

First-Year Writing Seminar (FYWS) 151
Topic: Oral History and Oral Tradition
Section 4: MWF 12:00 pm-12:50 pm, 203 Palmer Hall (CRN 15294)

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Office Hours: MW 2:00-3:20 and by appointment

"I will tell you something about stories. . . . They aren't just for entertainment. Don't be fooled."

--Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*

Welcome to the course! In today's world with its dependence on print and electronic media, it is worthwhile to ask ourselves what roles the spoken word continues to play in our society and in our lives. In what ways are oral traditions embedded in historical sources, and how might history, in turn, derive from oral tradition? In what ways do our own traditions inform our responses to fiction, history, and the world around us? What ethical and social issues are involved in the collection of oral histories or traditional narratives? These and related questions will help guide our reading and discussion across four units, each of which will culminate in a tightly focused paper. Our first unit will involve work with the oral history collections of Crossroads to Freedom, a digital, multimedia archive sponsored by Rhodes College that documents Memphis in the Civil Rights era. Next, we will explore how works of fiction can incorporate concepts from oral history, and in the third unit, you will be asked to research oral traditions within your own families or communities. Finally, you will research a specific oral tradition or oral history collection, drawing extensively on print and electronic library resources in the preparation of an annotated bibliography and research project. Throughout the entire semester, we will analyze various modes of oral and written communication with the primary goal of increasing awareness of the complex factors that guide our many choices as writers. *F2s*

Textbooks and Related Materials:

- *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd edition, Edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, Routledge, 2006. Paperback [ISBN 9780415343039]
- *World War Z: An Oral History of the Zombie War*, Max Brooks, Random House. [ISBN 0307346617]
- *Guide to Effective Paper Writing* (Rhodes College Writing Center)
 - You should have received hard copies in your orientation materials. This resource is also available online and linked from our course Moodle site.
- Recommended: Raimes, Ann. *Keys for Writers*, 7th Edition, Cengage Learning.
- Additional required readings will be available on the Moodle site or distributed as handouts. Some assignments involve online audio and video media. Computer labs in the library have headphones where you can complete these assignments if you do not have the capacity on your own computer.

Important Notes regarding textbooks:

- Please be aware that it is the student's responsibility to obtain assigned textbooks, and assignment extensions cannot be given even if the bookstore runs out of copies. In the event that you have difficulty locating a required text, please go to the bookstore's textbook office as soon as possible to order a copy. Also, contact me or a fellow student to make arrangements to borrow/photocopy assigned readings until your copy arrives.

Course Requirements

- Papers 1-4: 60% (15% each)
 - Specific requirements regarding papers will be provided near the beginning of each unit.
 - One full letter grade (10%) will be deducted from papers submitted more than five minutes after the beginning of class but within one week of the due date. Papers submitted more than one week late will not be accepted. If a serious illness or an emergency arises, please complete the "Special Request" form on Moodle before the due date. Any special arrangements must be agreed to ahead of time and outside of class.

- Unless otherwise noted, papers will be submitted through *Turnitin.com*. You will need to create an account with Turnitin and then enroll in FYWS 151 Oral History and Folklore. To enroll, use Class ID 8465887 and enrollment password “zombies.” If you encounter problems with turnitin, you can lessen the late penalty by 1) notifying me of the problem as soon as possible; and 2) submitting your paper in hard copy or through email before the deadline. Technical difficulties will not lessen the late penalty unless both these steps have been taken.
- Please note that all writing to receive credit must be original work for this particular class. No paper or portion of a paper may receive credit in more than one course without prior permission.
- Revision (paper of your choice)
 - While drafting and revision will be an integral component of every unit and paper, the final unit of the course will be devoted to revision of the paper of your choice. The grade of the revised version will be averaged with the grade of your original submission. This average will then replace the grade of the original paper. (For example, if your grade on Paper 2 is a 75% and your revised submission earns an 85%, your new grade for Paper 2 will be 80%.)
 - Please be aware that revision is a crucial skill that we will be developing this semester, and the submission of a thoughtfully revised paper is mandatory. The same late penalties and submission policies apply to the revisions as to the four papers themselves. Failure to submit a revised paper (or the submission of a paper only very lightly and superficially revised) will result in the lowering of one of the original grades.
- Annotated Bibliography and Progress Report: 5%
 - Details for this assignment will be provided later in the semester. Assignments submitted more than five minutes after the beginning of class and within 48 hours of the original due date will be subject to a 10% penalty. Because this assignment is crucial preparation for Paper 4, progress reports and bibliographies submitted more than 48 hours late cannot be accepted. Please complete the “Special Request” form before the deadline should an emergency prevent a timely submission. Any special arrangements must be approved ahead of time and outside of class.
- Paper Workshops and Draft Submissions: 10%
 - This portion of your grade involves submission of drafts, workshops focusing on such skills as peer editing, self-editing, draft-writing, and revision. If you miss a class for any reason, please be sure to check the Moodle site for any such assignments or instructions. Please note that late drafts or workshop materials may not receive credit after the assigned deadlines. Any exceptions must be made ahead of time and outside of class. In the case of unavoidable extenuating circumstances, please submit a “Special Arrangements” request on Moodle. Documentation may be required.
- Daily online writing: 20%
 - Daily postings (approximately 250 words each) are intended to stimulate in-class discussions, to serve as starting points for formal papers (where appropriate), and to offer additional writing practice throughout the semester. From time to time, online writing may be replaced with in-class work. Two scores will be dropped to allow for occasional illness or emergency. Any special arrangements for extenuating circumstances after the first two drops will likely require documentation and must be approved ahead of time and outside of class.
- Participation and Engagement: 5%
 - Your participation grade will be determined on the basis of your attendance, the quality of your contributions to discussion, your participation in class activities, and your completion of any ungraded assignments.
 - Please note that while the course’s success will depend largely on class discussion, there are many ways to participate. Those who speak often will not automatically receive higher grades than more quiet students. If you seldom speak in class, you can participate by making more frequent contributions to online forums or contributing more actively in small groups.
 - In all cases, contributions to discussion (in class and online) should demonstrate careful reading of course materials and must be respectful of other students’ ideas and points of view. For information on the attendance policy, see below.

Additional Notes

Class preparation: Please read all materials carefully before you come to class. Bring questions about what is difficult or confusing to you. Also come prepared to share your thoughtful insights and responses. It is your responsibility to notify me *before* classtime of any problems completing readings or assignments. While time spent completing readings and assignments will no doubt vary from student to student and from day to day, you should expect to spend at least 2-3 hours preparing for each hour that you are in class. See helpful tips on time management at <http://www.rhodes.edu/counselingcenter/12089.asp>. The “Academic Support” course on Moodle offers many useful handouts on note-taking, study habits, time management, and other useful skills for success at Rhodes. Please bring your books to class each day. In the case of online readings, please bring specific notes.

honor code: All work must adhere to the honor code: “As a member of the Rhodes community, I pledge I will not lie, cheat, or steal, and that I will report any such violation that I may witness.”

plagiarism and academic integrity: The Rhodes College Honor Council Constitution defines plagiarism as follows: “Cheating includes plagiarism; specifically, it is the act of using another person’s words or ideas and representing them as one’s original work. This includes, without limitation, using information from any source without proper reference, getting ideas or words from a classmate’s paper, failure to properly punctuate direct quotes, and obtaining a paper from someone else. Ignorance is not an excuse for these violations. It is the student’s responsibility to consult the professor, an Honor Council member, or writing handbooks for procedure for properly acknowledging sources.”

Barret Library offers the following advice for avoiding possible plagiarism (<http://www.rhodes.edu/barret/15554.asp>):

- Acknowledge and cite all sources properly.
- Use quotation marks around words that are not your own.
- Properly introduce and indent longer quotations that are not your own.
- Use footnotes or endnotes to acknowledge another’s words or ideas.
- Do not paraphrase too closely.

Please note also that all writing in FYWS 151 must be original work produced specifically for this course. No paper or portion of a paper—even if revised— may receive credit if it has already received or will receive credit in another class. Please ask me or Writing Center staff member if you have any doubt about even a small portion of a paper that you have produced.

Attendance: As the official Student Handbook explains, Rhodes College “considers interactive engagement with other students and the professor, in a structured setting, to be one of the essential and central components of the academic program. . . . Absenteeism is not to be taken lightly” (<http://www.rhodes.edu/studenthandbook/2176.asp>). Regular attendance is thus expected and counts as a part of your participation grade. Two tardies will be treated as one absence. In addition to the effect of absences on your participation grade, after two unexcused absences, your overall grade may automatically be reduced by 2 percentage points each day. For example, if your course average at the end of the semester is an 80% and you have 3 unexcused absences, your course grade could be lowered to 78%. I will take roll or distribute a roll sheet at the beginning of each class. I will have a sign-in sheet for late arrivals at the front of the room. Please note that it is *your* responsibility to sign the sheet if you arrive late in order to avoid recorded absences. Absences and tardies may be excused only if I have been notified ahead of time and outside of class. Please use the “Special Request” form to explain your circumstances. If you miss class, be sure to check the course website for missed material or assignments. Students whose reasons for absence raise privacy concerns should seek assistance from the Office of Student Affairs: <http://www.rhodes.edu/campuslife/1186.asp>. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to check the course website and/or contact me for any notes or assignments you may have missed.

Computer problems: Please be aware that computer and printing problems will not serve as an excuse for late assignments. Back up your hard-drive files frequently, and, if you are in any doubt, always keep a second hard copy of your assignments. If extenuating circumstances arise, please complete the “Special Request” form on Moodle. Please avoid using the time immediately before and after class to ask for special arrangements. Information on late penalties can be found under course requirements.

Special Accommodations: If you require any disability-related accommodations, please contact me as soon as possible. I am more than happy to help make any necessary arrangements. Since I am only able to provide accommodations to students registered with the Office of Disability Services, please contact this office as soon as possible if you have not already done so: 901-843-3885. For further information, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/disabilityservices/default.asp>.

Library Reserve: Occasionally, books that might be especially helpful for your research may be placed on reserve in Barret Library. For information on using Library Reserves, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/barret/4446.asp>.

The Writing Center: The Rhodes College Writing Center, Located in Barret Library 122, is an excellent resource for help at all stages of the writing process. You can call the Writing Center at 901.843.3393. For additional information, go to <http://www.rhodes.edu/writingcenter/>.

Electronic Devices and Classroom Expectations: Because many of our texts are on Moodle rather than hard copy, students are allowed and encouraged to bring laptops, tablets, or other devices to read and annotate texts as well as take notes. Any other uses of electronic devices are prohibited during classtime. Please note the student handbook policy on classroom conduct, which includes the use of electronic devices: “Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible learners. Classroom behavior should not detract from the learning environment. Each faculty member has the right to determine appropriate behavior for the classroom. Expectations might address behavior such as use of electronic devices, late arrivals or early departures, eating or sleeping. A student violating a professor’s classroom policy or individual instructions regarding classroom disruptions might be dismissed from the class for the day on which the disruption occurs, subject to a reduction of participation grade, and/or referred to the Director of Student Conduct.”

Additional Resources: Success in this course and others is likely to be enhanced with careful time management, good study habits, and a general sense of well-being. The Counseling Center offers free and confidential counseling to Rhodes students: <http://www.rhodes.edu/counselingcenter.asp>. In addition, helpful links and information on such issues as test anxiety, procrastination, homesickness, study skills, and stress are available at <http://www.rhodes.edu/counselingcenter/default.asp>.

Tentative Schedule

[Note: All readings and assignments must be completed by class time on the dates below. Readings from *Keys to Writers* and the *Rhodes Guide for Effective Paper Writing* will be assigned on a regular basis as we work on specific writing skills. If you miss class for any reason, please check the Moodle site or contact me to avoid missing any assigned work.]

W 8/27: Introduction to class; discussion of three oral narratives (from Alaska, Memphis, and Israel, also linked from Moodle)

UNIT 1: USING ORAL HISTORIES IN RESEARCH (Crossroads to Freedom)

F 8/29: *The Oral History Reader (OHR)*: Introduction to second edition (ix-xiv); Alex Haley, "Black History, Oral History, and Genealogy" (14-24), Paul Thompson, "The Voice of the Past: Oral History" (25-31); Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" (32-42)

Labor Day Holiday, no class

W 9/3: View *At the River I Stand* (55 min) and *I am a Man* (30 min), both streamed through Moodle.

F 9/5: Read "From Civil Rights Act to Sanitation Strike," Laurie Green, *Battling the Plantation Mentality*, paying special attention to pages 275-87, which details the strike itself; view "Crossroads to Freedom interviews with Fred Davis, Parts 10-13 (18.5 minutes; Billy Homes, Part 2 (5 minutes); Eddie May Hawkins, Part 6 and 9 (6.5 minutes)

M 9/8: View *Hoxie: The First Stand* (streaming video documentary, linked from Moodle, 56 minutes); View interviews with Charlene Trotter, Parts 1 and 4 (8 minutes) and Fayth Hill Washington, Parts 1, 2, 3, 9 (20 minutes).

W 9/10: Read "The Hoxie Imbroglia," J. Vervak (Moodle); view Crossroads interviews with Charles Penix, Parts 1, 3, 4 (13 minutes) and Ethel Tompkins, Parts 1-4 (21 minutes)

F 9/12: Memphis integration: Read Lovett, excerpts from "Hell no, we won't integrate" 68-71 (up to asterisk), 79 (after asterisk)-81 (end of first full paragraph, ending "by the 1990s"), 84 (after asterisk)-86, 89(after asterisk)-94 (up to asterisk), 104(after asterisk)-end; view Crossroads interviews with Erlene Duncan, Parts 4 and 5 (10 minutes, please note that these are out of order on YouTube channel); Maxine Smith, Parts 1, 4, 5, 8, 9 (30 minutes); Margaret Seewood, Parts 1-3 (16 minutes); and Evelyn Strong, Parts 1-3 (21 minutes)

M 9/15: King's death: read Lovett, "The King God Didn't Save: The Movement Turns Violent in Tennessee" (201-28, on Moodle; view Billy Kyles, Parts 1 and 9 (10 minutes); view separate link to Kyles on King's death (3 min); view Luther Ivory, Parts 3-7 (23 minutes)

W 9/17: Paper #1 Workshops

F 9/19: **Paper #1 Due**

UNIT 2: ORAL HISTORY AND LITERATURE (*World War Z*)

M 9/22: *World War Z (WWZ)*, 1-44; Studs Terkel, with Tony Parker, "Interviewing an Interviewer," (*OHR*, 123-127); "What College Kids Can Learn from the Zombie War" (NPR, linked from Moodle)

W 9/24: *WWZ*, 45-104; Kathleen Blee, "Evidence, Empathy, and Ethics" (*OHR* 322-33);

F 9/26: *WWZ*, 105-186; Mark Klempner, "Navigating Life Review Interviews with Survivors of Trauma" (*OHR* 198-208)

M 9/29: *WWZ*, 187-269; Fred H. Allison, "Remembering a Vietnam War Firefight: Changing Perspectives over Time" (*OHR* 221-29)

W 10/1: *WWZ*, 270-342

F 10/3: Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses" (*OHR* 129-42; Ruth Finnegan, "Family Myths, Memories and Interviewing" (*OHR*, 177-83)

M 10/6: Paper #2 Workshop

W 10/8: **Paper #2 Due**; no class meeting. (I will be at the Oral History Association Annual Meeting but available through email.)

UNIT 3: ORAL TRADITIONS IN OUR OWN LIVES

F 10/10: no class meeting; (I will be at the Oral History Association Annual Meeting.) Elizabeth Tucker, *Campus Legends* (Moodle); essays by Margaret Yocum and Dennis Folly from *Celebration of Family Folklore* (on Moodle); complete online assignment.

M 10/13: *Fieldworking*, 286-295 (on Moodle); Sims and Stephens, *Living Folklore*, "Introduction" and "Groups" (pages 1-68, on Moodle)

W 10/15: Francis Good, "Voice, Ear, and Text: Words, Meaning, and Transcription" (*OHR* 362-73); Dennis Tedlock, "Oral History as Poetry," from *Envelopes of Sound* (linked from Moodle).

F 10/17: Carefully complete your interview plan and submit to Moodle.

Monday, 10/20, Fall Break

W 10/22: Transcription assignment due, on Moodle; "Stories as Equipment for Living," Barbara Meyerhoff (on Moodle)

F 10/24: Roger Abrahams, excerpts from *A Singer and Her Songs* (Moodle)

M 10/27: Paper #3 Workshop; introduction to Research Paper assignment.

W 10/29: **Paper #3 Due**

UNIT 4: RESEARCH IN ORAL TRADITIONS AND ORAL HISTORY

F 10/31: Elizabeth Tucker, "Ghosts in Mirrors: Reflections of the Self" (Moodle); Cindy Dell Clark, "Tricks of Festival: Children, Enculturation, and American Halloween" (Moodle)

M 11/3: Zuni storytelling: "Coyote and Junco," "Coyote and the Locust" (Moodle), "The Girl Who Took Care of the Turkeys" (all on Moodle)

W 11/5: First and second annotations due; William Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore" (Moodle)

F 11/7: Third and fourth annotations due; Richard Bauman, "Keys to Performance" (Moodle)

M 11/10: Fifth and sixth annotations due; Barre Toelken, *Dynamics of Folklore* (pp. 1-48, on Moodle)

W 11/12: ***Annotated Bibliography and Progress Report Due***

F 11/14: Continue work on research paper; class presentations

M 11/17: Continue work on research paper; class presentations

W 11/19: *Paper 4 draft due*; class presentations

UNIT 5: REVISING

F 11/21: Editing and revision workshops; reading TBA.

M 11/24: **Paper #4 Due**

Thanksgiving Break, 11/26 and 11/28

M 12/1: Editing and revision workshops; reading TBA; sign up for mandatory conferences

W 12/3: Individual Conferences

F 12/5: Individual Conferences

M 12/8: Editing and revision workshops; reading TBA

W 12/10: ***Revised paper (of your choice) due***; Workshop on in-class essay writing.

No final examination.

About FYWS 151 and the F2 Foundations Requirement

This course fulfills an F2s Foundation Requirement: "Develop excellence in written communication." The following information on the F2 requirement as well as the Writing Seminar and related resources is taken from <http://www.rhodes.edu/9078.asp>:

The ability to express concise and methodical arguments in clear and precise prose is essential to success in most courses at Rhodes and in most of the vocations Rhodes graduates pursue. Students will receive significant training in writing during the first two years through (1) one course foregrounding skills of critical analysis, rhetoric, and argumentation, and (2) two writing intensive courses. These three required courses will provide the initial steps in the student's deliberate development as a writer. Courses within each major will ensure that each student continues to refine writing skills over the course of the four years in college.

[This requirement will be satisfied by one writing seminar (taken in the first year) and two writing intensive courses, one of which will be in Search/Life. All three courses are to be completed by the end of the second year. Writing intensive courses and writing seminars may explore material in any discipline or may be interdisciplinary. However, the writing seminars will have as their central focus writing skills.]

Writing Center

Students should take advantage of the Writing Center especially during their first year, when they are enrolled in the first part of the F2 requirement, the Writing Seminar. Many of the tutors took this course themselves and can reinforce the instruction provided by professors.

What to expect in your writing seminar

Because each Writing Seminar is designed and taught by a different member of the English department faculty, each class, including the reading and assignments will be different. For example, some professors teach from a "reader" with contemporary essays and rhetorical strategies, while others may teach the fundamentals of Aristotelian argument. Regardless, the goals of the course are the same.

All of the Writing Seminars, regardless of who teaches them, have similar goals: to develop the ability to read and think critically, to employ discussion and writing as a means of exploring and refining ideas, and to express those ideas in effective prose. Several papers will be required, at least one of which will involve the inclusion of outside sources. The seminar will emphasize successive stages of the writing process, including prewriting, drafting, and revision, and will provide feedback from classmates and the instructor.

Outcome Goals

By the end of the semester, each student enrolled in the Writing Seminar should know how to do the following:

1. Determine important questions about a topic or a text on their own.
2. Analyze a writing task and develop a strategy to fulfill it, considering the rhetorical situation and the audience.
3. Assess fairly the arguments of others and develop a critical/analytical response to a written text.
4. Plan and organize a coherent, well-supported argument with a clear thesis.
5. Support the thesis with unified paragraphs that are clearly related and substantially developed. Develop a polished, rational, evidenced argument.
6. Distinguish between kinds of evidence and select evidence that is relevant, sufficiently detailed, and substantial.
7. Summarize, extrapolate, and synthesize material from a variety of sources, giving adequate and accurate documentation.
8. Demonstrate sensitivity to tone, diction, syntax, and figurative language.
9. Express complex ideas in clear and effective prose that has been carefully edited and proofread.
Assess their own drafts (drawing on audience feedback when appropriate) and reconceive, restructure, or significantly modify their own arguments.