

B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title	: Lifewriting
Course Code	: ENG3385
Recommended Study Year	: 3 rd or 4 th Year
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours	: 2-hour lecture per wee 1-hour tutorial per week
Category	: Discipline Elective (Contemporary Language/Literary Strand)
Prerequisite(s)	: Nil
Co-requisite(s)	: Nil
Exclusion(s)	: Nil
Exemption Requirement(s)	: Nil

Brief Course Description

This course is a writing course aimed at ushering students into the complex critical creativity required for lifewriting, which includes not only autobiography and memoir but biography and journalistic profiles as well, in a variety of different genres (letters, travel writing, blogs, essays, and so on).

Aims

Because writing about oneself—the traditional goal of memoirists, though not of all lifewriters—is one of the most difficult tasks any writer can take on, one of the aims of this course is to “sneak up” on lifewriting, to develop creative strategies for seeing oneself from the outside. And because writing about oneself is not the only form lifewriting takes, another aim is to help students explore what is called “guided lifewriting,” helping someone else write his or her life—specifically, with the help of the Office of Service-Learning, residents of Hong Kong old people’s homes.

Learning Outcomes

Students completing this course will:

1. write in English with fluency and confidence about aspects of their own and other people’s personal experience;
2. use appropriate and interesting techniques and genres flexibly and creatively in constructing a story, letter, blog, or other lifewriting text;
3. identify, compare, and reflect flexibly on various lifewriting genres and the contexts in which they are used;
4. use new digital media effectively in writing about themselves and others;
5. engage creatively and sympathetically with members of the Hong Kong community through service-learning;
6. evaluate and edit peers’ lifewriting reflectively and constructively;
7. think critically in assessing the discussion forum posts of fellow students;
8. show a broad strategic understanding of the uses of lifewriting in various academic and professional contexts.

Indicative Contents

- Introduction to the genres of lifewriting
- The two dramas: the named drama
- The two dramas: the unnamed drama
- Starting to write: creative brainstorming tricks
- Starting to write: truth vs. fact in lifewriting
- Starting to write: compassion in lifewriting
- Starting to write: creation of voice for dramatic effect (demolishing the myth of “finding your voice”)
- Guided lifewriting
- Dramatic structure
- Scene-building
- Dramatic context: named context
- Dramatic context: unnamed context
- Dramatic purpose: named purpose
- Dramatic purpose: unnamed purpose

Teaching Method

Interactive tutorial-style discussion of readings and writings in small groups and the whole class; service-learning.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

- Written assignments (outcomes 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7)
- Discussion forums (outcomes 3, 7, 8)
- Class discussion of student writing and peer-review sessions (outcomes 3, 6, 8)
- Individual consultations with the professor (outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4, 8)

Assessment

100% Continuous Assessment

Required Readings

Douglas Robinson, *Lifewriting as Drama*: an e-textbook specifically designed for this course, including numerous sample papers written by previous Lingnan lifewriting students.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is “the presentation of another person’s work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student’s own work”. Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students’ understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course “Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness” is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.