

**HENRY FORD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
DEARBORN, MICHIGAN
COURSE MASTER: ENGLISH 236**

APPROVAL DATES:

English Division: 24 March 2006.

Academic Council: 21 June 2006.

Council: 6 November 2006.

DIVISION: ENGLISH

COURSE NUMBER AND TITLE: English 236: American Autobiography.

CREDIT HOURS: 3.

TOTAL CONTACT HOURS: 47.

PREREQUISITES: A grade of C or better in English 131.

COREQUISITES: None.

COURSE GRADING SCALE: A through E.

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: This course will introduce students to published essays, narratives, autobiographies, memoirs, journals and/or diaries by Americans who have significantly influenced the social, cultural, and political composition of America. The course will also examine issues such as gender inequality and religious institutions that compose American society.

MAJOR CORE COURSE OBJECTIVES (MEASURABLE):

Through the literary exploration of essays, narratives, autobiographies, memoirs, journals and/or diaries written by Americans, students will be able to do the following:

1. Analyze literary texts to identify how they address major issues related to race, gender, ethnicity, multiculturalism, and various religious groups that compose American society. **(General Education Outcome #1)**
2. Identify major political and historical events and describe how they affected the lives of the American people. **(General Education Outcome #1)**
3. Identify influential ideas and practices and describe the ways in which they have shaped the American experience. **(General Education Outcome #1)**
4. Be able to place the assigned writers in the proper historical timeframe to better understand the issues and ideas being discussed.

5. Identify some of the following key literary terms that are essential to an introductory-level understanding of the memoir and autobiography as a representation of the American experience, such as allegory, anecdote, antagonist, antithesis, atmosphere, biographical criticism, captivity narrative, carpe diem, character, conflict, connotation, cultural studies, denotation, dialect, dialogue, diary, epistolary novel, fiction, figure of speech, first-person narrator, foreshadowing, gender criticism, genre, historical criticism, ideology, image, initiation story, irony, journal, memoir, motif, narrator, non-fiction novel, oral tradition, plot, protagonist, reader-response criticism, rhetoric, satire, setting, style, symbol, theme, third-person narrator, and tone.
6. Trace how the autobiography has evolved over time, beginning with the narrative and culminating with the memoir.
7. Explain the importance and /or distinctive achievement of key writers of the autobiography, such as Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Mouroud Barghouti, William Bradford, Annie Dillard, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Jacobs, Thomas Jefferson, Maxine Hong Kingston, Thomas Paine, Sylvia Plath, Mary Rowlandson, Samuel Sewell, Era Bell Thompson, Henry David Thoreau, John Updike, Booker T. Washington, and Richard Wright.

RECOMMENDED MEANS OF ACHIEVING COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Students should do the following:

1. Understand the historical and social context of the autobiography being studied and how it represents American society.
2. Read autobiographical work from various periods in American society.
3. Research biographical information about assigned writers when such information could be helpful in understanding the themes and ideas presented in the literature.
4. Take quizzes on assigned readings.
5. Keep a reading-response journal.

ASSESSMENT OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:

Student learning will be assessed in the following ways:

Note: Essay assignments should be a minimum of 1,200 words and may or may not include documentation.

Option 1

1. Students will write an essay which examines both the writer of the text and his or her influence on the social, political, and cultural composition of America and ways of thinking about America. (**General Education Outcome #1**)
2. Students will write an essay which examines **and** **one or more** of the selected texts that deals with the issue of race, ethnicity, and multiculturalism in American society. (**General Education Outcome #1**)

Option 2

1. Students will write an essay which compares and contrasts ideas in America and describe how they have and continue to influence the American experience. (**General Education Outcome #1**)
- and**
2. Students will write an essay which defines social institutions and the changes that have affected America over the past **fifty** years and the causes and effects of such changes. (**General Education Outcome #1**)

A common rubric will be developed to assess student learning of course objectives. Student papers will be evaluated bi-yearly to ensure that they are meeting the goals of the course. These results will be forwarded to CASL by the beginning of the following semester.

In addition to essays, instructors may incorporate quizzes, an oral presentation, a reading journal, and/or a documented report to assess student learning.

GENERAL COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Students will do the following:

1. Read substantial and representative autobiographical selections from at least **five** influential figures in American society such as Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Mouroud Barghouti, William Bradford, Annie Dillard, Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Benjamin Franklin, Harriet Jacobs, Thomas Jefferson, Maxine Hong Kingston, Thomas Paine, Sylvia Plath, Mary Rowlandson, Samuel Sewell, Era Bell Thompson, Henry David Thoreau, John Updike, Booker T. Washington, and Richard Wright.
2. Read representative selections of literary texts that explore gender, social, economic, and political circumstances of **two or more** racial, ethnic, or religious groups that compose American society.
3. Regularly engage in thoughtful discussion of the assigned readings.

TEXTS:

Instructors may choose **one** of the anthologies listed below. If an anthology is selected, the instructor may still select **two** additional texts from the booklist.

Anthologies:

Note: This is a “working” booklist. Other texts may be added with the approval of the Literature Committee.

Andrews, William L., ed. *Classic American Autobiographies*. Signet Classics, 2003.

Cole, Joni B., Rebecca Joffrey, and B.K. Rakhra., eds. *This Day: Diaries From American Women*. Beyond Worlds Publishing, 2003.

Dillard, Annie., ed. *Modern American Memoirs*. Perennial, 1996.

Gates, Henry Louis., ed. *The Classic Slave Narratives*. Signet Classics, 2002.

Gonzalez, Ray., ed. *Muy Macho: Latino Men Confront Their Manhood*. Anchor, 1996.

Hutner, Gordon., ed. *Immigrant Voices: Twenty-Four Narratives on Becoming an American*. Signet Classics, 1999.

Kim, Elaine H et al., ed. *Making More Waves: New Writing by Asian American Women*. Beacon Press, 1997.

Krupat, Arnold., ed. *Native American Autobiography: An Anthology*. University of Wisconsin Press, 1994.

If an anthology is not selected, the instructor should choose **five to fifteen** texts from the booklist below. The length of each book will determine the number of books selected.

Single Books:

Note: This is a “working” booklist. Other texts may be added with the approval of the Literature Committee.

- Abouzeid, Leila (Author) and Barbara Parmenter (Translator) *Year of the Elephant: A Moroccan Woman's Journey Toward Independence*
- Ahmed, Leila. *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey*
- Angelou, Maya. *I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings*
- Antin, Mary. *The Promised Land*
- Apple, Max. *Roommates*
- Baldwin, James. *Notes of a Native Son*
- Barghouti, Mouroud (Author) and Souief (Translator). *I Saw Ramallah*
- Bulason, Carlos. *America is in the Heart*
- Bradford, William. *Of Plymouth Plantation*
- Brown, Claude. *Manchild in the Promised Land*
- Cha, Theresa Hak-Kyung. *Dictee*
- Cisneros, Sandra. *My Wicked Wicked Ways*
- Cofer, Judith Ortiz. *Silent Dancing; The Latin Deli*
- Columbus, Christopher. *First Voyage to America: From The Log of Santa Maria*
- Crafts, Hannah and Henry Louis Gats Jr. *The Bondwoman's Narrative*
- Dathcer, Michael. *Raising Fences: A Black Man's Love Story*
- Davis, Angela. *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*
- Dickens, Charles. *American Notes*
- Dillard, Annie. *An American Childhood*
- Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of an American Slave*
- DuBois, W.E.B. *The Autobiography of W.E.B. DuBois: A Soliloquy on Viewing My Life from the Last Decade of its First Century*
- Dunham, Katherine. *A Touch of Innocence*
- Eggers, Dave. *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius: A True Story*
- Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Selected Writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson*
- Equiano, Olaudah. *The Interesting Narrative of The Life of Olaudah Equiano*
- Everett, Syble. *Adventures with Life: An Autobiography of a Distinguished Negro Citizen*
- Fisher, Antwone Q and Mim E. Rivas. *Finding Fish: A Memoir*
- Franklin, Benjamin. *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*
- Gates, Henry Louis Jr. *Colored People*
- Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The Living of CPG*
- Gilbert, Olive and Sojourner Truth. *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (Dover Thrift Edition)
- Gilyard, Keith. *Voices of the Self...*
- Gomez-Pena, Guillermo. *Dangerous Border Crossers: The Artist Talks Back*
- Hall, Donald. *Lifework*
- Hamper, Ben. *Rivethed*
- Harrison, Juanita. *My Great, Wide Beautiful World*

Hollibaugh, Amber L. *My Dangerous Desires: A Queer Girl Dreaming Her Way Home*
 Hooks, Bell. *Bone Black*
 Howard, Jane. *A Different Woman*
 Hurston, Zora Neale. *Dust Tracks on a Road*
 Hughes, Langston. *The Big Sea*
 Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in The Life of a Slave Girl* (Dover Thrift Edition)
 Jefferson, Thomas. *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson*
 Jennings, Francis. *The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest*
 Kingston, Maxine Hong. *Woman Warrior*
 Lim, Shirley Geok-Lin. *White Moon Faces*
 Mankiller, Wilma and Michael Wallis. *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People*
 Martinez, Ruben. *The Other Side: Notes from the New L. A., Mexico City, and Beyond*
 McCall, Nathan. *Makes Me Want to Holler*
 McCarthy, Mary. *Memories of a Catholic Girlhood*
 McKay, Claude. *A Long Way From Home*
 Mfume, Kweisi. *No Free Ride: From the Mean Streets to the Mainstream*
 Mingus, Charles. *Beneath the Underdog*
 Monet, Paul. *Becoming a Man: Half of Life Story*
 Morris, Willie. *North Toward Home*
 Paine, Thomas. *Common Sense*
 Plath, Sylvia. *The Bell Jar*
 Raybon, Patrica. *My First White Friend: Confessions on Race, Love, and Forgiveness*
 Robeson, Paul. *Here I Stand*
 Rowlandson, Mary. *A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson*
 Santiago, Esmerelda. *When I Was Puerto Rican*
 Schuyler, Philippa Duke. *Adventures in Black and White*
 Sewell, Samuel. *The Diary of Samuel Sewell*
 Shakur, Assata. *Assata: An Autobiography*
 Shakur, Sanyika. *Monster: Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member*
 Tanner, Annie. *A Mormon Mother*
 Terrell, Mary Church. *A Colored Woman in a White World*
 Thompson, Era Bell. *American Daughter*
 Thoreau, Henry David. *Walden: Or, Life in the Woods*
 Twain, Mark. *Autobiography*
 Updike, John. *Self-Consciousness*
 Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery* (Dover Thrift Edition)
 Whitman, Walt. *Leaves of Grass*
 Wright, Richard. *Black Boy*

CORE COURSE TOPICAL OUTLINE:

Instructors may choose to follow the course outline below when preparing to teach this course. The order of the topics may be rearranged with the instructor's discretion; however, the topics below should be addressed in some manner in the course so that we remain in compliance with the General Education Outcome #1.

1. Introduction to the autobiography (Course Objective #6)
2. The language of literature (Course Objective #5)
3. The autobiography as a representation of American life (Course Objective #3)
4. Major ideas and events that have influenced American society (Course Objective #2 & #3)
5. Social and political institutions that shape American society (Course Objective #2)
6. Diverse populations and cultures that compose American society (Course Objectives #1)

