

EN2721: THE ART OF LIFE NARRATIVE

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

The Art of Life Narrative

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

2721

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

GE2407 Reading Lives, Writing Selves: Autobiography and Culture

Part II Course Details

Abstract

'The Art of Life Narrative' is an English course that introduces students to the theory and practice of life narrative in diverse forms. It combines a thematic focus with an exploration of key concepts and ideas such as memory, identity, gender,

history, place and language when discussing questions of forms and narrative strategies. Students will develop critical analytical and interpretative skills through exploring various literary and cultural productions, such as auto/biography, personal essays, memoirs, diaries, graphic narrative, documentaries and video art produced in different cultural and historical contexts. This course emphasizes students' self-reflexivity and engagement with their own experiences when exploring various life narratives and composing that of their own.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1 Recognize formal elements—structures, narrative perspectives, style, rhetorical strategies, etc.—in life narratives and explore how they may represent issues of contemporary interest.			x	
2 Analyze the theoretical, aesthetic, and creative aspects of life writing evidenced by the particular structures, styles, and thematic elements in each text.		x	x	x
3 Apply critical thinking and reading skills in the interpretation of diverse life narratives, highlighting their local and global significance, and identifying connections among different traditions.		x	x	x
4 Reflect on their own learning processes and engage with their lived experiences when composing their own creative and critical work.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1 Interactive Lectures and Discussion	Students will acquire knowledge of key concepts and theories of life writing through lectures and group discussions	1, 2	

2	Group Life Writing Project	Students will collaboratively design and develop a group project on a theme germane to life writing	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Test	Students will apply their knowledge and literary interpretative skills to address test questions	1, 2, 3, 4	
4	Reading and Creative Responses	Students will compose a range of critical reading and creative responses to selected literary and cultural texts throughout the courses, applying the knowledge that they learnt in class.	1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Reading and Creative Responses Students will compose a range of short reading and creative responses to selected texts and topics throughout the course.	2, 4	25	Individual Work	No
2	Test Students will take an end-of-term test, when they will be evaluated on their knowledge and understanding of course materials and key concepts in life narratives. They will be required to apply critical interpretative and analytical skills of primary and secondary source materials covered in this course to address the test questions.	1, 2, 3, 4	35	Individual Work	No

3	Group Life Writing Project Students will form small groups to develop a life writing project that engages with the topic of 'Memory and Place'. Students will need to upload their projects to the course-dedicated website and to present their projects in class upon completion.	1, 2, 3, 4	30	Group Work	No
4	Participation Students will participate in class discussions and activities, as well as complete short writing exercises and take part in other in-class activities throughout the course	1, 2, 3, 4	10	Individual Work	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Reading and Creative Responses

Criterion

Engagement and Support

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Demonstrates a very detailed understanding of the course readings. Demonstrates creative and original thought; show a deep self-reflexivity and engagement with the self. Specific and accurate support

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant texts with some specific support. Demonstrates some creative and thoughtful ideas; gives a sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrates fairly good understanding of relevant texts, but lacking in detail. There may be some inaccuracies. The sense of self-reflexivity needs to be strengthened.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrates a superficial understanding of relevant texts. Support is not always detailed or accurate. Little attempt to engage with the self; a lack of self-reflexivity.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content. Failed to demonstrate any attempt to engage with one's self.

Assessment Task

Reading and Creative Responses

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas of the response are sharp, creative, and compelling.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The response is coherent and contains some elements of creativity and originality.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Main ideas are mostly clear but the response may be lacking in terms of specific or original ideas.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are not always clear and the response appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

The response appears to be off topic or ideas are generally incoherent.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas are original, thoughtful and demonstrates a strong engagement with the genre of life writing.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The main ideas are thoughtful and contains elements of originality. It demonstrates an engagement with the genre of life writing.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

There are some interesting ideas, though the project appears to be lacking in terms of original/thoughtful ideas. It demonstrates an attempt to engage with the genre of life writing.

Marginal (D)

The project appears to be lacking in terms of originality or relevance. It has a minimal engagement with the genre of life writing.

Failure (F)

The project ideas are generally incoherent, or irrelevant to the chosen topic. Failed to engage with the genre of life writing.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Engagement and Support

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are very well expressed and supported. Demonstrates a deep sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self and the others.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are well-articulated and supported. Demonstrates a good sense of self-reflexivity and engagement with the self and the others.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The key ideas of the life writing project are to a large extent conveyed. Demonstrates a sense of self-reflexivity and an attempt to engage with the self and the others.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are unclear. A weak sense of self-reflexivity and little attempt to engage with the self and the others.

Failure (F)

Failed to convey the main ideas of the project. Failed to give any sense of self-reflexivity or engagement with the self and the others.

Assessment Task

Group Life Writing Project

Criterion

Presentation

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The life writing project is extremely well-presented. The chosen approach succeeds in bringing out the major features and ideas of the project.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The life writing project is well-presented. The chosen approach to a large extent brings out the major features and ideas of the project.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The life writing project is to a large extent clearly presented. The chosen approach may not bring out all the key features and ideas of the project.

Marginal (D)

The life writing project is not effectively presented. The chosen approach is not effective in bringing out the key ideas of the project.

Failure (F)

The presentation appears to be incoherent and is in lack of consideration.

Assessment Task

Participation

Criterion

Participation in-class discussion and activities

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Makes significant contribution to in-class discussion and completes tasks satisfactorily.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Makes occasional contribution to in-class discussion and completes the tasks satisfactorily.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Seldom makes contribution to in-class discussion; completes some of the in-class writing tasks.

Marginal (D)

Little evidence of participation in class; completes very few in-class writing tasks.

Failure (F)

Fails to sufficiently participate in in-class activities (including discussion and writing)

Assessment Task

Test

Criterion

Ideas

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

The main ideas demonstrate originality and critical thinking. They demonstrate students' excellent analytical and interpretative skills.

Good (B+, B, B-)

The main ideas demonstrate some elements of originality and critical thinking. They show that students attain a good level of analytical and interpretative skills.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

The main ideas are mostly clear but lacking in terms of specific or original ideas. They show that students' analytical and interpretative skills are average or below average.

Marginal (D)

The main ideas are not always clear and they lack originality or relevance.

Failure (F)

The writing appears to be off topic or ideas are generally incoherent.

Assessment Task

Test

Criterion

Engagement and Support**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the course readings with specific and accurate support.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Demonstrates a good understanding of relevant texts with some specific support.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Demonstrates fairly good understanding of relevant texts, but lacking in detail. There may be some inaccuracies.

Marginal (D)

Demonstrates a superficial understanding of relevant texts. Support is not always detailed or accurate.

Failure (F)

Demonstrates a minimal understanding of relevant texts and/or lacking in content.

Assessment Task

Test

Criterion

Language

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Exceptionally well composed. Words are used with precision and accuracy. A wide variety of sentence structures are used.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Strong control of language and a wide lexical range. Grammatical structures are varied and well constructed. Small errors may persist but the meaning is sharp and clear.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Effective and functional control. Basic ideas are communicated effectively. Errors cause minimal distraction.

Marginal (D)

There is a high density of errors, causing strain for the reader. The meaning is sometimes lost or unclear.

Failure (F)

Almost every sentence has some kind of error, which causes serious problems for the reader. The meaning is often lost or distorted.

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Autobiography, memoir, life writing, narrative, identity, culture, history, language, memory, experience, place

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Eva Hoffman, <i>Lost in Translation</i>
2	Orhan Pamuk, <i>Istanbul: Memories of a City</i> (selections)

3	Spiegelman, Art, MAUS Complete (graphic novel)
4	Woolf, Virginia, Moments of Being: Autobiographical Writings (selections)
5	Other primary texts will be distributed by the instructor before the start of the course
6	Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson. Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives (Second Edition). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010. (selections)
7	Bill Roorbach. Writing Life Stories. Ohio: F&W Publications, 2008. (selections)

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Anderson, Linda. Autobiography. London: Routledge, 2001.
2	Eakin, Paul John. How Our Lives Become Stories: Making Selves. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999.
3	Engel, Susan. Context is Everything: The Nature of Memory. New York: W.H. Freeman and Co., 1999.
4	Olney, James, ed. Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical. Princeton: Princeton University, 1980.
5	Gornick, Vivian. The Situation and the Story: The Art of Personal Narrative. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001.
6	Zinsser, William. On Writing Well: The Classic Guide to Writing Nonfiction. New York: HarperCollins, 2006. (selections)