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ENG 3903B-001: Women Literature and Language Post - 1800

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ENGLISH 3903B, Spring 2019
Women, Language, and Literature, Post-1800
T/TH 2:00 to 3:15
Coleman Hall 3160
Dr. Daiva Markelis/dmmarkelis@eiu.edu
(217) 549-8352
Office: Coleman Hall 3375
Office hours: M 9:30 to 11:30
T/R 12:30 to 1:30 and by appointment

Purpose of the Course

Alice Walker once stated that she became a writer in order to process traumatic events she endured as a girl. She credits writing with saving her life. Studies have shown that when we write about depressing experiences we are empowered to move beyond them. The focus of this course will be on memoirs written by women in English during the past twenty years. There will be a special emphasis on how women write about their experiences with trauma and the resulting depression and addiction that are so often its fallouts.

Goals of the Course

1. Explore how women writers use traumatic events from their past to reclaim their lives
2. Understand the role that gender identity, race, class, and sexual orientation play in the writing of memoir
3. Explore how memoirists use fictional techniques to write about autobiographical events
4. Understand the various ethical issues involved in the writing of memoir
5. Examine how personal writing can act as a form of healing from traumatic events
6. Perceive how memoir fits into the larger framework of autobiographical writing

Books and Materials

Hunger by Roxane Gay

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou

Lying by Lauren Slater

● *On Edge: A Journey Through Anxiety* by Andrea Petersen

A Piece of Cake by Cupcake Brown

Smashed by Koren Zailckas

Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal? By Jeanette Winterson

Writing as a Way of Healing by Louise DeSalvo

Requirements

1. Read the assigned material by the assigned date and participate in class discussions.
2. Keep a journal for in-class writing, informal homework questions, observations, etc.
I will collect the journals twice during the semester. If you feel that some of your writing is too personal for me to read, you can hand in five to eight selected TYPED (single-spaced) pages of notes/observations/personal experiences.

3. Write a four to six-page typed (double-spaced) essay on two of the memoirs.
4. Write a second essay, review of a memoir, or your own personal memoir. Feel free to use material from your journals. More about this in class. The second essay should be five to seven pages.
5. Take a final exam, which may be a take-home exam.

Grade Breakdown	Percentage of Grade
Essay One	20
Essay Two	20
Journal entries	30
Final Exam (may be a take-home exam)	10
Attendance and Oral Participation	20

Attendance/Participation

Many of the ideas used in your essays will be generated in class discussions or in-class writing, which is why it is very important that you come to each class session. I realize, however, that emergencies do occur. Excused absences are those outlined in the student catalogue: "illness, emergency, or university activity." Documentation is required for all excused absences. Unexcused absences are pretty much all others—oversleeping, hangovers, finishing papers for other classes, out-of-town trips "because I'm homesick." More than three unexcused absences may lower your attendance/participation grade to an E.

PLEASE COME TO CLASS ON TIME (Nobody Likes a Latecomer)

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL CELL PHONES BEFORE COMING TO CLASS

PLAGIARISM (Nobody Likes a Cheater)

Here is the English Department policy on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

University Policies

(1) Academic integrity - Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>) Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards.

(2) Students with disabilities - If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583.

(3) The Student Success Center - Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with

time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

NOTE: Some of the reading material contains scenes that may be disturbing based on your own personal experiences and/or values. We will begin slowly and safely with a book that deals with the healing powers of writing. If you read something that makes you uncomfortable, try to stay with it—great literature makes us question our assumptions about the world. I may sometimes announce which sections contain material that some might find offensive. Feel free to come and talk to me about the books (or anything else, for that matter!).

ANOTHER NOTE: I will post the syllabus on D2L and also on my EIU faculty page: <https://www.eiu.edu/english/faculty.php?id=dmmarkelis>

AND YET ANOTHER NOTE: The final exam date/time (or due date if the exam is take-home is Thursday, May 2nd, from 10:15 to 12:15.

CLASS SCHEDULE

#1	T	01/08	Introduction to course
	TH	01/10	Discussion of handout, <i>Trauma Theory Abbreviated</i>
#2	T	01/15	<i>Writing as a Way of Healing</i> Part One
	TH	01/17	<i>Writing as a Way of Healing</i> Part Two
#3	T	01/22	<i>On Edge</i> Chapters 1 to 3 (including 3)
	TH	01/24	<i>Hunger</i> Parts One and Two
#4	T	01/29	<i>Hunger</i> Parts Three and Four
	TH	01/31	<i>Hunger</i> Parts Five and Six
#5	T	02/05	<i>Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal</i> Chapters 1 to 5 (including 5)
	TH	02/07	<i>Why Be Happy</i> Chapters 6 to 10 (including 10)
#6	T	02/12	<i>Why Be Happy</i> Chapters 11 to 14 (including 14)
	TH	02/14	<i>Why Be Happy</i> Chapters 15 to the end
#7	T	02/19	<i>Smashed</i> xi-134
	TH	02/21	<i>Smashed</i> 135-247
			Essay One on Hunger and/or Why Be Happy Due
#8	T	02/26	<i>Smashed</i> 247 to the end
	TH	02/28	<i>A Piece of Cake</i> 1-113

#9 T 03/05 *A Piece of Cake* 114-200
TH 03/07 *A Piece of Cake* 201-338
Collection of journals or typed up pages from journal

SPRING BREAK

#10 T 03/19 *A Piece of Cake* 339-the end
TH 03/21 *Writing as a Way of Healing* Part Three

#11 T 03/26 *Lying*
TH 03/28 *Lying*

#12 T 04/02 *Lying*
TH 04/04 *Lying*

#13 T 04/09 *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*
TH 04/11 *I Know Why*
Essay Two Due (three options will be discussed in class)

#14 T 04/16 *I Know Why*
TH 04/18 *I Know Why*

#15 T 04/23 *On Edge* Chapters 4 to 7
TH 04/25 **Collection of journals or typed up pages from journal**
Rest of *On Edge*

NOTE: I may make minor changes to this syllabus in order to suit the needs of the class. Changes will always be announced in advance.