**ENGL 1373 (crn 22631)**

**The Spotless Mind: Memory, History, and Identity**

   Instructor: Dr. Glenn Jellenik E-mail: gjellenik@uca.edu Office: 410 Irby Time: TR 9:25-10:40 Office Hours: MWF 11-12, or by appointment Place: Hughes

**“Without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no civilization, no society, no future.” --Elie Wiesel**

**Course Description:** Memory matters. It matters to us as individuals, and it matters to us as a society. Indeed, what we remember and how we remember what we remember goes a long way toward making us who we are. In this class, we’ll be engaging with stories and thinking about their relation to memory. Novelist Salman Rushdie says that “Man is the storytelling animal, the only creature on earth that tells itself stories to understand what kind of creature it is.” So, according to Rushdie, stories function as an attempt to understand ourselves. But beyond representing our externalized attempts at self-understanding, the stories we tell also come to function as a collective memory. For Elie Wiesel, the externalized act of memory (writing) actually guarantees the very preservation of our humanity. We will read (and watch) a series of texts that center and rehearse issues of memory. In doing so, we’ll think, talk, and write about the ways that memory functions as a theme in our culture, in our society, and in our own lives.

**Learning Outcome:** This class will look extremely closely at narratives and develop specific critical reading strategies. This class will give you an historical context and a toolbox that will allow you to develop your ability to critically analyze texts and to organize and express those analyses in written form. Thus, you’ll practice reading/viewing stories, forming ideas, observations, and arguments about those stories, and delivering those ideas, observations, and arguments in clear, concise, and effective written forms. So really, this is a course in alchemy! You’ll turn reading/viewing into writing—not as profitable as turning lead to gold or water to wine, but still pretty cool! **Writing will be a regular and important part of this class; as such, the ability to write well in** **Standard Academic English is necessary to your success.**

**My Policies.**

**Participation**: It comprises 15% of your final grade. That means that I expect everybody to participate in our discussions. Seriously, you do *not* want to listen to 75 straight minutes of my talking head everyday. We will explore a wide range of texts and topics in class; not only would it be impossible for all of you to agree with me and each other on everything, it would be boring. I highly encourage you to disagree with one another, and I highly encourage you to disagree with me. All I ask (actually, I don’t ask, I demand) is that you disagree with one another (and me) in a **constructive** manner that fosters conversation rather than shuts it down. Show respect for one another’s views, opinions and ideas.

In keeping with the idea that this is a safe space to share and test out ideas, I encourage you all to speak to one another in our discussions. That is, not all comments have to go through me at the front of the room. Let ideas bounce around the room—address one another directly. This will be best accomplished if you learn each other’s names. If done properly, we can all join together in an Intro-to-Fiction brother and sisterhood. We will now join hands and sing Kumbaya.

Small but **not** insignificant point: In order to truly participate productively in class, you need to have done the assigned readings. If it becomes obvious that you haven’t been doing the readings—and it’s not that difficult to tell—I’ll be forced to administer annoying quizzes at the beginning of each class. Don’t make me administer annoying quizzes. Do all the readings.

**Attendance:** If you intend to make a premium grade (A or B), you should attend class as frequently as possible, preferably everyday. Your final grade for this course will drop two points for every absence after two, except in rare situations. Infrequent absences caused by illness or accident, family death, official university functions, or inclement weather are acceptable, but you need to bring documentation of the reason to receive this consideration. If you should miss 4 or more classes, I will strongly recommend that you drop the class.

**Late arrivals/Early departures:** Avoid these at all costs; if it’s unavoidable, be as considerate as possible to your classmates.

**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*!!!!!!Cell Phones!!!!!!\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

 

Hear this now: Cell phone interruptions drive me nuts—seriously, they give me facial tics. So please turn off and stow all cell phones before class. Seriously, I don’t even want to see your cell phone. Really. Prove to yourself that you’re not addicted to the little monster: spend our 75 minutes out of its presence (#giveyourthumbsarest; #iknowthismakesmesoundreallyold).

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. All assignments are due on the day indicated on the syllabus, at the start of class. Period.

**Assignments and Grade value:**

Personal Memory Project (9/18) 10% \*Essay 1 (10/9) 25% Group Project (11/15) 10% \*Final Essay (12/13) 30% SWAs (short writing assignments) 10% Participation 15%

\*You cannot pass the class without completing **both** essays.

# Grades: Ahh, grading! Here’s the rub. One of the major sticking points between teacher and student comes down to a potential disparity in goals. My goal is that you develop as a thinker, reader and writer. Often (I didn’t say always, so don’t be offended!), your goal is to obtain a grade that will make you happy. See the potential conflict? Honestly, if I thought that handing out A’s were the best way to improve your thinking/reading/writing, I’d do it. Unfortunately, everything about your academic training to this point has worked in an opposite direction. In our system, I tie a carrot (grade) to a stick and dangle it in front of you as you pull the millstone. Sorry. I didn’t invent the system, but it’s where we work. On the bright side, in my experience, it’s relatively rare for the grade not to reflect the effort of the student.

Extra credit opportunities **may** be offered throughout the semester, but they exist in order to enhance your engagement with the college and our material, not to explicitly improve a student’s grade (though, of course, they will improve your grade). What I’m saying here is, don’t ask me to devise extra extra credit opportunities to make up for missed or poor work.

**University Policies.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans withDisabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the **Sexual Harassment Policy** and **Academic Policies**. You are responsible for acting in accordance with these university policies. If you have any questions about these policies and how they pertain to you, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

**Title IX disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit:  <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Texts: Books:** *Beloved* (Toni Morrison, 1987); *Everything Is Illuminated* (Jonathan Safran Foer, 2002); *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986/91); *The Trial of God* (Wiesel, 1979); *W, or the Memory of Childhood* (Perec, 1975). **Films:** *Memento* (Nolan, 2000); *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Gondry, 2004); *Ida* (Pawlikowski, 2013) (films are available on Kanopy, Netflix, and library Reserve).

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1:** **Welcome!**

Th 8/23: Introductions.

**Week 2:** **Unit I. Identity Crises: Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

T 8/28: Read: “We Can Remember It for You Wholesale” (Dick, 1966) Write: **SWA 1**

Th 8/30: Watch: *Memento* (Nolan, 2000)

**Week 3:** **Identity Crises: Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

T 9/4: No class

 Th 9/6: *Memento* Write: **SWA 2**

**Week 4:** **Identity Crises: Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

 T 9/11: Watch: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* (Gondry, 2004) Write: **SWA 3**

Th 9/13: *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*

**Week 5:** **Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

T 9/18: Read: *Beloved* (Morrison, 1987)

 **\*Due: Memory Project**

 Th 9/20: Read: *Beloved*

**Week 6:** **Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

 T 9/25: Read: *Beloved* Write: **SWA 4**

 Th 9/27: Read: *Beloved*

**Week 7: Does memory create us, or do we create memory?**

 T 10/2: Read: *Beloved*

 Th 10/4: Read: *Beloved* Write: **SWA 5**

**Week 8: Unit II. Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 10/9: Read: *Everything Is Illuminated* (Foer, 2002)

 **\*Due: Essay 1**

 Th 10/11: **Fall Break. No class**

**Week 9: Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 10/16: Read: *Everything Is Illuminated* Write: **SWA 6**

 Th 10/18: Read: *Everything Is Illuminated*

**Week 10:** **Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 10/23: Read: *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1986/1991) Write: **SWA 7**

Th 10/25: Read: *Maus*

**Week 11:** **Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 10/30: Read: *Maus*

 Th 11/1: Read: *Maus*

**Week 12: Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

T 11/6: Read: *The Trial of God* (Wiesel, 1979) Write: **SWA 8**

 Th 11/8: Read: *The Trial of God*

**Week 13: Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 11/13: Read: *The Trial of God*

 Th 11/15: Read: *W, or the Memory of Childhood* (Perec, 1975)

 **\*Due: Group Project**

**Week 14: Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

T 11/20: Read: *W, or the Memory of Childhood* Write: **SWA 9**

 Th 11/22: **Thanksgiving! No class.**

**Week 15. Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 11/27: Read: *W, or the Memory of Childhood* Write: **SWA 10**

 Th 11/29: Read: *W, or the Memory of Childhood*

**Week 16. Historical Crisis: The Holocaust, trauma, and collective memory**

 T 12/4: Watch: *Ida* (Pawlikowski, 2013) Write: **SWA 11**

 Th 12/6: Last Day!

**\*Final: Final Essay due: Thursday 12/13**