

TCORE 101

Life Writing and Identity: Language and the Creation of the Self



Class Times	Tues/Thurs 1:30 p.m. – 3:35 p.m. TLB 115
Office Hours	Weds. 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. or by appointment KEY 204
Contact	Dr. Andrea Modarres Use Canvas email or modara@uw.edu

Course Description

In this course, we will study written and graphic texts, in hard copy and online, and explore how writers communicate a sense of “self” through particular kinds of narratives. “Life writing” is a broad term that includes conventional biography and memoir, essays in disciplines such as science or nature writing, journals, letters, oral testimony, and eyewitness accounts to history; in recent years, we have seen a proliferation of personal writing online, from blogs to forums such as Reddit, to Twitter accounts, and these can also be studied through the lens of the “self.” In examining a variety of texts, from literacy narratives to graphic memoir, we will investigate notions of identity construction, and attempt to understand some of the ways life writing reflects specific social, cultural, and historical frameworks.

Core

The Core program consists of a coordinated series of courses that represent the various disciplines in the university. This course, along with the others in your cohort, fulfills one of the university’s general education requirements in each of the areas of knowledge plus composition. The courses are designed to both support and challenge you to develop the critical thinking, writing, research, and analytical skills you’ll need at UWT while introducing you to relevant topics in the social sciences, humanities, and sciences.

Learning Objectives

The Core program emphasizes several areas of broad study, each with specific learning objectives, as follows:

- *Inquiry and Critical Thinking* - collect, evaluate, and analyze information and resources to solve problems or answer questions; approach complex issues by taking a large question and breaking it down into manageable pieces; make meaningful connections among assignments and readings in order to develop a sense of the 'big picture.'
- *Communication/Self-Expression* - formulate an original thesis driven argument and sustain it in both written and verbal communication; identify, analyze, and summarize/represent the key elements of a text; enter into an existing dialogue, such as an intellectual or political debate; express ideas clearly in writing and speaking in order to synthesize and evaluate information before presenting it.
- *Global Perspective - Diversity - Civic Engagement* - understand events and processes as 'disciplinarily' situated; interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to the interdependences between personal, local, and global relationships; think outside of cultural norms and values, including personally-informed perspectives, to critically engage the larger world; interact with concepts, ideas, and processes related to civic engagement.
- *Quantitative Literacy* - Use quantitative evidence (including statistics, graphs, etc.) in support of an argument; analyze and evaluate a chart or graph and interpret it (through discussion, a written assignment, etc.); find quantitative data to support an argument.

Additional learning objectives that more closely reflect activities in this course include:

- *Reading* - Close read 20-100 pages a week, depending on difficulty of the material; locate key points and sub-points of scholarly and non-fiction texts.
- *Research* - Use at least one academic database through UWT library website to research background material on texts being studied.
- *Critical Thinking* - Succinctly summarize the main argument of texts and key supporting points; compare texts and synthesize evidence to produce your own argument.
- *Writing* - Plan for composing with pre-writing and post-writing strategies; compose 4-6 page thesis-driven analysis essays that are well-reasoned, well-organized, and clear; reference sources by integrating in-text and bibliographic citations with the appropriate style (for this class, we will use MLA guidelines); revise and improve major compositions in regard to content and structure as well as sentence-level editing.

Required Texts and Materials

They Say, I Say by Graff & Birkenstein

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic by Alison Bechdel

Maus by Art Spiegelman (either the combined volume or the two separate ones)

Access to course Canvas site (for course materials, including some readings)

I will expect students to come to class with the readings assigned for that day in hard copy or on a reading device such as a Kindle or Nook. Please do not come to class without the reading for reference as we discuss it.

Grading and Assignments

The course grade will be assessed based on the following components:

Literacy Narrative (first essay worth points but graded only pass/fail):	20%
Rhetorical Analysis essay:	25%
Final Essay on graphic text:	30%
Homework:	15%
Participation:	10%

The course grade will follow the UWT's standard scale, which can be accessed online at <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/enrollment-services/grading-policies>

A (94-100%)	3.9 - 4.0	C (74-76%)	1.9 - 2.1
A- (90-93%)	3.5 - 3.8	C- (70-73%)	1.5 - 1.8
B+ (87-89%)	3.2 - 3.4	D+ (67-69%)	1.2 - 1.4
B (84-86%)	2.9 - 3.1	D (64-66%)	0.9 - 1.1
B- (80-83%)	2.5 - 2.8	D- (60-63%)	0.7 - 0.8 (Lowest passing grade)
C+ (77-79%)	2.2 - 2.4	E (0-59%)	0.0 (Failure or unofficial withdrawal; no credit earned)

- ❖ Late rough drafts of essays will cost you homework points; if rough drafts of essays are not turned in at all, the essay grade will also be lowered by 5%.
- ❖ Final drafts of essays submitted past the due date will lose a full grade (10%) per class period (not per day); no final drafts will be accepted more than one week late.
- ❖ We will be using Turnitin.com software as a tool for learning some of the conventions of academic writing. You will be required to submit essays to Turnitin using the class Canvas site. The Turnitin website and UWT's Turnitin Technology & Scholarly Work page both have information about the process: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-technology/turnitin-students> and <http://turnitin.com/>
- ❖ Essays will be counted as having been turned in on time if they are uploaded by the deadline to turnitin.com **AND/OR** a hard copy is handed in on time. If you do not upload them on time, you will lose homework points and may be required to email me a copy for upload before receiving a grade.
- ❖ No in-class activities can be made up. No homework will be accepted late. However, you may turn assignments in early, or send them to class by the due date with someone else.
- ❖ Unless arranged ahead of time for very special circumstances ONLY, I will accept NO work via email. Be responsible enough to back up your work and complete your assignments early so you can avoid that last minute panic when your computer dies, your internet goes haywire, or your printer runs out of ink.
- ❖ Unless otherwise specified, all work completed outside of class and handed in must be typed (and stapled or paper-clipped if more than one page long). In most cases, handwritten work (except in-class writing) will not receive credit.
- ❖ Grading criteria will be discussed in class; in general, however, my comments on your written work will consider the following: purpose, audience, content, expression, organization, development of ideas, mechanics, and maturity of thought.

- ❖ Please keep all graded work handed back to you until after final grades are filed. If there is a question about a grade, this will be your backup. Without proof, I will adhere to the grade (or lack thereof) recorded in my grade book.
- ❖ I do not assign extra credit or make-up work or allow "do-overs" on minor assignments.
- ❖ I will allow a rewrite of the first essay (not the final essay) **under the following conditions only:**
 - Both rough draft and final draft must have been turned in on time;
 - No plagiarized work can be rewritten or resubmitted;
 - The essay must be revised and returned within two weeks of the day I return essays in class (whether you are present that day or not);
 - You must have participated fully in any peer reviews or workshops for that essay;
 - Significant revisions (not just "proofreading" corrections) are required before I will consider changing the grade. There is no guarantee that revising an essay will improve its final grade, but the grade will never go lower as a result of revision.
 - Revised essays must be accompanied by a cover page outlining all changes made and why.
- ❖ I strongly recommend that you take advantage of the help provided by UWT's Teaching and Learning Center, which provides assistance with writing assignments, reading strategies and general study skills, through individual tutoring, online consultations, workshops, and more. See the webpage for more information: <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/teaching-learning-center>. The library is also a place to go for help with the research process; the webpage is at <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/library/>.
- ❖ If you would like your final essay back after it is graded, you may arrange a time to pick it up during the next quarter OR provide a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your final draft. Do **NOT** plan to pick up any assignments in the IAS office.
- ❖ Per UWT policy, "a grade of Incomplete is given only when the student has been in attendance and has done satisfactory work until within two weeks of the end of the quarter and has furnished proof satisfactory to the instructor that the work cannot be completed because of illness or other circumstances beyond the student's control."

Academic Standards/Plagiarism

All student work must be free of plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined in the University catalog and in the Student Handbook. Consult your professor if you have any questions.

A major part of your experience in the class will be reading, synthesizing, and using the knowledge and ideas of others. It is the responsibility of the faculty to help you in this process and to be certain you learn to credit the work of others upon which you draw. To plagiarize is to appropriate and to pass off, as one's own ideas, writing or works of another. Plagiarism is no less of a misconduct violation than vandalism or assault. Ignorance of proper documentation procedures is the usual cause of plagiarism. This ignorance does not excuse the act. Students are responsible for learning how and when to document and attribute resources used in preparing a written or oral presentation.

For more information, please refer to the "Student Academic Responsibility" document prepared by the Committee on Academic Conduct in the College of Arts and Sciences, UW Seattle: <http://depts.washington.edu/grading/pdf/AcademicResponsibility.pdf>

Classroom Policies

This course is based largely on discussion and in-class work; missing excessive classes or arriving late on a regular basis will affect your grade negatively even if you turn in all required essays. Please do not make a habit of arriving to class after the scheduled start time, as it is extremely disruptive. If you think you will consistently have a problem arriving on time, you should strongly consider a different class schedule.

I expect all students to approach the class with a sense of commitment and responsibility - if you are not serious about learning, you do yourself and everyone else in the class a disservice. Therefore, I expect all students to observe the following simple guidelines:

- ❖ Unless you have obtained prior permission from me, silence and put away all electronic devices for the duration of class. Please do not keep your cell phone anywhere visible to the rest of the class.
- ❖ Do not plan to read the newspaper, write in your journal or planner, or work on homework for another class.
- ❖ In most cases, I do not allow students to use their computers in class except on days when the whole class is working on essay drafts.
- ❖ Avoid distracting others during class with a lot of personal conversation. If you enroll in the class with a friend, relative, or significant other, your personal relationship should be secondary to your role as student.
- ❖ The educational process can only take place in an environment of reasoned discussion, intellectual honesty and respect for others. All students are expected to abide by the university's Student Conduct Code, which you can find here: http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/studentaffairs/SI/conduct_code.cfm
- ❖ Any behavior considered disruptive or threatening will not be tolerated. We will treat each other with respect for diverse views and beliefs and refrain from any inappropriate remarks, either spoken or written. I will require you to leave the classroom if your activities are disruptive, distracting, or disrespectful to me or to your classmates.

If you ever have any questions or concerns about this course, please let me know in person or via email. Students should treat emails to instructors as professional writing: include a formal salutation of some sort, state the reason for emailing professionally and carefully, and always include full name and class section or time. I will answer as soon as I can, but please do not expect a response over the weekend or in the evenings. I may be online during those times, but you cannot count on it. In other words, if you email me the night before an assignment is due with questions and issues that you should have resolved earlier, you will probably not hear back from me before class. I am here to help you all I can, but the final responsibility for your success as a student lies in your hands.

Additional campus policies and resources:

Student Health Services (SHS) is committed to providing compassionate, convenient, and affordable health care for University of Washington Tacoma students, from care for illness and minor injury to women's health and preventative medicine, including vaccination services. Insurance is not required. Funded by UW Tacoma student fees, office visits are provided free of charge. Treatment plans may incur costs, such as medications, labs, or vaccines, most of which are offered at discounted rates. For more information, please visit www.tacoma.uw.edu/shs or email uwtshs@uw.edu. If you have questions or would like to schedule an appointment, please call (253) 692-5811 or stop by SHS at the Laborer's Hall on Market Street.

The **Counseling Center** offers short-term, problem-focused counseling to UW Tacoma students who may feel overwhelmed by the responsibilities of college, work, family, and relationships. Counselors are available to help students cope with stresses and personal issues that may interfere with their ability to perform in school. The service is provided confidentially and without additional charge to currently enrolled undergraduate and graduate students. To schedule an appointment, please call 253-692-4522 or stop by the Student Counseling Center (SCC), located in MAT 253. Additional information can also be found by visiting <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/counseling>

Disability Support Services: In compliance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, any enrolled student at UW Tacoma who has an appropriately documented physical, emotional, or mental disability that "substantially limits one or more major life activities [including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working]," is eligible for services from Disability Support Services (DSS). If you are wondering if you may be eligible for accommodations on our campus, please contact the DSS reception desk at 692-4522, or visit <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/dss>

Campus Safety Information -- <http://www.tacoma.uw.edu/administrative-services/campus-safety>

Safety Escort Program: For your safety, UW Tacoma encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to use the Safety Escort Program. Campus Safety Officers are available to walk you to your car or other campus destinations during the following hours: Monday - Thursday – 6 a.m. to 11 p.m.; Friday – 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. The service is free of charge. During busy periods, the Campus Safety Officer may ask you to meet in a common location as to facilitate escorting multiple people. Dial 253-692-4416 to request a Safety Escort.

Inclement Weather Policy: Call 253-383-INFO or check the UW Tacoma homepage to determine whether campus operations have been suspended or delayed. If not, but driving conditions remain problematic, call the professor's office number or check Canvas. These resources should provide information on whether class will be held or not, and/or the status of pending assignments. Information on inclement weather, including how to sign up for text alerts, can be found at <http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/security/alert/students.cfm>

In case of a fire alarm - Take your valuables and leave the building. Plan to return to class once the alarm has stopped. Do not return until you have received an all clear from somebody "official," the web or email.

In case of an earthquake - DROP, COVER, and HOLD. Once the shaking stops, take your valuables and leave the building. Do not plan to return for the rest of the day. Do not return to the building until you have received an all clear from somebody "official," the web, or email.

Please also familiarize yourself with the **campus email policy**:
http://www.tacoma.washington.edu/policies_procedures/E-mail_Policy.pdf