COURSE OVERVIEW:
This course examines nonfiction narratives based on personal experience but written for public audiences, asking how writers use genre conventions and formal strategies to make claims about history, memory, politics, and identity. In this section of English 378, we will focus on personal essays and book-length memoirs by recent American writers such as Dorothy Allison, Alison Bechdel, Patricia Hampl, bell hooks, Lucy Grealy, David Sedaris, and John Edgar Wideman. Assignments include leading and participating actively in seminar-style discussion, attentive reading of all assigned texts, three exams, one short creative essay, and one longer analytical essay.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Analyze the strategies and aims of memoirs, autobiographies, and personal essays.
2. Support arguments based on textual analysis.
3. Use formal terms from the fields of rhetoric and literary studies to describe and interpret memoirs, autobiographies, and personal essays.

WRITING-INTENSIVE STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
As this course carries the WI (Writing Intensive) marker, students who complete this course will also be able to:
4. Recognize and write in genres appropriate to the discipline of English.
5. Use informal and formal approaches to writing and multiple drafts to deepen their mastery of the subject.
6. Incorporate constructive feedback from readers to improve written work.

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS:
Instruction will proceed primarily through strategies adopted from active-learning pedagogy; students will write frequently, both formally and informally, will revise repeatedly, and will adopt a variety of forms and genres to gain familiarity with the communication practices typical in English studies.
Formal assignments include:

*Analytical Essay* [SLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6] (5-6 pages; 25pts.)
You’ll draft, workshop, and revise an analytical essay that should respond to one of the questions/prompts posted to Blackboard and should perform a close reading of one of our course texts. You should support your claims about how this text is working by quoting and interpreting specific passages from your chosen text; other secondary sources are not necessary. A complete draft (at least five pages) of the essay must be completed before an in-class workshop; your peers will give you feedback on this draft that should be incorporated into your final revision. A successful analytical essay will articulate a clear and arguable thesis, will support the thesis using textual evidence based on close analysis of the text, will be clearly organized and clearly written, and will be edited and proofread.
Three Mini-Exams [SLO 1, 2, 3] (in class; 10pts. each)
Throughout the semester, three in-class exams will give you the opportunity to demonstrate your mastery of the assigned readings and to practice interpreting passages. Exams will typically ask you to identify the speaker, context, and significance of several lines of a text, to identify the context and significance of objects or characters that appear in a text, and to respond to brief essay prompts by taking a position and marshaling examples from assigned readings.

This I Believe Essay [SLO 1, 3, 4, 5, 6] (10pts.)
In addition to analyzing personal essays and book-length memoirs, we’ll conclude the semester by studying how everyday citizens use personal narratives to make public claims through a study of NPR’s This I Believe series. After listening to and analyzing a series of these short audio essays, you’ll compose your own 3-4 minute audio presentation, which you will revise over the course of two workshops and present to your peers. You’ll also provide a brief self-reflection essay (roughly 2 pages long) that indicates the features of the This I Believe genre that your essay replicates and the formal elements that you used to create specific effects in your own essay.

Discussion Leading [SLO 1, 3, 5] (two times; 10pts. each)
Each of you will sign up for two days in which you’ll serve as a Discussion Leader. To prepare for your turn as Discussion Leader, you should thoroughly digest the day’s reading assignment, identify specific passages to analyze during discussion, and compose thoughtful questions to engage your classmates. During class, you (along with one other classmate, usually) will be responsible for guiding discussion for approximately 30 minutes, during which time I will hold back, supporting rather than leading discussion myself. While guiding discussion, you should seek to include as many students as possible, should provide room for varied positions in response to your questions, and should work to keep discussion lively and engaged—which might mean asking your peers to write, speak, move around the room, or engage in some other activity. At the end of each meeting in which you are a Discussion Leader, you will turn in a printed sheet (1-2 single-spaced pages) that includes 3-4 passages marked for discussion, at least 3-4 thoughtful, engaging discussion questions, and any other notes you’ve used to prepare.

Active Engagement in All Class Activities [SLO 1, 3, 5] (15pts.)
Your engagement, attention, and participation in all class activities—including individual writing exercises, small group writing exercises and discussions, large group discussions and activities, and in-class workshops—is required. Your in-class writing should be kept in one place so it can be easily produced whenever required during class: either a small writer’s notebook which you bring to every class meeting, or, if you have a laptop, in an electronic file on your laptop which you will post to Blackboard occasionally.

EVALUATION AND GRADING:
Because this class carries a WI marker, you will write during most class meetings, will complete frequent informal writing out-of-class, and will complete multiple assignments demanding analytical and argumentative writing. All assignments must be completed to earn credit for the course. In-class work will be evaluated according to how fully, thoughtfully, and productively you engage in class discussions and activities. Out-of-class work will be evaluated according to assignment-specific rubrics; you should use these rubrics as you prepare your writing, share it with your classmates, receive and incorporate feedback from your classmates and from me, and revise your writing for final grading.
Grades will be assigned to major activities as follows:

- Active Engagement in Class Activities and Completion of In-Class Writing (15pts.)
- Analytical Essay (25pts.)
- Mini-Exams (30pts. total, 10pts. each)
- Discussion Leading (20pts. total, 10pts. each)
- This I Believe Essay with Critical Reflection (10pts.)

Final letter grades will be determined by the following scale:

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<tr>
<th>Points Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>92.5-100pts.</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90.0-92.4pts.</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87.5-89.9pts.</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>82.5-87.4pts.</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.0-82.4pts.</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77.5-79.9pts.</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>72.5-77.4pts.</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70.0-72.4pts.</td>
<td>C-</td>
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<tr>
<td>67.5-69.9pts.</td>
<td>D+</td>
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<tr>
<td>60.0-67.4pts.</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>0-59.9pts.</td>
<td>F</td>
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**REQUIRED TEXTS:**


+ Additional essays posted to Blackboard.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY:**

Each student is required to abide by the Academic Integrity Policy on all work throughout the course. *Plagiarism is a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy*. Violations of academic integrity are serious academic offenses that will not be tolerated in this class. I expect every student to review the guidelines and list of violations at [http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu](http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu) and to abide by the UNCG Academic Integrity Policy. As you will see, violations include but are not limited to plagiarism.

A person commits plagiarism when he or she represents someone else's words or ideas as his or her own. In writing your papers, you must take care to avoid plagiarizing the words or ideas of others. When you use sources such as books, web pages, articles, or primary documents in your writing, you must identify them to your reader. If you quote a source directly, you must put the borrowed material in quotation marks and include a proper citation. If you take an idea from another source but put it in your own words (i.e. paraphrase it), you must still give proper credit to the source. Please use MLA style documentation to document any sources used in written work, unless I have asked you to use another documentation style. Be scrupulous about documenting, quoting, and citing your sources even in first drafts. A draft that has been read by your instructor or classmates has not been ‘checked’ and given the okay; it is always your responsibility to make sure you understand and have successfully followed rules of citation and documentation in all your writing.

All suspected violations of the academic integrity policy will be reported to the Dean of Students, and
proven violations will result in serious repercussions. In my classes, a single violation of academic integrity is grounds for failure of the entire course. Repeated offenses can cause you to be expelled from the University. You can avoid these consequences by 1. never deliberately misleading your instructors or being dishonest in your writing, and 2. asking for clarification about any rules or standards for source-use that you do not understand. If you are ever unsure about how to cite a source or whether an act would be considered plagiarism, please ask me about it before you turn in your work.

ATTENDANCE POLICY:
All students are permitted three absences without penalty. For these absences, no explanation is required, and indeed, I prefer not to hear explanations because my assumption when you are absent is that you have good reasons for being so. All absences beyond the third will result in deductions from your final grade. Furthermore, in-class writing cannot be made up, and assignments are still due, even if you are absent, so you should arrange for a classmate to turn in required assignments in your absence. Because I provide information about classroom activities on Blackboard and in the syllabus, I will not respond to emails that ask “What did we do in class?” Following an absence, you should consult the syllabus, read announcements posted to Blackboard, and, if necessary, contact a classmate to learn whether there are any informal assignments or changes to the syllabus that require your attention before the next class.

Any enrolled student who is absent for the first two class meetings or who misses three classes before Aug. 29 will be dropped from the course. Any student missing eight or more classes for any reason will be dropped from the course; prior to Oct. 10, which is the last day to withdraw from a course without academic penalty, this will result in a grade of “W” for the course; after Oct. 10, this will result in a grade of “WF” for the course.

Exceptions to these attendance policies will be made for students who participate in a varsity athletic program or who must miss class due to religious observances and who speak with me well in advance of such absences.

FINAL EXAMINATION: In lieu of holding a final examination, for this course you will submit a final project—your This I Believe essay and critical self-reflection—during our last class meeting.

DISRUPTIONS AND DISTRACTIONS:
I expect all participants in this class to engage thoughtfully and respectfully with each other, and I will intervene and, if necessary, remove from class any student who persists in disrespectful or disruptive behavior. I ask that you silence and stow your technological gadgets for the entirety of the class meeting, that you actively listen and maintain respectful conversation even when others’ opinions differ strongly from your own, and that you refrain from any use of derogatory or abusive language.

POLICY ON LATE WORK AND EXTENSIONS:
Your assignments should always be posted to Blackboard and printed and brought to class by the beginning of class on the due date. If you will be absent, you must make arrangements to have your work brought to class by a friend or peer. If you will be absent on a day when a workshop is scheduled,
you must make arrangements with your groupmates to both receive and provide feedback on the draft outside of class in order to receive credit for the workshop.

Any informal writing we do in class cannot be made up; this writing generally serves its purpose during that class period and isn’t formally graded. You are welcome to complete these writing activities on your own outside of class, but you do not need to complete them and turn them in to me if you miss class.

Any assignment that we are workshopping in class cannot be granted an extension.

Any formal assignment is due at the beginning of class on the due date. I require an electronic and a printed copy to provide some flexibility here: if you have turned in either your printed copy or your electronic copy before the deadline, your assignment won’t be considered late, though I’ll also expect you to turn in both versions as soon as possible (for instance, by posting the electronic copy when you’re next at your computer, or by bringing the printed copy to our next class meeting). Assignments that are turned in late will lose 1 point for each day they are late. Thus, an assignment due at 9:00am on Monday will lose 1 point if it is turned in any time between 9:00am Monday and 9:00am Tuesday, and another point every 24 hours afterward.

Make-Up Exams can be scheduled if you have a documented religious or athletic conflict and communicate this conflict to me at least one week before the exam’s scheduled date; in such cases, you will typically have to make arrangements to take the exam before your classmates take it. If you miss an exam unexpectedly due to an emergency, make-up exams may be scheduled at my discretion—probably at 8am—and they may differ from the version of the exam taken by your classmates.

I am happy to provide extensions on assignments that are due to me for grading (as opposed to assignments that are due to your classmates for workshopping). To seek an extension, simply send me an email at least twelve hours before the due date and specify the date and time you would like to set as your new deadline. This new deadline (A) should be no more than a week beyond the original deadline, and (B) is absolutely inviolable. There are two risks you undertake if you seek an extension: First, you cannot miss your new deadline; a paper that is not turned in by the extended deadline will receive an F. Second, you are likely to receive less extensive and less timely feedback from me on your writing when you have received an extension. I typically return student papers a week to a week and a half after I have collected them; I make no promises regarding timely responses to papers that have been granted an extension.

OFFICE HOURS:
I am available for drop-in appointments during my office hours each week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 11:15 to 12:00pm. I’m also happy to make additional appointments outside of office hours; please talk to me to schedule an appointment if you cannot meet during office hours.

BLACKBOARD:
You will use Blackboard extensively during this course to talk to your groupmates, to sign up for conferences with me, to print copies of handouts, and to get feedback on your writing. I will use Blackboard to contact you and to post course announcements and reading assignments. For these reasons, check the course page frequently—in particular, the day before each class period.