

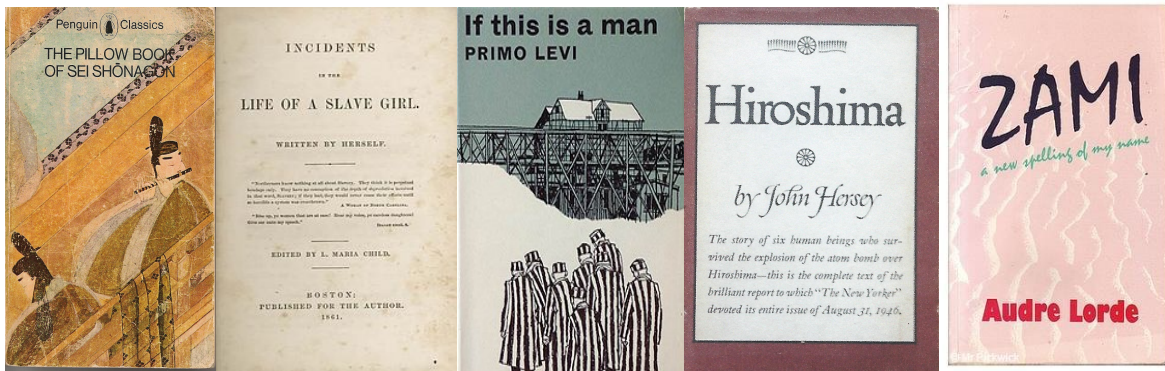
DePaul University

Lincoln Park Campus

Spring 2014

DePaul ENG 379-901 [MLS 449-302]

Topics in Literature: Creative Nonfiction Classics



Tuesdays 6:00-9:15 PM, 1 April—3 June 2014

Arts & Letters Hall, Room 204

Final Summary of Learning Letter DUE 11:59 p.m., Tuesday 10 June (D2L dropbox deadline)

~PROFESSOR: Barrie Jean Borich

Arts & Letter Hall 213-03 (2nd floor ENG Department annex/ in the corner)

Spring 2014 Drop-In OFFICE HOURS Tuesdays & Wednesdays 4:30-5:30. *Additional hours by appointment.* I'm available to take appointments many times during the week. You are welcome to stop by during my drop-in time but be aware that I might be busy with another student, so *it's best to make an appointment* even then, to be certain you're my first priority.

EMAIL: bborich@depaul.edu. Office: 773-325-8109.

I'm happy to hear from you and **email is quickest.** (I check my office voice mail infrequently so don't rely on messages left at that number.) I usually respond to email between 24 and 48 hours during the week, but occasionally get behind. Please send me a follow-up email if I don't respond within a couple of days.

I WILL USE EMAIL FREQUENTLY TO CONTACT ALL CLASS MEMBERS, usually through D2L, so please make sure Campus Connect has your current email address, and remember to check mail regularly.

Feel free to friend me at my public FACEBOOK site—*Barrie Borich Nonfiction-Universe*—developed for conversation within my teaching/writing communities. I try to add a few new links every week. I also tweet mostly on the topics of cities, bicycles and the future of the book. Follow me @BOOKofBJB.

~COURSE TEXTS

- *THE PROMISED LAND* By Mary Antin
- *LIFE OF BLACK HAWK, OR MA-KA-TAI-ME* By Black Hawk
- *HIROSHIMA* By John Hersey
- *INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL* By Harriet Jacobs
- *SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ/ If This Is A Man* By Primo Levi
- *ZAMI: A NEW SPELLING OF MY NAME* By Audre Lorde
- *MEMORIES OF CATHOLIC GIRLHOOD* By Mary McCarthy
- *PILLOW BOOK* By Sei Shonagon

Additional readings on D2L. If you do not plan to obtain and read the books—e-book or print is fine— please drop the class.

~COURSE DESCRIPTION

Contemporary writers frequently talk about Creative Nonfiction as an evolving, genre-defying form, but the origins of this literature are quite old and extraordinarily diverse. The roots of today's creative nonfiction include a myriad of time-honored writings of witness, testimony and lyric musing that critique, confront and comment on circumstances of the actual world. In this class we read literary nonfiction works published before the contemporary use of the term "creative nonfiction." Our focus includes: captivity and immigration narrative; personal rumination on race, identity, atrocity, justice and feminism; literary documentary and the nonfiction novel; nostalgic recollection; and meditation on the political necessity of self-naming.

~COURSE GOALS

To develop an informed understanding of literature from and about the actual and witnessed world—as such was published before nonfiction was considered a "creative writing" genre—and be able to speak to the ways this literature impacts the mission and form of creative nonfiction as it is read and written today.

~COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

See D2L for grading rubrics.

- **Reading and Face-to-Face /Online Discussion [10%]:** DISCUSSION is CENTRAL to this course. Come to class having read the ENTIRE assignment (usually a full book) and be ready for lively student-generated class discussion. Class participation (face-to-face and in blog comment streams) will be graded. Your preparedness will be evaluated by your active and substantive participation in class discussion, your responses on the Little Bitty Papers (see below) and any comments you contribute on your classmates' blogs.
- **Little Bitty Papers [8%]:** We will usually begin class with brief (5-10 minute) on-the-spot (and graded) writing designed to get you to respond intelligently to the readings and offer up questions for that night's class discussion. Due on notecards in class. *These cannot be made up if you miss that week's class.*
- **Blog [32%]:** Eight substantive blog posts written in response to that week's assigned reading, 250-500 words each. I will post questions on the instructor blog to help get you started, but you should feel free to go your own way. CHECK YOUR EMAIL for the Edublog invite to your blog (which only our class can see without the password). *Due weekly online by 5:59 on class meeting nights.* You will receive class participation points if you comment on classmate blogs.
- **Time & Place Report [10%]:** You will work in randomly assigned groups to research and share background and contextual information in presentations to the class designed to illuminate us all on the time and place of the books we are reading. Each group member will turn in a 250-500 word annotated bibliography describing their part of the research. (You receive zero points for including Wikipedia on your graded annotation, so be sure to go deeper, preferably into library databases and other research sources. Remember research librarians at Richardson Library are always happy to help.) *Presentations are due on the night we discuss the book you've been assigned. Topics will be assigned on the first night we meet and you will have some group work time in class during Week 2.*
- **Conversation Project [Presentation 5%—Essay 30%]:** In this 8-10 page paper and presentation you will choose any two of the authors we've read this term, from St. Augustine to Audre Lorde, and imagine they are in conversation with one another. Based on your deep and close readings of their texts, what do you suppose they would have to say about each other's work, and to each other, about the worlds they were a part of and witness to? You may present this as a conventional paper comparing and contrasting the form, focus, sensibility and impact of each writer, or you may write an imagined dialogue between the two. When presenting the dialogue option in class feel free to enlist a helper classmate to read one of the parts. *Presentations are due on the final night of class, and the paper is due in the D2L Dropbox by 11:59 that, after our final class.* I will not accept these assignments via email or on paper, so be sure to make the dropbox deadline. If you are locked out due to lateness please email me and though you will lose points I will reopen the box for you.
- **Summary of Learning Letter [5%]:** addressed to the instructor, 250-500 words outlining your class takeaways from the reading, the blogging, the discussion and the project work, reflecting on your learning in this class. *Due in the D2L Dropbox by 11:59 on the final exam date.*

~COURSE CALENDAR (Subject to Change—Check D2L for calendar updates)

Please complete all assignments and readings by the dates listed here. **Blogs** are due by 5:59 p.m. on the night of class. See my instructor blog page [To Attempt Or Try] for weekly blog prompts. **Time & Place Presentations** are due the night the related book is assigned and the completed **Research Annotations** are due in the D2L Dropbox by 11:59 the night of class.

~WEEK 1 1 April

Introductions: A bit of Augustine, Montaigne and Shonagon, to get us going.

~WEEK 2 8 April

Read excerpts from *THE CONFESSIONS* [D2L] by Saint Augustine, *ESSAYS* by Michel de Montaigne [D2L] and *THE PILLOW BOOK*, By Sei SHONAGON [Assigned Book]. This week's reading will be spread across the three reading groups assigned on the first night of class. I encourage you to read all the assigned selections if you can, but you are only responsible for the Shonagon pages listed below, along with the pages assigned to your group.

- **GROUP Augustine:** Read "Book 2" of Augustine's *Confessions* (see course reserves on D2L) and "Of Idleness" and "Of the Force of Imagination" from Montaigne (see D2L for Links)
- **GROUP Michel:** Read "Book 3" of Augustine's *Confessions* (see course reserves on D2L) and "Of Liars" and "Of the Custom of Wearing Clothes" from Montaigne (see D2L for Links)
- **GROUP of the Pillow:** Read "Book 8" of Augustine's *Confessions* (see course reserves on D2L) and "Not to Counterfeit Being Sick" and "That We Taste Nothing Pure" from Montaigne (see D2L for Links)

EVERYONE read the first 101 sections of Sei Shonagon's *The Pillow Book*, and pick three more sections from the rest of the text to read as well. Respond to the email invite from Edublogs, set up your blog and post your first remarks by class time on 15 April, and come to class with questions about the Shonagon book to pose to the group

~WEEK 3 15 April

INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL By Harriet Jacobs

~WEEK 4 22 April

LIFE OF BLACK HAWK, OR MA-KA-TAI-ME By Black Hawk

~WEEK 5 29 April

THE PROMISED LAND By Mary Antin

~WEEK 6 6 May

SURVIVAL IN AUSCHWITZ (If This Is A Man), By Primo Levi

~WEEK 7 13 May

HIROSHIMA By John Hersey

~WEEK 8 20 May

MEMORIES OF CATHOLIC GIRLHOOD By Mary McCarthy

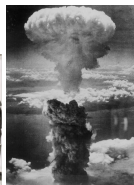
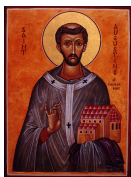
~WEEK 9 27 May

ZAMI: A NEW SPELLING OF MY NAME By Audre Lorde

~WEEK 10 3 June

DUE: Conversation Paper Presentations. 7-9 minutes each. Plan on around 1000 words excerpted from your paper. Your ESSAY is due in the D2L DropBox by 11:59 tonight, and should be 2000-3000 words.

~FINAL—Your 250-500 Summary of Learning Letter is due by 11:59 p.m., via the D2L dropbox, on the final exam date, 10 June. The final letter and paper will not be returned. *I'll post ALL final comments, in brief, in the D2L gradebook. Be sure you submit ALL materials to the D2L dropbox*



~CLASS EXPECTATIONS

I EXPECT YOU TO:

- *Show up and speak to each other.* This class is a collaborative learning community; everyone must engage and participate. If you are quiet you must find ways to speak up more often, and if you are a talker you must find ways to help open discussion space for others.
- *Be the community member you'd like your classmates to be.* Listen closely to comments before responding; don't interrupt each other; don't overshare; don't lead discussion into side topics; remember to critique the ideas, NOT the speaker. Come to me with concerns.
- *Say to yourself "I am willing to be persuaded."* Learning is a process with many stages and changes of mind. If we could do it alone we'd just stay home, but as long as we're all here let's learn from each other.
- *Read ALL assigned texts, and read beyond your preferences,* considering the purpose of the assignment, in the context of the class, before engaging with your own likes and dislikes.
- *Check your campus email, and the D2L site,* and take responsibility for being aware of what I post and mail to you, assuming I wouldn't spend my time emailing you unless the information I want you to see is important.
- *Come to me ahead of time if you need some special consideration.* You don't have to divulge private details, but I can't make accommodations if I don't know there's a need.
- *Ask questions,* but not until AFTER you've read the syllabus carefully.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM ME: *committed attention to your individual voice and talents; a strong push in areas where I believe you can do better; my own long and tenacious experience as a working artist and teacher, the lessons of which I am happy to share; an abiding belief that if you work and stay open and accept critique, you will learn and develop as a thinker, writer and citizen; a fair and direct communication style; a willingness to engage in creative problem-solving; a deep love and respect for the material of this class, which I'm eager to share.*

I look forward to all the ways you will amaze me this term. Unleash yourself and bring me your best work!

GRADE BREAKDOWN:

- Reading & Face-to-Face and Online Discussion [10%] 100 points
- Little Bitty Papers [8%] 8 mini-papers graded at 10 points each, 80 points total
- Blog [32%] 8 blogs at 40 points each, 320 points total
- Time & Place Report [10%] 100 points
- Conversation Project [5% Presentation, 30% paper] 350 points
- Summary of Learning Letter [5%] 50 points

TOTAL 100% 1000 points

FINAL GRADE POINT SCALE

A=950–1000	A–=910–949		
B+=880–909	B=850–879	B–=810–849	
C+=770–809	C=730–769	C–=690–729	
D+=650–689	D=630–649	D–=610–629	F=less than 600

You start this course at zero and earn a grade through accumulating points, earned by the work you do. If you show up, are an engaged attentive citizen, turn in all your work you'll do fine. Absences beyond the minimum, consistent lateness, and leaving a class in session show up as subtractions from your final points. If you don't turn in any of the required major drafts or don't show up for your workshop or presentation dates without making prior arrangements, you will fail. Finally, at the end of the term, much of your grade will be based on the quality, depth, nerve, craft-based skill and ambition of your revision. Please plan to knock me out!

~OFFICIAL COURSE POLICIES

LAPTOPS and PHONES: I DO allow electronic devices in the classroom. I believe in the power of technology as a writing tool, support the use of e-books (and think of my own laptop as a shiny beloved puppy) and encourage you to do so as well (the first two parts of this sentence at least.) THAT SAID—we're all aware of the problems and temptations. Please know that while I allow devices for writing, note-taking, and research purposes, I DO NOT allow use in class unrelated to our work. Please be courteous. DO NOT: answer cell phones, send text messages, check e-mail or social media, shop, check the game score, register for the coming term, or do anything at all on your device unrelated to our immediate classroom activities. I reserve the right to look at your device screen to make sure you are doing class work. I don't wish to police you, but all actions in the classroom impact every single member of the group. Please abide by these guidelines and don't put either of us in the awkward position of stopping class to intervene on electronics-related distractions.

ABSENCES: We have only ten weeks of meetings, so it matters whether or not you are present. I expect you to attend every class. However, you are allowed ONE absence, for any reason, serious or frivolous. It's not my business to prove or disprove why you are here, so the same rule applies to everyone. If you miss more than one class you will lose significant grade points every missed session and may have a problem passing the course without completing additional work. Do not schedule family events, medical appointments, social or professional meetings during class time. If you face a life emergency of some kind please talk to me before you miss class, or as soon as possible after. The worst thing you can do is just disappear.

PREPARATION: Just showing up is not enough. Lack of preparation will impact your grade. You are responsible for knowing what is due and when, and I expect you read all assigned texts and to note and meet every deadline. If you have questions about deadlines, please ask. If you are having life problems preventing you from completing your work please tell me the truth about what's going on and we will proceed as fairly as possible.

CONDITION OF WORK: Please make sure all work submitted (digital or paper) is professionally presented—i.e. carefully edited, paginated, word-processed with 12-point type and double-spaced, and if printed, using black ink on white paper (one-or-two sided, but no scratch paper), stapled, **with your full name on the front page AND in the electronic document title.** [Remember that once your work is on my hard drive I have difficulty identifying the author of *ASSIGNMENT1.doc*. Do us both a favor and label your submissions.]

INCOMPLETES: An incomplete grade is given only for an exceptional reason such as a death in the family or a serious illness. Any such reason must be documented, and requests for incompletes must be made at least two weeks before the final exam period.

HONESTY: All students should be familiar with DePaul's academic integrity policy and resources before beginning course assignments. Students in this course should be aware of the strong sanctions that can be imposed against someone guilty of plagiarism. If proven, a charge of plagiarism could result in an automatic F in the course and possible expulsion. The strongest of sanctions will be imposed on anyone who submits as his/her own work any assignment that has been prepared by someone else. If you have any questions or doubts about what plagiarism entails or how to properly acknowledge source materials, be sure to consult the instructor. **SHORT VERSION of my PLAGIARISM POLICY: Don't do it; I will fail you.**

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Students who feel they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately, as early as possible in the quarter (preferably within the first week of class) to discuss their specific needs. All discussions will remain confidential. Also make sure that you have contacted the: PLuS Program (for LD, AD/HD) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370, and/or the Office for Students with Disabilities (for all other disabilities) at 773-325-1677, Student Center #370

WRITING CENTER: Correct grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling are required, and I will grade down any work that comes to me with mechanical problems. If you have any concerns about writing mechanics, please contact The Writing Center, a wonderful resource open to undergrads and graduate students. To schedule a Face-to-Face Meeting, Written Feedback by Email, or Online Appointment, visit www.depaul.edu/writing.