English 335: Autobiography  
Spring 2011  
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Course Description:
3 crs. 3 hr.
To enroll in ENG 335, students must pass ENG 101 and 201 or 121 or its transfer equivalent.

This course will introduce the student to autobiography in the context of literary debate: why do we read autobiography? How do we classify autobiography, as non-fiction or fiction? Works by both men and women of many cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds will be included. Students will examine the various styles, elements, as well as the recurring themes in autobiography, while working on their own “reflection of the self.”

Prof. Pari’s description of this course:
Autobiography is a vast topic as it encompasses spiritual autobiography, slave narratives, rage-to-riches stories, immigrant stories, self-help stories, and so on. Thus, this semester we will focus on one type of autobiography called “literacy narratives.” Literacy narratives are autobiographical accounts of one’s experience learning to read and write in and out of school. These stories about literacy and education relate to other issues, such as race, social class, politics, and gender. We will read classics like Frederick Douglass’s Narrative of the Life of a Slave, contemporary works like Keith Gilyard’s Voices of the Self, an account of growing up in New York City during the civil rights era, and many other works written by a diverse group of authors. Your own autobiographical writing will have a similar focus.

About the Workload
MANAGING YOUR TIME TO SUCCEED IN ONLINE COURSES: The key to success in an online course is managing your time throughout the week in order to accomplish the tasks. Find a few hours at least twice a week, at the same times and on the same days, or maybe find one hour per day. This course usually meets for 3 hours in the classroom, so that means you should spend that much time reading the lecture notes and completing the discussion board activities. You then need to spend time reading the week’s assignment and sometimes completing some written autobiographical work (usually around 2 pages). Although it depends on how long it takes you to complete the assignments, I suggest you set aside at least another 3 hours for the homework. You will need to create a schedule and stick to it. It’s very easy for an online course to overwhelm you if you start falling...
behind. However, if that happens, please speak to me privately. I can help you manage the tasks if you are new at this. Students can also help each other. There are many resources available even at BMCC to help you succeed in online learning.

**READING:** Each week you are responsible for completing a reading assignment. In addition, you will also be responsible for reading that week’s introduction or lecture notes, reading questions, and any other additional materials, including videos, audio content, images, links, etc. All folders are located in “Weekly Folders” and are arranged by week.

**WRITING:** Each week you are also responsible for posting a response to my questions on the discussion board and submitting autobiographical writing fairly often (sometimes weekly). The brief writing assignments will be short drafts (1-2 pages) of autobiographical writing that will not be graded. You can then revise these pieces after submitting them to me/students for feedback. They can be used to help you complete the completed autobiography which will be graded. Rather than have you write your autobiography all at once, I believe it will be much more manageable if you write a little at a time each week (much how like professional writers work). The readings and discussions will often give you inspiration, ideas, and models for your own writing; in fact, I will often connect the two.

**Student Learning Outcomes and Measurements**
According to the English Department, students enrolled in a 300-level course will be able to:

- Discuss course content in a range of critical contexts
- Demonstrate knowledge of themes and genres of course texts.
- Critique the complexities within and differences among course texts.

More specifically, after completing ENG 335, students will be able to:

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<tr>
<th>ENG 335 Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Measurements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand and define memoir</td>
<td>Discussion Board posts; Exams; Autobiographical writing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand and define “literacy narrative” as a genre of autobiography</td>
<td>Reading assignments; Discussion Board posts; Exams; Autobiographical writing</td>
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<td>Become familiar with authors from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>Reading assignments; Discussion Board posts; Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand various writing styles, techniques, and themes in autobiography</td>
<td>Discussion Board posts; Quizzes; Exams; Autobiographical writing</td>
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<td>Produce written responses to texts read</td>
<td>Discussion Board posts; Quizzes; Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft and revise one’s own autobiographical manuscript of at least 10 pages</td>
<td>Autobiographical writing</td>
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Below are the college’s general education learning outcomes that will be covered and assessed in this course.

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<th>General Education Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Measurements (means of assessment for general education goals listed in first column)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication Skills - Students will be able to write, read, listen and speak critically and effectively.</td>
<td>Students will read texts and participate in class discussions. Students will write drafts and revisions of their autobiographical manuscript.</td>
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<td>Arts &amp; Humanities - Students will be able to develop knowledge and understanding of the arts and literature through critiques of works of art, music, theatre or literature.</td>
<td>Students will examine works of literature to understand certain concepts of writing and autobiography and of placing oneself in the context of history.</td>
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<td>Information &amp; Technology Literacy - Students will be able to collect, evaluate and interpret information and effectively use information technologies.</td>
<td>Students will use internet search engines to gather information relating to writing topics, and to understand vocabulary words.</td>
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<td>Values - Students will be able to make informed choices based on an understanding of personal values, human diversity, multicultural awareness and social responsibility.</td>
<td>Students will read and write about topics that involve personal values, human diversity, multicultural awareness and social responsibility.</td>
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**Required Texts:**


**ISBN-10:** 1550710982 **ISBN-13:** 978-1550710984

**Use of Technology**

You are expected to have a CUNY portal account and to know how to use Blackboard.

**Evaluation and Requirements of Students:**

Your success in this course depends, in part, on your willingness to make and fulfill the following commitments:

1. **To complete all assignments on time:**
   For reading assignments, you are expected to read the assigned material and to participate in a discussion about the text(s) through the Discussion Board on Bb. Each Discussion Board post is graded and worth points that add up to approximately 100. Attendance, participation, and briefer writing assignments account for 25% of your grade.

2. **Quizzes and Exams:**
   There will be quizzes, a midterm and a final exam on the autobiographies we will be reading. These account for 25% of your grade.

3. **Your Literacy Narrative/Writing Autobiography:**
   You will work on this throughout the semester on a weekly basis. This accounts for 50% of your grade.

Most likely, you will receive higher grades for work extensively revised and improved.
You will have much freedom to develop as a writer with a unique voice and purpose. Therefore, you will decide on your own whether to continue revising a piece. You should develop habits most writers have, so try not worry so much about grades. However, I would like to explain how the grading in this course works:

To receive an A in this course:
- all written assignments and discussion board posts are completed on time
- discussion board posts show an excellent understanding of the reading and originality of thought or are insightful and meaningful, inspiring many others to respond
- "A" quality written work on autobiography, which is at least 15 pages; "A" on midterm and final exams
- extensive effort in revision of writing

To receive a B in this course:
- all written assignments and discussion board posts are completed on time with only an occasional lateness
- discussion board posts show much effort, and a very good understanding of the reading
- "B" quality written work on autobiography which is at least 12 pages; "B" on midterm and final exams
- much effort in revision of writing

To receive a C in this course:
- all written assignments and discussion board posts are mostly on time
- discussion board posts show some effort and a good understanding of the reading
- "C" quality written work on autobiography which is close to 10 pages; "C" on midterm and final exams.
- some effort in revision of writing

These are just general sketches of each grade as there is room for much variation here. For example, a student may earn a B on his/her autobiography and As on exams. So, such a student may earn a B+ or A-.

Though I only have descriptions for A-C grades, I do assign lower grades. It should be obvious that less participation in class discussion boards or posting with little effort and a lack of understanding of what was assigned to read, less effort with written work, and poorer quality work will result in lower grades.

College Attendance Policy
At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the number of hours a class meets in one week. For example, you may be enrolled in a three-hour class. In that class, you would be allowed 4 hours of absence (not 4 days). In the case of
excessive absences, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an F or WU grade.

**Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities**
Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Accessibility Office (Office of Services for Students with Disabilities). BMCC is committed to providing equal access to all programs and curricula to all students.

**BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement**
Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one’s own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC’s web site, [www.bmcc.cuny.edu](http://www.bmcc.cuny.edu). For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).