

## ENGL 1101: Autobiographical Graphic Novels

Dr. Dean-Ruzicka

### Descriptive Memoir Essay

#### **Basic Assignment**

The first step in creating your graphic novel this semester is focusing your ideas on one event or experience to narrate. Following the guidelines from *WOVENText* .pdf, we will create memoir essays that include these genre conventions: personal anecdotes, use of literary techniques, style and tone that highlight your personality, and detailed writing. There's no need for additional sources or citations, as you are working strictly from your own personal history. You can choose any type of memory you like, but know that you will be sharing it with the class, so let that guide your choices. Your memoir should be 1300-1500 words, or around 5 pages.

#### **Process and Details**

Following the questions on p. 276 of the *WOVENText* PDF reading you should begin by **brainstorming** on the following:

- **Purpose**—What specific moment do you want to write about? Why? What questions do I have about that moment? How might I interpret it? What insights do I want to share with others? The memoir you create should be significant in some way, and your writing should make that clear to readers.
- **Audience**—Why will your memoir matter to readers? What do I want them to get out of it? How will I reach them?
- **Rhetorical Appeals**—How will I establish my authority as a writer? To what extent will I appeal to readers emotions? How will I use logic to support my opinions?

Once you have brainstormed some answers to those questions you can begin **drafting**. Thinking about genre conventions will help you here. Begin creating paragraphs around anecdotes and experiences. You can refine them in the next step.

- **Elements of genre**—How will I keep my writing true and accurate? How much will I disclose about myself (and others) in my memoir? What tone will I use? First person? What anecdotes will I use, and why? What literary elements may I use? Where can I include dialogue?

When you have a good draft of your experience, then you can work on **revision**.

- **Elements of style**—Check for consistency in tone. Are you trying to be humorous throughout? Serious? Make sure the appeals and language you use match that tone. Confirm that you have enough descriptive detail. Readers should be able to follow your experiences clearly, like in the Eggars example from *WOVENText*.

- **Organization**—your organization will likely be chronological (although this isn't required). Do we have enough information to clearly follow how one event happens after (or before, or alongside) another?

Complete your **edits**, checking for consistency, grammar errors, and finalizing design. Follow the formatting document on Canvas if you have questions.

**Publish** your piece to Canvas. Your paper should be 1300-1500 words, with the word count listed on the front page (see example below). It should be submitted as a word document or google doc, double-spaced, Times New Roman font, with MLA style page headers and page numbers.

Example:

Rachel Dean-Ruzicka  
Ruzicka 1

Dean-

ENGL 1101.XX

January 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

1425 words

Can't Stop, Won't Stop: 24 Hours in New York City

(Your title will differ—make up something creative!)

### Process deadlines:

- Complete & post your **brainstorm** activity for class on **January 17th**.
- Write a first **draft**. Upload your draft to Canvas by **February 5th**.
- Bring copies of completed **workshop comments** for class on **February 7th**.
- Complete your **revision plan** in class on **February 7th**.
- **Edit** and **publish** your essay to Canvas by **February 12th**.
- **Reflect** on your essay in-class on **February 12th**.

### Grading:

- The **A+ Paper** will go above and beyond the A paper.
- The **A paper (95%)** will have a clearly defined subject matter and follow the conventions of a memoir in a mature or exemplary manner. That means that it will be written in past tense, have a consistent tone to reach its audience, have considered emotional/logical appeals, used detailed descriptive language, and included literary elements. The A paper will also clearly highlight the *significance* of the event—this is something that matters to you, that you want us to reflect on and

come away with some new perspective or knowledge on the subject. It will be correctly formatted and have few to no errors.

- The **A- paper (92%)** will have a clearly defined subject matter and follow the conventions of a memoir in a mature manner. That means that it will be written in past tense, have a consistent tone to reach its audience, have considered emotional/logical appeals, used detailed descriptive language, and included literary elements. The A- paper will also highlight the *significance* of the event—this is something that matters to you, that you want us to reflect on and come away with some new perspective or knowledge on the subject, although it may be a bit generic. It will be correctly formatted and have few to no errors.
- The **B+ paper (88%)** will have a clearly defined subject matter and follow the conventions of a memoir in a mature or competent manner. That means that it will be written in past tense, have a consistent tone to reach its audience, may have considered emotional/logical appeals, used detailed descriptive language, and included literary elements. The B+ paper will also clearly highlight the *significance* of the event—this is something that matters to you, that you want us to reflect on and come away with some new perspective or knowledge on the subject. It will be correctly formatted and have very few errors.
- The **B paper (85%)** will have a clearly defined subject and follow conventions in a competent manner. It will have a consistent tone but may lack some appeals, descriptive language, OR literary elements. The tense may shift throughout the essay. The B paper likewise highlight the *significance* of the event—this is something that matters to you, that you want us to reflect on and come away with some new perspective or knowledge on the subject. It will be correctly formatted but may have minor errors.
- The **B- paper (82%)** will have a clearly defined subject and follow conventions in a competent to developing manner. It will have a consistent tone but may lack some appeals, descriptive language, OR literary elements. The tense may shift throughout the essay. The B paper likewise highlight the *significance* of the event—this is something that matters to you, that you want us to reflect on and come away with some new perspective or knowledge on the subject. It will be correctly formatted but may have minor errors.
- The **C+ paper (78%)** will have a subject, but it may not always be the focus of the paper. It follows conventions in a developing manner, that is, it tries for a consistent tone but sometimes fails. It likely has flat language, fails to appeal to the audience, or lacks some literary elements. The C+ paper has the good conventions found in a B paper, but it often lacks the ability for readers to see the significance of the event. It may not follow all formatting requirements and likely has a pattern of errors. C papers also may be significantly under word count.
- The **C paper (75%)** will have a subject, but it may not always be the focus of the paper. It follows conventions in a developing manner, that is, it tries for a consistent tone but sometimes fails. It likely has flat language, fails to appeal to the audience, or lacks some literary elements. The C paper may have the good conventions found in a B paper, but it lacks the ability for readers to see the significance of the event. Readers fail to come away with any new perspectives. It may not follow all

formatting requirements and likely has a pattern of errors. C papers also may be significantly under word count.

- The **C- paper (72%)** will have a subject, but it is not always be the focus of the paper. It follows conventions in a developing to beginning manner, that is, it tries for a consistent tone but often fails. It likely has flat language, fails to appeal to the audience, or lacks some literary elements. The C paper sometimes has the good conventions found in a B paper, but it lacks the ability for readers to see the significance of the event. Readers fail to come away with any new perspectives. It may not follow all formatting requirements and likely has a pattern of errors. C papers also may be significantly under word count.
- The **D+ paper (68%)** lacks a clear subject and is likely disorganized because of this. It lacks two or more of the conventions for good memoir: the consistent tone, emotional/logical appeals, descriptive language, OR literary elements. It likely lacks the element of significance, or if it is present, it is hindered by poor organization and use of memoir conventions. It may not follow all formatting requirements and likely has a pattern of errors. D papers are also often significantly under word count
- The **D paper (65%)** lacks a clear subject and is disorganized because of this. It lacks two or more of the conventions for good memoir: the consistent tone, emotional/logical appeals, descriptive language, OR literary elements. The verb tense is likewise confusing. It likely lacks the element of significance, or if it is present, it is hindered by poor organization and use of memoir conventions. It may not follow all formatting requirements and likely has a pattern of errors. D papers are also often significantly under word count
- The **D- paper (62%)** lacks a clear subject and is likely disorganized because of this. It lacks three or more of the conventions for good memoir: the consistent tone, emotional/logical appeals, descriptive language, OR literary elements. The verb tense is confusing. It likely lacks the element of significance, or if it is present, it is hindered by poor organization and use of memoir conventions. It may not follow all formatting requirements and definitely has a pattern of errors. D papers are also often significantly under word count
- **Failing** papers are poorly organized, fail to highlight the significance of the event, and lack descriptive language that helps us engage with the story. They are incorrectly formatted, have a major pattern of errors, and may be significantly under word count.