



IDH 3931: Writing from Memory

AN (UN)COMMON WRITES HONORS COURSE

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OFFICE HOURS: WEDNESDAYS 2-5 AND BY APPOINTMENT

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Writing a memoir is a dangerous undertaking. Part therapy and part meditation, memoir writing requires us to interrogate the numerous masks we use to create our public and personal sense of self. It requires us to probe the sometimes uncomfortable, sometimes petty, and sometimes beautiful motivations behind our actions and interrogate the narratives that make up our identities. In the name of creating an “authentic voice,” we often must first deconstruct ourselves and bring to light precisely those parts of ourselves that we prefer to remain hidden. Yet, for those brave enough to begin, writing a memoir can be a dramatic act of self-discovery and can lead to powerful connections between author and audience.

This course is predicated on the belief that everyone has a story worth telling. During the semester, we will identify those stories and learn how to tell them effectively, considering tone, diction, theme, structure, and imagery. Through reading published memoirs, extensive workshopping, and radical revisions, each student will craft a short memoir by the end of the course and will hopefully learn important truths about themselves and their peers in the process.

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STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course, students will:

- Create a short memoir
- Demonstrate an understanding of the memoir genre
- Identify and develop their individual authorial voice
- Understand how to provide and receive constructive feedback
- Participate in a supportive writing community
- Engage in extensive revision processes leading to a polished final draft

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
Participation Active engagement in discussions, demonstrated understanding of reading	200
Memoir Polished final draft	400
Weekly Writing Assignments Thoughtful drafted work	300
Peer Feedback Constructive feedback for classmates	100
Total Possible Points	1000



You've Got this!

Grading Scale

A	4.0	94-100	940-1000
A-	3.67	90-93	900-929
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899
B	3.0	84-86	840-869
B-	2.67	80-83	800-829
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799
C	2.0	74-76	740-769
C-	1.67	70-73	700-729
D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
D	1.0	64-66	640-669
D-	0.67	60-623	600-629
E	0.00	0-59	0-599

It is this course's policy NOT to round grades up or down. An 89.9 is a B+.

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. Once you have earned your final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Milestone / Completion credit.

Attendance

Attendance is required. Students are allowed two unexcused absences without penalty. On the third and subsequent absences, 25 points per absence will be deducted from the final grade in the class. Excused absences consist **only** of those absences due to university-sponsored events, such as athletics and band, religious holidays, quarantine, illness, or serious family emergencies. Absences related to university-sponsored events must be discussed with me **prior** to the date that will be missed. For absences due to quarantine or illness, I may require a signed doctor's note.

Please note: If students are absent, it is their responsibility to make themselves aware of all due dates. If absent due to a scheduled event, students are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.

Tardiness: If students enter class after roll has been taken, they are late, which disrupts the entire class. Two instances of tardiness count as one absence.

Due Dates

All assignments are due on Canvas at the date and time specified in the schedule. If you need more time to complete an assignment, please come talk to me as early as possible before the assignment is due so that we can arrange an accommodation that will prioritize your success and time management. If you have not prearranged an extension, late assignments are penalized 10% for each calendar day. If you have a reason that you feel I should waive late points, please contact me to discuss this matter as soon as possible. These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Course Materials

Please bring: *The Art of Memoir* by Mary Karr to class each meeting. I will provide additional reading assignments. These assignments typically appear in the syllabus on the date on which they are due. You should complete these readings before coming to class that day.

Classroom Demeanor and Conduct

This class is a safe space for open, engaging thought and discussion. The more you participate, the more you will get from this course. I welcome different—and even controversial—points of view, as long as they are presented in a respectful manner. Please remember that one of the norms of the academic discourse community is respect for others' racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientations, and gender identities and abilities. This norm should be respected in your written work, as well as in class discussion. I invite you to challenge yourselves and see what lively, thoughtful discussion—and writing— you will accomplish as a result.

To foster a respectful environment, please turn cell phones off and put them away. If you have a personal emergency and must keep your phone on one day, please discuss it with the instructor before class. Please bring a computer or tablet to class each day.

Please do not pack up your belongings until I am done speaking. If you respect my time in class, I will respect yours by making sure we do not go over our allotted time.

Office Hours and Writing Studio

Please come to my office hours if you have any questions about assignments, course policies or other concerns. My door is open even if you just want to have a chat and vent about the stresses of college! I am an excellent resource and am happy to steer you in the right direction with assignments **before** you turn them in. If you have a conflict with my office hours, please let me know and we can schedule a time to meet. The Writing Studio also offers one-on-one assistance for writing projects and is available to students of all levels.

Evaluations

Evaluations are the most effective way for you to provide feedback about the course and ensure that I am meeting the needs of UF students. Please fill out the evaluations on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open and time in class to fill them out. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting classroom accommodation must register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation. **It is important to me to provide an accessible learning environment for all my students** Please let me know what I can do to make your experience in this course a success.

Students in Distress

For guidance during distressing situations, please contact U Matter We Care or the Dean of Students Office. They can help students navigate resources and academic procedures for personal, medical, and academic issues.

- U Matter We Care:
<http://umatter.ufl.edu>,
umatter@ufl.edu, 352-294-2273
- (CARE)Dean of Students:
<https://dso.ufl.edu/>, 202 Peabody Hall,
(352) 392-1261
- Counseling and Wellness Center:
<https://counseling.ufl.edu/>, 3190 Radio
Road, (352) 392-1575
- Field and Fork Pantry:
<https://fieldandfork.ufl.edu/>, located
near McCarty B, 352-294-2208
- Student Health Care Center:
<http://shcc.ufl.edu/>, multiple locations,
(352) 392-1161
- Aid-a-Gator:
<https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/aidagator/>,
S-107 Criser Hall, (352) 392-1275

Academic Resources

- *Honors Program*: 201 Walker Hall, 352-92-1519. For an honors advisor, email: advisor@honors.ufl.edu. Need an Honors advising appointment? Schedule via Microsoft Bookings:
<https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>
- *E-learning technical support*: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- *Library Support*: Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Career Connections Center*: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services.
- *Teaching Center*: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio*: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- *Student Complaints On-Campus*: [Visit the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code webpage for more information.](#)

Class Recording Policy

The State of Florida has passed a law regarding the recording of classes by students.

- A Student may record a **class lecture** for three specified purposes as outlined in House Bill 233/Section 1004.097, Florida Statutes:
 1. For the student's own personal educational use;
 2. In connection with a complaint to the University where the recording is made
 3. As evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding.
- Students may audio or video record a class lecture for a class in which the student is enrolled. Students do not need advance permission, or to provide notice, to record.
- A class lecture is defined as an educational presentation delivered by faculty (instructor of record) or guest lecturer, as part of a University of Florida course, intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject. Lecture is inclusive of **faculty-led** discussions that are integrated into the educational presentation.
- A class lecture **does not** include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, **academic exercises involving student participation**, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.
- A recording of a class lecture may not be published without the consent of the lecturer.
 - **Publish** is defined as sharing, transmitting, circulating, distributing, or providing access to a Recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section.
 - A recording, or transcript of the recording, is considered to be published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper or leaflet.
- A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Academic Honesty

As a University of Florida student, your performance is governed by the UF Student Honor Code, (<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student-honor-code.aspx>). The Honor Code requires Florida students to neither give nor receive unauthorized aid in completing all assignments. Violations include cheating, plagiarism, bribery, and misrepresentation, all defined in detail at the above site. The University Writing Program takes plagiarism very seriously and treats instances of plagiarism as dishonesty and as a failure to comply with the scholarly requirements of this course. You commit plagiarism when you present the ideas or words of someone else as your own. If you are unsure if what you are doing is considered academic dishonesty, ask your instructor before turning in an assignment. **Plagiarism** is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

1. **Quoting oral or written materials** including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, **without proper attribution**.
2. **Submitting a document or assignment** which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment **not authored by the student**.

Cheating is defined as using or attempting to use “unauthorized materials or resources in any academic activity for academic advantage or benefit”. Cheating includes use of “entities” to complete work.

1. Using any materials or resources prepared by another person or **Entity** without the other person or Entity’s express Consent or without proper attribution to the other person or Entity.
2. Using any materials or resources, through any medium, which the Faculty has not given express permission to use and that may confer an academic benefit to a Student.
5. Collaborating with another person or **Entity**, through any medium, on any academic activity, when Faculty has expressly prohibited collaboration.
6. Commissioning or seeking to commission another person or **Entity**, with or without compensation, to produce or complete academic work or to impersonate a student in any academic activity.

Entity

This includes but is not limited to generative artificial intelligence, large language models, content generation bots, or other non-human intelligence or digital tools.

All assignments should not use an Entity for class assignments unless given explicit permission to do so. Each student’s work will be tested for originality against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites may constitute proof of plagiarism. Some (but not all!) examples of plagiarism are copying-and-pasting anything from the Internet without proper quotation, citation, or attributive tags, and using work you have previously submitted without permission from the instructor.

If you commit academic dishonesty, the instructor will submit the incident to the Dean of Students Office as an Honor Code violation.

Tentative Class Schedule
(Please refer to Canvas for updates)

Week 1

January 13

Course introduction

Week 2

January 20

NO CLASS

Week 3

January 27

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “The Past’s Vigor” and “The Truth Contract Twixt Writer and Reader”

“The Trash Heap has Spoken” by Carmen Maria Machado

Week 4

February 3

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “A Voice Conjures the Human Who Utters It”

“Autobiography of a Body” by Lucy Grealy

Week 5

February 10

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Sacred Carnality” and “How to Choose a Detail”

“Body in Trouble” by Nancy Mairs

Week 6

February 17

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Hucksters, the Deluded, and Big Fat Liars”

“My Mother Liked to Fuck” by Joan Nestle

Week 7

February 24

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Interiority and Inner Enemy – Private Agonies Read Deeper than External Whammies”

“Heroin/e” by Cheryl Strayed

Week 8

March 3

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “On Finding the Nature of Your Talent”

“My Dad Tried to Kill Me with an Alligator” by Harrison Scott Key

Week 9

March 10

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “On Information, Facts, and Data”
“Transition” by Akwaeke Emery

Week 10

March 17

NO CLASS: Spring Break

Week 11

March 24

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Personal Run-Ins with Fake Voices,” “On Book Structure and the Order of Information,” and “The Road to Hell is Paved with Exaggeration”
Due: Complete Rough Draft of Memoir

Week 12

March 31

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Blind Spots and False Selves”

Week 13

April 7

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Old-School Technologies for the Stalled Novice” and “Why Memoirs Fail”

Week 14

April 14

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “And Incomplete Checklist to Stave Off Dread”

Week 15

April 21

Read: *The Art of Memoir*: “Against Vanity: In Praise of Revision”

Week 16

April 28

NO CLASS

Due: Final Memoir