

English 103: American Selfie

Fall 2018



Instructor: Sarah Harsh
MWF 1-1:50
Room 214 Crosby

Instructor Email:
Office: Cosby 313
Course Website:

Office Hours: Weds. 3-5pm and by
appointment

Course Information

Course Description: From Walt Whitman to Kim Kardashian, self-expression has shaped American culture. This course introduces students to college writing through an exploration of “Selfie” culture in America. Students will be guided through the writing process from drafting to revision. This course will build the critical thinking and close reading skills necessary to improve students’ writing and enhance their learning at Spelman and beyond. We’ll study self-expression in a range of media, including music and photography, and across a variety of literary genres

such as memoir, autobiography, and autoethnography. Focusing primarily on self-expression by women artists of color, questions of race, gender, and sexuality will be central to our discussions. Artists studied include authors Roxane Gay and Audre Lorde; photographers Cindy Sherman and Laura Aguilar; and musicians Lauren Hill and Kendrick Lamar. Major assignments will include persuasive, literary, and archival research essays, as well as an album review and a photo essay. Active participation is required in this discussion-based class.

Course Learning Objectives and Rationale

Learning Objective	Related Assignment(s)
Formulate and craft personal and professional goals for improving your writing	Literacy Narrative
Investigate, identify, and compose (rhetorical and literary) characteristics of academic discourse and texts	Moodle Posts, Reading Assignments, Discussion Lead
Compose and deliver a multimodal composition that strategically uses oral and visual arguments	Photo Essay and Artist's Statement, Discussion Lead
Identify, select, evaluate, and (effectively) utilize a range of sources that are integrated into at least one major assignment	Position Piece, Archival Research Paper
Develop arguments through a structured revision process that demonstrates a substantial revision (e.g. strengthens the existing genre and/or appeals to various configurations of audiences, purposes, genres, mediums and styles)	Essay Revision
Participate actively in the editorial process with peers, instructors, and the writing center to practice improving the delivery of arguments, in terms of grammar and mechanics (e.g. syntax, diction, punctuation, spelling, and citation), as well as document design.	Workshopping, Position Piece, Literary Analysis, Revision
Compose fundamental components of a multi-page persuasive, academic argument which expresses the strategic invention and arrangement of claims, reasons, and evidence that includes considerations of counter-arguments and ethical use of sources	Position Piece, Literary Analysis, Archival Research Paper

Course Prerequisites: This course or its equivalent (Honors English 193) is required for all first-year students and is a prerequisite for all other courses in the English major.

Fourth Hour Justification: This course meets for three hours each week, yet students receive four hours of credit. To earn the fourth credit, you have to engage in outside activity that fulfills the goals of the class, generally 15 additional hours of parallel or out-of-class assignments. For this course, you will earn your fourth credit through completion of regular blog posts on Moodle, which will require you to engage with the readings and enter into a dialogue with your classmates. Additionally, this course will require at least one visit to Spelman's archives to be completed outside of class hours.

Required Course Texts:

- Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein, editors. [*They Say, I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing*](#). 4th edition. W.W. Norton & Co., 2018. ISBN: 978-0393631678
- Gay, Roxane. [*Hunger A Memoir of \(My\) Body*](#). Perennial, 2018. ISBN: 978-0-06-242071-8
- Lorde, Audre. [*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*](#). Crossing Press, 1982. ISBN: 978-0-89594-123-7
- Palmquist, Mike, editor. *Joining the Conversation*. Bedford/St. Matins. Copies available at Spelman.

Method of Instruction: While lectures will take place (typically as an introduction to a topic at the start of class) this is a discussion-based class where students are expected to actively participate in their own learning. This means coming prepared with thoughts on the day's assigned readings, engaging in class discussion, and participating thoughtfully in workshops.

Course Grading Information

Required Coursework: To pass this course you must satisfactorily complete all assignments and maintain an active level participation, both in class and on our course website. Here is a brief overview of major assignments. Detailed assignment sheets will be provided well in advance of due dates.

- **Literacy Narrative:** You'll begin our course by writing an autobiographical piece describing your own experiences with reading and writing and outlining your goals for our course.
- **Position Piece:** You'll write a persuasive essay which makes a claim about a topic, in this case, the selfie phenomenon. You will use and accurately cite sources we've read in class and supplement your argument with outside research.
- **Literary Analysis:** A rhetorical analysis which uses a thesis statement to make a claim about an author's choice of words and supports this claim using close reading and text-based evidence. Our text for this assignment will be Roxane Gay's *Hunger*.

- **Album Review:** Music is another genre of self-expression we will explore in this course. After listening to an album and reading reviews in class, you will choose another album with a strong autobiographical theme and write a review of it. You will write a proposal explaining your choice of album.
- **Archival Research Paper:** Spelman's archives house a collection of Audre Lorde's work. For this assignment, we will visit the Lorde collection for a hands-on archival experience. You will then write a paper comparing the published version of a chapter of Lorde's *Zami* to the draft versions found in the archives. This assignment will require you to perform archival research and will be a valuable opportunity to learn more about Lorde's writing process.
- **Photo Essay & Artist's Statement:** A multimodal composition which uses photos, captions, and an artist's statement tell a story or make an argument. Following our course theme, your photo essay will be a series of self-portraits. Note that we will be thinking of the self broadly and that your photos may, but need not, include your physical self.
- **Revision:** You will complete meaningful revisions on either your literary analysis or position piece. This revision will incorporate my feedback on an earlier assignment as well as your classmates' notes from workshop.

Grading Scale and Criteria: The assignments in English 103 will receive letter grades corresponding to percentage points. Below is a breakdown of each letter grade:

- **A (100-94%) / A-(93-90%): Excellent**
 - Assignments which thoughtfully respond to the topic and demonstrate exemplary rhetorical skills and mastery of genre.
- **B+ (89-87%) / B (86-84%) / B- (83-80%): Good**
 - Assignments which demonstrate a thorough understanding of the topic and a well-crafted response. While they may contain some minor errors, "B" assignments still demonstrate above-average rhetorical skills and a good understanding of genre.
- **C+ (79-77%) / C (76-74%) / C- (73-70%): Average**
 - Assignments are mediocre responses. They reflect some understanding of the topic and assignment, but lack insight or reflection. These assignments contain several errors, but still demonstrate adequate rhetorical skills.
- **D(69-60%): Below average**
 - Assignments are poor responses that reflect a lack of understanding or a misunderstanding of the topic at hand. They have numerous errors, and demonstrate below average rhetorical skills.
- **F (59% and under): Failing**
 - Assignments do not respond to the topic appropriately, contain an unacceptable number of errors and/or demonstrate a lack of rhetorical skills.

Method of Evaluation: Your final grade for this course will be evaluated according to the following breakdown of assignments:

Attendance, Participation, Moodle Posts	30% (10% each)
Literacy Narrative	5%
Position Piece	10%
Album Review	10%
Photo Essay & Artist's Statement	10%
Archival Research Paper	15%
Literary Analysis	15%
Essay Revision	5%

Course Policies

Attendance and Tardiness Policy: In this class, you are allotted three absences without penalty. You do not need to notify me in advance to explain these absences, they are simply yours to use if and when you need them. Note that even if you are absent, you are still responsible for submitting the day's writing assignments and completing the required reading. After three absences, your attendance grade will be lowered by 5% for each missed class. If you have an ongoing circumstance that necessitates more than three absences, please consult the College's excused absence policy which will grant an official excuse and enable makeup work and extensions. Students who arrive to class more than 5 minutes late will be marked tardy. Three tardies will count as one absence.

Late Assignment Policy: Unless otherwise stated, assignments are due on or before the start of class listed as the due date on the assignment sheet. Even if you are absent, you are still required to submit your work before class. Late assignments will be docked 5% for each day late past the deadline. If students are aware of a conflict, they may request a penalty-free extension up to 24 hours in advance of the due date. Extensions will be considered, but are not guaranteed. Unless there is an extenuating circumstance, students will not be granted more than one extension during the semester.

Technology Usage Policy: You may use technology in class as part of your learning process. Laptops, tablets, E-readers may be used in class to access our readings, assignment sheets, and Moodle discussions boards. Cell phone use is in general not permitted during class hours, unless students notify me of their intended cell phone use

before class. In all cases, technology use must be limited to classwork only. Students observed using technology for purposes unrelated to our class will be marked absent for the day. If a problem persists, the student's participation grade will be significantly lowered.

Acceptable Behavior/Etiquette Policy: Students are expected to conduct themselves thoughtfully and respectfully in this course. This means coming to class on time, bringing the required readings with you, expressing your ideas in a thoughtful way, engaging with others' ideas in a respectful manner, using technology appropriately, and giving our course your full attention during class hours. Failure to meet acceptable behavior standards will negatively impact your participation grade. For a refresher on appropriate email etiquette in a professional or educational setting, please read [“Re: Your Recent Email to Your Professor” from Inside Higher Ed.](#)

Content Advisory: This course will read about and discuss difficult topics including but not limited to self-harm, suicide, sexual assault, eating disorders, racialized violence, and mental illness. If you would like advance notice to prepare yourself to approach these topics, please reach out to me to make arrangements. Any conversations of this nature will be held in the strictest confidence.

Academic Integrity Policy: At the heart of Spelman College's mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the current Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior toward other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy. Violators will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the Spelman College Bulletin.

Student Access Statement: Spelman College is committed to ensuring the full participation of all students in its programs. If you have a documented disability (or think you may have a disability) and, as a result, need a reasonable accommodation to participate in class, complete course requirements, or benefit from the College's

programs or services, you should contact Student Access Center (SAC) as soon as possible. To receive any academic accommodation, you must be appropriately registered with SAC. The SAC works with students confidentially and does not disclose any disability-related information without their permission. SAC serves as a clearinghouse on disability issues and works in partnership with faculty and all other student service offices. For further information about services for students with disabilities, please contact the SAC at 404-270-5289 (voice), located in MacVicar Hall, Room 106.

College Policies

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Incomplete Policy: An Incomplete (IP) is assigned to a student when extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, death of an immediate family member, or family emergency” prevent a student who is passing a course from completing the final exam or final assignment(s) by the end of the semester. In consultation with a Dean, the faculty member determines if an Incomplete is appropriate and completes the necessary paperwork. The faculty member determines the date for completion of all work. An Incompletion must be changed by the deadline specified on the College academic calendar. A student who cannot complete the Incomplete by the specified deadline must request an extension from the professor, who will notify the Office of the Dean of the extension. If the required work is not completed by the established deadline or the student is not given an extension, the IP will automatically be changed to an F.

Course Schedule

Subject to change. Check your email for updates about our course schedule.

Day of Week	Date	Reading	Writing
Introductions			
Wednesday	August 15	None	None
Friday	August 17	Tayari Jones, "Among the Believers" in <i>Joining the Conversation</i> or The New York Times	None
The Selfie Phenomenon			
Monday	August 20	"A Defense of Selfies in Ten Selfies" from <i>Bustle</i>	Literacy Narrative Due
Wednesday	August 22	"Why Selfies Matter" from <i>Time</i> and "The Art of Summarizing" pg. 30-42 in <i>They Say, I Say</i>	Guided Moodle post: Summary
Friday	August 24	Joan Acocella, "Selfie" in <i>The New Yorker</i> and "The Art of Quoting" pg. 43-52 in <i>They Say, I Say</i>	Guided Moodle post: Quotations
Monday	August 27	Selections from <i>Selfie</i> , by Will Storr (pg. 275-285) and "Yes/No/Okay, But" pg. 53-66 in <i>They Say, I Say</i>	Guided Moodle post: Agree/Disagree
Wednesday	August 29	Selections from <i>Selfie</i> , by Will Storr (pg. 285-302) and "So What? Who Cares?" pg. 91-100 in <i>They Say, I Say</i>	Guided Moodle post: Stating Significance
Friday	August 31	"Promoting Positive Affect through Smartphone Photography" in <i>Psychology of Well Being</i> and "Writing in the Sciences" in <i>TSIS</i>	Guided Moodle post: Evaluating Data
Monday	September 3	Labor Day (no class)	
Literary Selfies I: Roxane Gay			
Wednesday	September 5	None	Position Piece Due
Friday	September 7	Roxane Gay, <i>Hunger</i> , Part I (pg. 1-23)	Guided Moodle post: Rhetorical situations

Monday	September 10	<i>Hunger</i> , Part II (pg. 27-70)	Guided Moodle post: Close Reading
Wednesday	September 12	<i>Hunger</i> , Part II (pg. 71-11)	Moodle post
Friday	September 14	<i>Hunger</i> , Part III (115-149)	Moodle post
Monday	September 17	<i>Hunger</i> , Part IV (153-174)	Moodle post
Wednesday	September 19	<i>Hunger</i> , Part IV (175-212)	Moodle post
Friday	September 21	<i>Hunger</i> , Part V (215-245)	Moodle post
Monday	September 24	<i>Hunger</i> , Part V (246-270)	Moodle post
Wednesday	September 26	<i>Hunger</i> , Part VI (273-303)	Moodle post
Friday	September 28	“What Fullness Is” and “Entering Conversations about Literature” in <i>They Say, I Say</i>	None
Monday	October 1	Chapter 16 “Developing and Supporting Your Thesis Statement” in <i>Joining the Conversation</i> pgs. 526-534)	Draft of thesis statement due for workshopping
Wednesday	October 3	Ch. 17 “Organizing”(pg. 535-546) and “How Can I Draft My Introduction” (pg. 557-563) in <i>Joining the Conversation</i>	Draft of introduction and outline due for workshopping
Friday	October 5	Ch. 18 “Drafting and Designing” <i>Joining the Conversation</i> (pg. 545-570)	First draft of literary analysis due for workshopping
Fall Break			
Wednesday	October 10	None	Final Literary Analysis Due
Musical Selfies			
Friday	October 12	Listen to <i>The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill</i>	Guided Moodle post
Monday	October 15	Reviews of <i>The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill</i> at Pitchfork and EW	Album proposal due
Wednesday	October 17	Kendrick Lamar, “i” video and article on Noisey	Moodle post

Friday	October 19	None	Draft of Album Review due for workshopping
Monday	October 22	None	Final Album Review due
Literary Selfies II: Audre Lorde			
Wednesday	October 24	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 1-3	Moodle post
Friday	October 26	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 4-9	Complete discussion question worksheet
Monday	October 29	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 10-13	Moodle post
Wednesday	October 31	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 14-17	None
Friday	November 2	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 18-21	Moodle post
Monday	November 5	Guest speaker: Spelman archivist Holly Smith <i>Zami</i> , ch. 22-25	None
Wednesday	November 7	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 26-29	Moodle post
Friday	November 9	<i>Zami</i> , ch. 30-31	Moodle post
Photographic Selfies			
Monday	November 12	Laura Aguilar: view photos and read article in the New Yorker and read her Artist Statement	Moodle post
Wednesday	November 14	Guest speaker: Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Melissa Bunni Elian	None
Friday	November 16	Cindy Sherman: read article in The Guardian and view photos at MoMa ; listen to the Prologue to "Switcheroo" on <i>This American Life</i> ; read articles on her blackface photos at Hyperallergic and Superselected	Moodle post
Monday	November 19	Kim Kardashian: Selfish and " Kim Kardashian's Selfish is Anything But " in <i>Time</i>	<i>Zami</i> writing assignment due
Thanksgiving Break: No class			

Monday	November 26	None	Photo Essay and Artist Statement Due
Wednesday	November 28	None	Revision draft due for workshopping
Wednesday	December 5	Final Revision Due at 5pm	