

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
The City University of New York

Department of ENGLISH

Title of Course:	Course Number:	ENG 335
<b>ENGLISH 335: AUTOBIOGRAPHY</b>	Class Hours per Week:	3
	Lab Hours:	0
	Credits:	3

A. Description

English 335 will introduce students to autobiography in the context of the literary debate: Why do we read autobiography? How do we classify autobiography, as nonfiction or fiction? Works by both men and women of many cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds will be included. Students will examine the various styles, elements, and themes in autobiography, while working on their own "reflections of the self."

B. Prerequisites and/or Corequisites

English 201 or English 121

C. Student Outcomes

Students will

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

D. Required Texts and/or Supplementary Materials

Primary Sources Could Include the Following:

Kincaid, *Annie John*, *At the Bottom of the River*  
Franklin, *Autobiography*  
Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*  
Sanger, *Autobiography*  
Stanton, *Eighty Years and More*  
Yeziarska, *Bread Givers*, *Red Ribbon on a White Horse*  
Smedley, *Daughters of the Earth*  
Rich, "Split at the Root"  
Simon, *Bronx Perspective*

Sarraute, *Childhood*  
Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*  
Hellman, *An Unknown Woman, Pentimento*  
Rose, *Norton Anthology of Women's Lives*

Secondary Sources Could Include the Following:

Butterfield, *Black Autobiographies in America*  
Eakin, *Fictions in Autobiography: Studies in the Art of Self Invention*  
Heilbrun, *Writing a Woman's Life*  
W. James, "Consciousness of Self," in *Principles of Psychology*  
Jelinek, *Women's Autobiography: Essays in Criticism; The Tradition of Women's Autobiography*  
Kazin, "Autobiography as Narrative," *Michigan Quarterly Review* 3, Fall 1964  
Leibowitz, *Fabricating Lives*  
Olney, *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography; Autobiography: Essays*  
Spengemann, *The Forms of Autobiography*  
Stone, *Autobiographical Occasions and Original Acts; The American Autobiography*

#### E. Evaluation and Requirements of Students

Students will be required to enter weekly reading responses in a journal, write a personal analysis of several works, do a critical analysis of one or two works, and compose a long biographical essay. Grades will be determined on the basis of students' total work in the course, including the written assignments, class participation, group work and any quizzes or examinations that are given.

#### F. General Education Learning Outcomes

Students 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 and differences among course texts.

#### **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 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).

### G. Outline of Topics

Week 1: Introduction: Why Do We Read Autobiography? Autobiography vs. Biography; Analysis of the Genre

Weeks 2-3: Literary Autobiography: Texts by Writers Such as McCarthy, Angelou, Thoreau, etc.

Weeks 4-5: Myth Creation: Texts by Writers Such as Kingston, Hellman, Hemingway, etc.

Weeks 6-7: Historical Context: Texts by Writers Such as Jacobs, Douglass, Augustine, etc.

Weeks 8-9: Family and Childhood: Texts by Writers Such as Wright, Hurston, Rivera, etc.

Weeks 10-11: Work: Texts by Writers Such as Sanger, Goldman, Malcolm X, Gordon, etc.

Weeks 12-13: Group Work: Each group can choose other autobiographies and topics of discussion

Week 14: Class Autobiographies