

COM 4930 Communication & the Storied Self
Course Syllabus ~ Fall 2014

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CLASS MEETING INFORMATION

DAY/TIME: Mondays, periods 7-9

LOCATION: 211 Rolfs Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

From the perspective of narrative identity, this course examines the relationship between and influence of intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication and social discourse on the construction of Self and self-narratives. Class discussions focus on the Self as a "storied self" and on the importance of our life stories. To that end, journaling and creative non-fiction writing are used as a primary vehicle for self-exploration and narrative expression.

REQUIRED TEXT

Please obtain from the University of Florida bookstore (in Reitz Union) and begin to read the textbook listed below. Also purchase a bound journal that you can keep with you and write in daily. Bring the book and journal with you to class each session.

Nelson, G. L. (2004). *Writing and being: Embracing your life through creative journaling (2nd ed)*. New World Library.

INSTRUCTOR OBLIGATIONS

You should expect that Dr. Williams-Garland will:

1. Convey passion for course material.
2. Conduct the class in a manner that is engaging.
3. Assign meaningful work that allows you to engage the course, its content and material.
4. Grade assignments and provide helpful feedback in a timely manner.
5. Reply to your emails within 48 hours.
6. Attempt to relate material in this course to your everyday life and relationships, as well as to relevant global, social, and political contexts.

STUDENT OBLIGATIONS

Students who give themselves to and engage this course fully will embark upon an enlightening and empowering journey of self-discovery and expression. To help accomplish this, you are expected to:

1. Journal daily.
2. Complete and spend time contemplating the readings before class each week.
3. Complete and submit all assignments in advance of the deadline.
4. Participate actively in discussions and classroom activities.
5. Contribute positively to the classroom and group climates.
6. Take a self-motivated approach to the course, including personal accountability for your behavior and academic progress in the class.
7. Stay in contact with me throughout the semester. Communicate with me about the course and its content. Come to me, and let me help you, any time you have questions, problems or concerns related to your personal journey in this class.

SAKAI REQUIREMENT

Check your UFL.edu email and our Saki course site frequently. If you have computer/internet or Sakai-related problems or questions, you can contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-HELP [4357], or email helpdesk@ufl.edu. Your instructor is unable to assist in these matters, so please contact the Help Desk directly.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Public Writings (150 pts = 15 WAs @ 10 points each)

We have 15 Public Writings (PWs); see below for list. Most PWs are due to Sakai no later than Sunday. Always bring a printed copy of your PW to class on Mondays. Detailed descriptions for each assignment will be provided in class.

- Epigraph
- Reflections on Your Name
- Word Photos
- Who Am I?
- Where Are You From?
- Maps & Memories
- Autobiographical Poem
- Sources of Self Stories Board
- Memories that Sustain Us
- Heart Scars
- Reaching In / Reaching Out
- Saying Goodbye
- Mythography
- Random Acts of Kindness
- Where Are You Now (Part 2)?

Final Project, Presentation & Proposal (35 points total)

Details on the final project and related assignments will be provided in class.

In-Class Activities (60 pts = 12 ICs @ 5 points each)

We will do in-class activities (ICs) during Tuesday class periods. Your 12 highest scores will count toward your final grade (one grade will be dropped). This allows students to miss or do poorly on one IC without penalty. If you are absent from class, ICs cannot be made up for any reason.

Thank You & Response Post Assignments (25 pts = 5 TY/RPs @ 5 points each)

Periodically, you will write Thank You notes and Response Posts to your classmates.

Journal (10 points)

Your journal is the cornerstone of this course. You are expected to carry it with you always (in and out of class). Although I will never read your personal journal, I will check to make sure you are writing in it regularly.

POINTS & GRADES

POINTS

There are 300 points possible in this class, as follows (assignment details provided in class):

POINTS & ASSIGNMENTS (See syllabus & Sakai for assignment details)

150 points = Public Writings (15 PW X 10 pts each; see list below)

60 points = In-Class Activities (12 IC X 5 pts each)

35 points = Final Project & Presentation

25 points = Response Posts & Thank You Assignments (5 RP/TY X 5 pts each)

20 points = Quizzes

10 points = Journal

300 POINTS POSSIBLE

ASSIGNMENT LETTER GRADE DESCRIPTIONS

A/- = Excellent! In addition to excellent quality and performance, work that earns an “A” exceeds minimum requirements and expectations.

B+/- = Very good! A grade of “B” indicates successful completion of all assignment requirements with little room for improvement. Please note that all minimum requirements must be satisfactorily completed to earn a grade of “B” or better. Writing skills and overall performance are above average.

C+/- = Good! A grade of “C” is the most commonly earned grade on course assignments. It indicates work in good standing. All minimum requirements are met, although some need improvement. Writing skills are average to excellent.

D = Passing...but below average. The assignment’s minimum requirements are not met and/or quality of work is less than average.

E = Not passing. Minimum requirements are not met and quality of work is poor.

FINAL GRADE

Please be advised that final letter grades are determined by the number of points earned, and I do not round up.

Letter Grade	Percentage	Points
A	93 – 100 %	279 – 300
A-	90 – 92.9 %	270 – 278.99
B+	87 – 89.9 %	261 – 269.99
B	83 – 86.9 %	249 – 260.99
B-	80 – 82.9 %	240 – 248.99
C+	77 – 79.9 %	231 – 239.99
C	73 – 76.9 %	219 – 230.99
C-	70 – 72.9 %	210 – 218.99
D	60 – 66.9 %	180 – 209.99
E	0 – 59.9 %	0 – 179.99

Special Note Concerning Final Grades of Incomplete

A grade of “Incomplete” is given only to a student with extreme circumstances that prevent the student from completing course requirements during the semester in which s/he is enrolled. Please be forewarned that an “Incomplete” can only be given to a student who has completed at the 50% of the class and who is passing the course with a grade of “C” or better at the time the Incomplete is negotiated. See the University’s policy for more information.

GENERAL ASSIGNMENT POLICIES

DEADLINES & LATE WORK

Assignment deadlines are listed on the Course Calendar. All Public Writings (PWs) that are to be submitted to Sakai are due before 11:59 p.m. EST (before midnight) on their respective due dates. PW deadlines have a 12-

hour Extension Period during which late work will be accepted with no penalty (until 11:59 a.m. on the morning after the deadline). **After the Extension Period, a maximum of one PW assignment can be submitted up to one week late with a 50% point deduction.** No assignments are accepted more than one week past the deadline.

TIME FRAME	POINT DEDUCTION
PWs submitted DURING the Extension Period (i.e., between one minute and 12 hours after the deadline)	No penalty
PWs submitted AFTER the Extension Period* (between 12 hours and 7 days after the deadline)	50% point deduction

*Note: No more than one PW assignment will be accepted after the 12-hour extension period.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- In-Class Assignments must be completed **in class on the day they are conducted** to receive points; no exceptions.
- **There is no Extension Period for Journal Checks, Thank You’s, Response Posts, Quizzes and the Final Project/Presentation.** For these assignments, deadlines are absolute.

SUBMITTING WRITTEN WORK

Although you will bring a typed copy to class, most written assignments will also be submitted through Sakai. It is your responsibility to ensure that your assignment has been successfully received by Sakai prior to the deadline. Submit only .doc or .rtf files.

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES

ATTENDANCE, UNIVERSITY-SANCTIONED EVENTS & RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

There are no excused or unexcused absences; so, there is no need to ask for my permission to miss a class. I view you as an adult who makes your own choices, including whether or not to attend classes. It is each student’s responsibility to submit assignments in advance of the deadline, regardless of one’s reasons for missing class (including illness, emergencies, university events, religious holidays, and all others); please plan accordingly.

My sole requirement regarding attendance is that you attend only after having read the assigned readings and when able/willing to make meaningful contributions to class discussions that demonstrate familiarity with the readings. Attendance is taken for the sole purpose of establishing a record of who is present each day and who is not.

IMPORTANT: Due to the importance of our in-class discussions and activities, if you will be absent from class frequently for any reason, you should withdraw from this course and enroll in another course that is scheduled on days you can attend. Please note that In-Class (IC) assignments must be completed in class on the day they are conducted to earn points.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

All submitted work during the course, written or oral, will be the student's personal, original work, with credit being given to sources used. If a student violates this understanding, evaluations of work must be affected accordingly and if necessary, adjudication will be processed by procedures approved by the University of Florida Honor Court.

STUDENT CONDUCT

The Dial Center for Written and Oral Communication strives for a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. Students are expected to behave according to the UF student code of conduct in their classes. This means treating their instructors and fellow classmates with respect. Public Speaking can be a stressful course and it can be a positive experience. To ensure a positive learning environment, students should not: make complaints publicly (in front of other students); attack the instructor verbally, physically, or in written form; or express reactions in the classroom that would bring harm to other students. Failure to meet the UF code of conduct can impact a student's class participation grade or result in referral to the UF judicial office. Class atmosphere can be made or broken by the approach that students take to the challenges of the course. Students that support others, show good humor in the face of obstacles, show dedication in the face of setbacks, and show grace when others are not doing as well will help to create a positive communication climate.

In a communication class, it is especially important for each of us to:

- Display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students;
- Pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities;
- Avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom;
- Avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, reading the newspaper, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, making/receiving cell phone calls, text messaging, etc.).

NO COMPUTERS & NO CELL PHONES

Computer and/or cell phone use is prohibited in the classroom. Each violation of this rule is subject to a 5-point deduction from your final grade. If you must use your cell phone or computer during class time, please leave the room and return when finished. Failure to adhere to this rule may result in dismissal from the class.

DISABILITY AND SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me privately, as soon as possible, so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure a successful and educational experience. It is your responsibility both to notify me and to make the first contact with the Disability Resource Center (DRC). Additionally, you must provide written documentation from the DRC at least one week prior to the date in which you are requesting accommodations.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) ensures that your student records (for any students over 18 years of age) are kept confidential. I will not release your grades to anyone other than you or school officials who are given permission to view your progress. Anyone other than you (or an approved school official) may not request any information (beyond simple directory information) about you, your progress, or your status as a student in my class – this includes parents, partners, and other students. For more information, see the University of Florida website for The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

ACCEPTABLE USE OF COMPUTER SYSTEM

As a student in this class you're subject to the Acceptable Use Policies for UF's computer systems. Anyone violating these policies will receive an automatic grade of "E" for the course and will be referred to the University for Disciplinary Action as deemed appropriate by the University of Florida Honor Court.

CHANGES TO COURSE SYLLABUS/CALENDAR

I reserve the right to update or change portions of this course syllabus and calendar in order to make the class a better experience for everyone. This may be in response to suggestions from students, from my own observations, or as the result of requirements by the Department, College, or University. Changes will be posted to the course site on Sakai.

COURSE FEEDBACK

I welcome feedback about the course. If we wait until university evaluations at the end of the semester, I cannot make changes that will help you. I regularly ask the class for feedback and suggestions regarding the tests and assignments. Please share your thoughts with me in an open and constructive manner during the semester. You can make suggestions in class, with me privately during office hours, or via email.

QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COURSE PROBLEMS

If you have any concerns regarding the course, contact me via e-mail immediately. I am always willing to assist you in any way that I can. However, please do NOT contact me for computer, internet and/or Sakai-related problems. Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-HELP [4357], or email to helpdesk@ufl.edu for these matters. Computers do act up, so plan ahead and give yourself plenty of time before deadlines to complete and submit your work.

HAVE FUN WITH IT!

Feel free to play with the material, share your ideas, and contribute to the class. The more you engage the material and your fellow classmates, the more everyone will enjoy and benefit from the course.