

# English 1102: Narrating Criminal Memory in Literature and Culture Fall 2014, Georgia Institute of Technology – Writing and Communication Program

## Syllabus – Course Objectives and Policies

### Sections

- 1102C, MWF @ 8:05am, Clough 125
- 1102A, MWF @ 9:05am, Clough 325
- 1102B, MWF @ 11:05am, Skiles 317

Professor: J. Stephen Addcox, PhD

Email: james.addcox@lmc.gatech.edu

Course website: T-Square

Office Hours: MW 1:00 – 2:30, Hall 121

### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course will allow students to cultivate effective communication strategies through textual and visual analysis, writing, presentation, collaboration, and creative design. Students will create artifacts in order to hone their strategic processes for communicating in multiple WOVEN modes (written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal). Our topic for developing these artifacts and strategies is the relationship between memory and crime in many fictional narratives.

Furthermore, in the context of the legal system, the question of how memory relates to testimony has been important to narratives that offer imaginative representations of crime. The frailty of memory is central to this question; in 1825, the philosopher and legal theorist Jeremy Bentham claimed that memories are both lost in forgetfulness as well as created through “false recollections.” Over the course of this semester, we will encounter a variety of narratives that seek to represent the uncertainty that often accompanies testimonial memories of criminal activity. Through multiple media, including text, film, and video games, we will consider larger questions about the nature of memory and testimony. Can we trust our own memories? What impact does our understanding of memory have on the way our legal system functions? Our readings and our work in this class will explore why these concerns remain so central to much of the cultural and creative discourse surrounding narratives of crime.

### Required Texts and Materials

- Rossington and Whitehead, eds. *Theories of Memory: A Reader*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2007. ISBN: 9780801887291
- WOVEN Textbook
- James Hogg, *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*. Oxford World’s Classics, 2010. ISBN: 9780199217953
- Walker Percy, *Lancelot*. Picador, 1999. ISBN: 9780312243074
- *Amnesia* (Video game, 2010). Available via Steam and at amnesiagame.com
- *Thirty Flights of Loving* (Video game, 2012). Available on Steam and at blendogames.com
- Additional readings will be made available on T-Square. Students are expected to have either printed or electronic copies of these readings in class on the days they are assigned.

## **APPROACH TO THE COURSE**

This course will be structured primarily like a seminar, in which students are expected to take a proactive role in shaping the class discussion and focus. As a class that is designed to hone your communication skills, class meetings are a key component in the process of further developing your written, oral, visual, electronic and non-verbal communication. Consequently, class meetings may involve discussion, in-class writing and assignments, student-led presentations, workshops and peer review, online writing & publication. Throughout the semester, students should be looking for ways to draw connections between the varied texts and concepts that we will be studying in order to develop their capacity to create detailed, informative, and insightful approaches to the course assignments specifically and communication generally.

## **EXPECTED STUDENT OUTCOMES**

In addition to course outcomes for all English 1102 courses listed in the Common Policies section on T-Square, this course include the following outcomes; students should be able to:

- Articulate and explain historical and contemporary memory theories
- Create connections between fictional works from various genres and historical contexts
- Multitask with audio/visual and textual communication
- Relate the concepts of memory and testimony to criminal justice and the legal system

## **SUMMARY OF COURSE UNITS AND PROJECTS**

### **Part I: Memorial Narrative**

We will begin the class by considering the role the perspective plays in memory. Our texts will include narratives in which more than one character recalls the same events, often with surprising distinctions between the various accounts. Furthermore, we will discuss the ways in which this perspectival distinctiveness creates complications for how the legal system handles testimony. The major assignment in this section will ask students to create their own testimonial memory of an event from their life, specifically one that someone else (a friend, relative, etc.) might remember differently. Writing in a narrative style, students will craft an essay that communicates first their personal recollection of the event followed by an imagined retelling of the event from the perspective of someone else. Finally, students will conduct a brief interview with the person involved to see how their imagined version compares to the individual's actual recollection.

### **Part II: Unraveling Narratives of Crime**

This section will elaborate upon Part I, by focusing on the role that the mind plays in representations of criminal memory in imaginative narrative. We will consider the impact that first-person narration has on readers/viewers in their approach to and understanding of such narratives. Drawing from the reflective nature of these testimonies, students will form groups and work on a multi-part project in which they analyze a particular narrative that we have read by researching, writing, and recording a deposition of a particular character. First, students will select their narrative and generate an annotated bibliography on the issues and concepts relevant to their text. Next, the group will write and produce a 5-10 min recording that probes a particular character's testimony through a deposition format. Finally, students will present their recording in class, followed by questions and discussion based on their analysis.

### **Part III: The Technology of Memorial Participation**

At this point, we will turn to the possibilities that technology bring into the world of memory and testimony, specifically through interactivity, virtual reality, and participation. In order to explore these ideas, students will play through two video games that emphasize the ways in which memory can be both linked to and occluded by trauma and crime. For the final project in this class, students will develop an interactive narrative in which the audience participates in or interacts with a testimonial memory. The testimony should make an evidence-based argument, while allowing the reader/player to impact the organization of the argument. While this project will use text, students will be required to incorporate visual cues or design into their final product.

### **ASSIGNMENT REQUIREMENTS**

Throughout the semester, students should keep in mind that they will be archiving and presenting selections of their work for the final portfolio. As such, be sure to maintain copies of all drafts, notes, and final products throughout the semester. Use track changes or similar functionality to document a projects evolution over time. Your final product for each assignment should represent professional level work that is polished and presentable.

### **WOVEN COMMUNICATION**

In keeping with the WOVEN focus of the Writing and Communication Program at Georgia Tech, students will be expected to develop their communication skills through written, oral, visual, electronic, and non-verbal scenarios. This class will pay particular attention to the following areas:

**Written** – Argument organization, evidence selection, and clarity

**Oral** – Decisive delivery, responsive discussion, and striking a professional and formal style of address

**Visual** – Clean and efficient design, effective spatial organization of information

**Electronic** – Using brevity to make a point succinctly, considering the uncertainty of audience in web-based communication

**Non-verbal** – the importance of professional body language in presentation, attentiveness and engagement as an audience member

### **LATE AND MISSED ASSIGNMENTS**

Late work is highly discouraged and will only be permitted under extraordinary circumstances and with advance notice (except in the case of extreme emergencies). If a student feels that they are likely to complete an assignment late, they should contact me in order to establish a timeline for completion. Without **prior** permission, late work will receive a half-letter grade penalty for each day beyond the due that it remains unfinished. In-class assignments and presentations that are scheduled on the same day as an officially sanctioned university absence, may be made up, but students should confer with me in advance of their absence.

### **REVISION POLICY**

During the course of the semester, students may select an individual component of the first three assignments (see below) for revision and improvement of their grade. This process will involve a required conference in which the student will outline their revision strategy and goals. Undertaking a revision does not threaten the student with a lower grade; in the unlikely event

that a revision receives a lower score than its predecessor, the student will receive the higher of the two grades. More details on the revision policy will be given as the semester progresses.

## **APPOINTMENTS**

It is often the case that students who take the time to come to office hours find themselves benefitting from the additional feedback and discussion. Writing is a conversational act, and engaging in one-on-one conversation can help in that process. I always encourage my students to meet with me during my regular office hours, or by appointment if necessary.

## **ASSESSMENT**

### **Assignment Breakdown**

1. Diagnostic Assignment (i)	25 points
2. Memorial Narrative (i)	150 points
3. Annotated Bibliography (s-c)	100 points
4. Deposition Project (c)	150 points
5. Presentation & Discussion (c)	50 points
6. Interactive Testimony (c)	225 points
7. Response Essays (5x20 points) (i)	100 points
8. Participation & Attendance (i)	100 points
9. Portfolio (i)	100 points

TOTAL: 1000 points

(i): Individual assignment

(c): Collaborative assignment

(s-c): Semi-collaborative assignment

**A: 895-1000 points; B: 795-894; C: 695-794; D: 595-694; F: 0-594**

## **COURSE POLICIES**

Georgia Tech's Writing and Communication Program has common, program-wide policies regarding these areas:

- General Education Outcomes
- Learning Outcomes
- Evaluation Equivalencies
- Evaluation Rubric
- Attendance
- Participation in Class
- Non-discrimination
- Communication Center
- Accommodations
- Academic Misconduct
- Syllabus Modifications
- Dead Week
- Reflective Portfolio

You can access these common Writing and Communication Program policies on T-Square: [<http://blogs.iac.gatech.edu/wcppolicies/engl-1101-and-engl-1102-common-policies/>]. You are required to acknowledge that you have read, understood, and intend to comply with these policies

## Daily Schedule – Reading and Writing Assignments

*NOTE: All reading and writing tasks are **due on the day** they appear on the syllabus. This schedule of assignments is subject to change; it is your responsibility to keep informed of any updates, including when you are absent.*

### Common Week

Week One (August 18 - 22)

- M - Course Introduction and Syllabus Review  
- **Diagnostic assigned**
  
- W - Ted Chiang, “The Truth of Fact, The Truth of Feeling”  
- Discuss diagnostic assignment
  
- F - Brainstorming, drafting, and workshopping assignments  
- WOVENText 1 & 2

### Part I: Introduction – Memory and Testimony

Week Two (August 25 – 29)

- M - Zizek, Introduction *Violence* (2008) [available on T-Square]  
- Response 1 (in class)  
- **Diagnostic Assignment Due**  
- **Memorial Narrative assigned**
  
- W - *Rashomon* (bring laptops)  
- WOVENText 9, 12, & 13  
- **Begin reading *Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* [PMCJS]**
  
- F - *Rashomon* (cont.)

Week Three (September 1 – 5) **\*\*NO CLASS on Sept. 1, Labor Day\*\***

- W - Discussion PMCJS pp. 1-93  
- Response 2 (in class)
  
- F - PMCJS pp. 94-134  
- Holst & Pezdek, “Scripts for Typical Crimes and their Effects on Memory for Eyewitness Testimony” [T-Square]

Week Four (September 8 – 12)

- M - PMCJS pp. 134-196
  
- W - John Locke & David Hume, *Theories of Memory* pp. 75-84
  
- F - Finish PMCJS pp. 196-end  
- **Drafts Due**  
- WOVENText 27, 30

Week Five (September 15 – 19)

- M - Peer Review and Discussion

## Part II: Unraveling Narratives of Crime

W - The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari  
- **Memorial Narrative assignment due**  
- **Begin reading Lancelot**

F - The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (cont.)

Week Six (September 22 – 26)

M - **Deposition Project assigned**  
- WOVENText 32, 35, 36

W - Lancelot (chs. 1-5)  
- Response 3 (in class)

F - Discuss approaches to Deposition Project  
- WOVENText 48

Week Seven (September 29 – October 3)

M - Lancelot (chs. 6-7)

W - Trauma and memory, *Theories of Memory* pp. 199-211  
- **Annotated Bibliography Due**

F - Lancelot (ch. 8-end)

Week Eight (October 6 – 10)

M - Race and Memory, *Theories of Memory* pp. 238-252

W - **Deposition script drafts due**  
- WOVENText 81, 82

F - Peer review of script drafts

Week Nine (October 13 – 17) [**\*\*NO CLASS on Oct. 13, Student Recess\*\***]

W - Group conferences – no class meeting

F - **Submit final Deposition recording to T-Square**

Week Ten (October 20 – 24)

M - Deposition presentations  
- Response 4 (complete on your own time)

W - Deposition presentations

## Part III: The Technology of Memorial Participation

F - *Source Code* (screening in class)  
- Begin playing *Amnesia*

Week Twelve (October 27 – 31)

M - *Source Code* (screening in class)  
- WOVENText, 92-94

W - Discussion, *Amnesia*

F - Thomas Grip lecture (watch online)  
- Group Work

Week Thirteen (November 3 – 7)

M - **Interactive Project Proposal Due, T-Square (5pm)**  
-WOVENText 106, 107, 109

W - In-class gaming: *Thirty Flights of Loving* (bring laptops to class)

F - Bogost, Empathy & End of Gamers  
- **Response 5 Due, T-Square (11:55pm)**

Week Fourteen (November 10 – 14)

M - Dick, “The Minority Report” (Handout on T-Square)

W - **Portfolio assigned**

F - Project work day (No Class)

Week Fifteen (November 17 – 21)

M - **Interactive Project Progress Report Due, T-Square (5pm)**

W - Conferences (No Class)

F - Collective Memory, *Theories of Memory* pp. 133-143

Week Sixteen (November 24 – 28) **\*\*NO CLASS on Nov. 28, Thanksgiving\*\***

M - Optional conferences via Google Hangout

W - **Final Project Due on T-Square (11:55pm)**

Week Seventeen (December 1 – 5) [Dead Week]

M - Teaching evaluations  
- **Discuss Final Portfolio**

W - Workshop portfolios

F - Optional Conferences

**\*\*\*Portfolio Due to T-Square by the end of the scheduled exam time for your section.\*\*\***