVERY MODE(S): Class and Group Discussions, Lectures, Film Analyses

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Become familiar with a span of theories on the self and how it is expressed through and within social/sociological contexts.

2. Learn about the significance of Representation, as a theoretical construct in sociology, and as a basis of interpretation of human experience. And how these operate together as powerful influences and forces in the life of a society.
3. Become familiar with the vast forms of, and influences in, depictions and communications of autobiography.
4. Acquire knowledge of what 'autobiography' might encompass.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. Familiarity with similarities and differences of self-description and representation. This includes awareness of story, memoir, biography, narrative, diary, confession, etc.

TRANSFERABILITY: UC, UL, AU, MRU, GMU, KUC

***** Grades of 'D' or 'D+' may not be acceptable for transfer to other post-secondary institutions. Students must be aware it is their responsibility to contact receiving institutions to ensure transferability.**

GRADING CRITERIA:

GRADING CONVERSION CHART			
Alpha Grade	4-point Equivalent	Percentage Guidelines	Designation
A+	4.0	95 – 100	EXCELLENT
A	4.0	90 – 94	
A-	3.7	87 – 89	FIRST CLASS STANDING
B+	3.3	83 – 86	
B	3.0	80 – 82	GOOD
B-	2.7	77 – 79	
C+	2.3	73 – 76	SATISFACTORY
C	2.0	65 – 72	
C-	1.7	60 – 64	

D+	1.3	55 – 59	MINIMAL PASS
D	1.0	50 – 54	
F	0.0	0 – 49	FAIL
WF	0.0	0	FAIL, withdrawal after the deadline

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.

EVALUATIONS:

Academic assignments for this course emphasize synthesis of ideas from a sociological standpoint, and the best questions you can think of to advance that synthesis. Analysis does not mean just reporting what others have expressed on a topic. Important as this is, other ideas or conclusions are valuable because they add insight or specific details that help you to ask questions about that topic. My written assignments are a philosophical inquiry that is advanced through your and others' investigations. 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.

How your grade is calculated?

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment 1: Critical Analysis Questions Essay 1	Weight: 33.3%
Assignment 2: Critical Analysis Questions Essay 2	Weight: 33.3%
Take-Home Final Exam: CAQ Essay 3	Weight: 33.4%

The following example illustrates the determination of how the grade is calculated:

Task	Grade	Score	Final score & Grade	
Assignment 1	B	3.0	3.0	
Assignment 2	B	3.0	3.0	
Final Exam	B	3.0	3.0	
			$(3.0+3.0+3.0)/3=3.0$ = B	

Assignment 1: Due Last Class Before Winter Break Minimum 1000 Words

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.

Assignment 2: March 16th

A class presentation on an autobiography that has affected you. You will lead the class in discussion on the person, the form/format of the autobiography, what forms of representation you see in it. And then discuss with us the character and degree of its impression on you.

Final Take-Home Exam Essay Assignment: Due Date TBA Minimum 1200 Words

An essay based on any 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.

NOTE:

1. 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.
2. All written assignments are subject to ateness penalties of one grade level per calendar day beyond the due date.
3. A one-grade-level penalty will be applied for assignments that are less than minimum length.

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE SENT BY EMAIL, TO MY COLLEGE ACCOUNT:

asegal@gprc.ab.ca

- **YOU MUST INCLUDE THE WORD 'ASSIGNMENT' IN THE SUBJECT LINE, AND INDICATE WHICH ASSIGNMENT IT IS.**

DO NOT SEND ATTACHMENTS. WRITE IN THE ACTUAL EMAIL WINDOW OR USE THE WORD PROGRAM YOU ENJOY MOST AND THEN COPY AND PASTE.

Discussion Bonus Mark:

Every person in the course may (but not necessarily will), receive a bonus mark based on a combination of the frequency and quality of the participation. Discussion postings to a 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 the book and completing all written assignments. Although attendance is not relevant to the regular assignments for the course, it is important to your eligibility for a bonus mark.

Eligibility for the bonus is nullified if you are absent for more than 2 classes.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

University courses provide the best intellectual and perhaps social experience, when students arrive prepared for the day's work. My classes are heavily discussion -oriented and therefore require commitment from students.

1. Read assignments.
2. Participate in class conversation about the material.
3. Complete all written work.
4. Indicate on submitted material your name; section and course number; and which assignment is being sent to me.
5. All written work must be sent via email to asegal@gprc.ab.ca You MUST use the word 'assignment' in the subject line.
6. *** Electronic Devices: People who must have contact with others during class time may leave their cell phones on 'vibrate', and leave the room if a response 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.

STATEMENT ON PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING:

Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated and there will be penalties. For a more precise definition of plagiarism and its consequences, refer to the Student Conduct section of the College Admission Guide at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/programs/calendar/>

Or the College Policy on Student Misconduct: Plagiarism and Cheating at <http://www.gprc.ab.ca/about/administration/policies/>

****Note:** all Academic and Administrative policies are available on the same page.

Instructors reserve the right to use electronic plagiarism detection services on written assignments. Instructors also reserve the right to ban the use of any form of electronics (cell phones, Blackberries, iPods, tablets, scanning pens, electronic dictionaries, etc.) during class and during exams.

COURSE SCHEDULE/TENTATIVE TIMELINE:

Week 1 *Introduction to SO2950*

Week 2 *Reading... Chapters 1 & 2*

Class Discussion:

What do the authors understand by narratives, definitions, and subjectivity? Should we consider these sociologically relevant to autobiography?

Week 3 *Reading... Chapters 3 & 9*

Class Discussion:

What are autobiographical acts? Might there be any self-referencing experience that would not rank as an autobiographical act? Would you concur with the authors that such acts correspond with the strategies for reading narratives outlined in chapter 9?

Week 4 *Night*

Class Discussion:

We will discuss and analyze this book from the analytical perspective of the course, and on its own terms.

Week 5 *Reading.... Chapter 6*

Week 6 *Reading.... Chapters 7 & 8*

Class Discussion:

What is the foundation of autobiography criticism?

Week 7 *Dreams of Trespass Chapters 1 - 11*

Week 8 *Dreams of Trespass Chapters 11 - 22*

Week 9 *Lecture: Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Homi Babha, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Judith Butler*

Week 10 *Reading... Chapters 4 & 5*

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