

English 290-006

Themes in Literature: Trauma and Healing

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Course: MO 106: T/Th 9:30-10:45
Office Hours: Mon, 2:00-4:00;
Tues, 1:00-3:00 (& by appointment)
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*Testimonial life-writing allows the author to share an unutterable tale of pain and suffering...
in a discursive medium that can be addressed to everyone or no-one...
It is through the very process of rehearsing and reenacting a drama of mental survival
that the trauma narrative effects psychological catharsis.
– Suzette Henke*

Course Overview

Catalogue Description

ENG 290: Prerequisite or corequisite: [ENG 103](#) or [ENG 201](#) , or consent of instructor. An interdisciplinary study of a significant theme, such as war and peace, justice, love, youth and age, focusing primarily on literary works but also drawing on sources from other fields, including art, music, and history. May be repeated under a different subtitle.

Course Description

This course is an interdisciplinary exploration of trauma and healing, linking literary and cultural studies with psychology and the arts. By engaging with various mediums – from literary texts to mixed media – students will examine multiple forms and meanings of trauma (such as natural disaster, illness, and abuse) and healing. The different representations open up spaces for students to interrogate and analyze both trauma and healing as public, collective, personal, individual experiences while investigating factors that come into play with telling trauma stories.

As a class, we will be investigating trauma and healing on several levels and with different mediums. Some questions that we will explore include, but not limited to, the following: What is trauma? What is healing? (How) Does literature and the arts play roles in our understanding of trauma and healing processes? In addition, you will have the chance to streamline *your* interest in a larger project related to the overall course theme, expanding the topics more.

Course Material

The following are required:

- Jerry W. Ward's *The Katrina Papers: A Journal of Trauma and Recovery* (ISBN-10: 0-9728143-3-7)
- Judith Herman's *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (ISBN-13: 978-0-465-08730-3)
- Sherry Reiter's edited collection *Writing Away the Demons: Stories of Creative Coping through Transformative Writing* (ISBN-13: 978-0-87839-329-9)
- Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* (ISBN 1-879960-73-7)
- Sylvia Fraser's *My Father's House: A Memoir of Incest and of Healing* (ISBN 0-86068-181-5) *This text is not available in the bookstore. But there are plenty of copies available online – even a Kindle version!!
- Patricia Weaver Francisco's *Telling: A Memoir of Rape and Recovery* (ISBN: 978-0-06-093076-9)
- Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* (ISBN: 1-4000-4314-X)
- Course Packet with Supplemental Reading– available for purchase in the bookstore. (Some supplemental material may, at times, be uploaded to Blackboard in the “Supplemental Reading” folder. *Because our analysis and discussion relies on the text, you must bring course packet or printed documents to class.
- Access to the Internet and to Blackboard (for supplemental readings, assignments, journals, etc.) Go to the following website: learn.uncw.edu. Please use your UNCW login and password to access Blackboard.
- A mindful and respectful presence – with the material, with yourself, and with all course participants ☺
- A positive attitude and a willingness to grow as a reader, writer, critical thinker ☺

Course Objectives/Student Learning Outcomes

Course objectives and student learning outcomes are outlined below:

- To demonstrate the ability to critically analyze, appreciate, and make cogent subjective judgments about literature in a variety of genres related to themes of trauma and healing [AIL1]
- To sharpen critical close reading skills and develop a familiarity with literary terms and conventions through assigned readings and lectures and the lens of trauma and healing [AIL1]
- To be aware of literary genres, movements, and writers related to the development of trauma and healing narratives and to explore relevant issues raised in each text [AIL2]
- To sharpen intellectual curiosity and develop confidence as a speaker and facilitator of discussions [AIL3]
- To learn about cultures and ideologies through the study of (primarily contemporary American) texts that have prominent themes of trauma and/or healing [AIL3]
- To draw on the assigned readings, on class discussions, and other sources in order to formulate, outline, and articulate arguments in written form [WI1]
- To select and choose textual sources to generalize, explain, and interpret content about issues presented in a given text [WI2]
- To demonstrate understanding of the ethical use and citation of others' ideas used as supporting materials, with some attention to appropriate citation of sources according to MLA style guidelines [WI3; AIL 3]
- To create sustained, thoughtful, persuasive arguments according to standard conventions of English [WI4]
- To analyze and evaluate the claims about the development and/or continuity of literature related to themes of trauma and healing [WI5]

Course Requirements and Grading

Below are the basic course requirements, with respective percentages and brief explanations:

Assignments	Percentages	Space to Record Your Grades
Essay 1	15%	
Essay 2	15%	
Essay 3	15%	
Final Essay	20%	
Final Essay: Prospectus	05%	
Final Essay: Annotated Bibliography	05%	
Participation, Informal Assignments, etc	15%	
10 Response Journals	10%	

Grading Scale:

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79;
C = 73-76; C- = 70-72, D+ = 68-69; D = 66-67; D- = 65; F = 64 and below

Essays (Formal Assignments):

Throughout the course, you will be expected to turn in formal essays. If you neglect to turn in any of these, you automatically fail the course. * Papers are DUE at the start of that class! If you walk in late, then, unfortunately, your paper and you are both late.* Specifics: All formal papers should be typed, double-spaced, using 12-font, Times New Roman. In the upper left corner, you should include your name, the course (and section), the date, and at least the Assignment number. All essays should have a title, but please do not waste trees with a title page! ☺ Also, all work should be stapled. (Staples are our friends!) Also, use documentation when appropriate, following MLA format. Please note that exact essay assignments will be elaborated in detail throughout the course. Please do not email me your assignments (unless you have prior approval), and in these extreme situations, you should keep a receipt of your email for your records.

Final Essay:

Each of you will have the opportunity to perform an in-depth exploration of a selected topic of your choice related to the general themes of this course. This will be your final essay, which is *not* a research paper. Rather, you will develop an original argument related to your selected topic. There is flexibility here, but you must have your topic approved. Furthermore, you will be working on your final paper while continuing to read the assigned course material and participating in our class's explorations. To help you space out your

process of this final paper, there will be smaller assignments (such as a prospectus and an annotated bibliography) due before your final deadline. Exact details will be distributed later in the semester.

Participation, Informal Assignments, etc. (may include, but not limited to, In-Class Writings, Quizzes, Peer-Reviews):

You are expected to come to class ready and willing to participate! ☺ Participation happens in various forms, including, but not limited to, discussing the readings, listening to peers' analyses and comments, engaging with in-class and small group assignments, etc. Informal assignments should be typed (when completed outside of class). These assignments will often be evaluated on a 10-point scale, often using a ✓+, ✓, ✓- system (which you may want to equate to a 10, 8, 6). (Pop) Quizzes will be assessed appropriately. Sadly, any missed assignment in this category will be recorded as a 0. Please note that these assignments cannot be made up if you are absent. *Please do not even ask.* Feel free to discuss your participation with me at any point, if you have concerns or would like advice on how to improve.

Journal Posts:

You will be asked to keep an online journal. There will be (almost) weekly prompts with which you are to engage, thoughtfully and critically, bringing in textual support, evidence, and appropriate citations. Entries should be (about) 450-550 words, are due on the specified day (*before class*), and will be periodically assessed (on a 10-point scale). Please note that journals should NOT be posted during class! Also, note that the journal prompts will be posted on Blackboard well in advance before they are due. The purpose of the online journal is layered: to provide an informal space for reflection, to assist with critical analysis, to enable out-of-classroom discussions, to aid with our in-class discussion, to allow you to brainstorm about possible topics for your larger essays, etc. Therefore, I encourage you to use this form of writing to its fullest.

Attendance and Assignment Policy

To expand upon the above, coming to class is required, and you are expected to do so. This course requires participation, and it is a lot easier to participate if you are here! ☺ Thus, your being absent will affect your grade. You are allowed two 'free' days (excused or unexcused). In the event that you are absent, it is your responsibility to obtain what you missed. However, **on your 3rd absence, your overall grade drops 10 points** and will continue to drop 10 points per day for each additional absence. * AND **on your 6th absence, you automatically fail the course.** *** Also, very late arrivals and very early departures will be counted as absences, as will coming to class unprepared.

Mandatory conferences may be held during class time. Missing will result in TWO absences. Again, **I do not allow in-class assignments or quizzes to be made-up.** Sorry. You must be there to receive credit. And again, **I do not accept assignments via email**, unless you have prior approval and unless it's an extreme situation. Also, **late assignments** will also affect your grade (unless you have pre-arranged an extension due to personal *and severe* matter prior the deadline). Generally, **assignments will drop 10 points for each day they are late.** And again, I stress that assignments are due at the start of class. If you are late, then so is your assignment – to be fair to all. And again, **if you fail to submit any of the formal essays, you automatically fail the course.**

General Expectations

Honor Code and Policy on Plagiarism

All members of UNCW are expected to follow the university-wide **Honor Code**; review the policy by visiting the following link: http://www.uncw.edu/policies/documents/03_100FINALHONORCODE_Aug2009.pdf. Also, in accordance with the policy, this course will not tolerate any form of academic dishonesty. Let's hold ourselves to high standards!

You are expected to abide by UNCW's policy on **plagiarism**. Please review UNCW's position on plagiarism, outlined in the Student Handbook. As a basic and ethical rule to follow, **do not plagiarize ANY assignment, written or oral** – formal projects, drafts, journal posts, in-class writings, presentations, etc. Give credit where credit is due (with ideas, words, images, etc.), and do your own original thinking, writing, responding. **This course cares what YOU think.** All plagiarism cases must be reported and will be handled appropriately. Some examples of plagiarism may include, but are not limited to, the following: passing off others' analyses as your own, neglecting to attribute to the original source, and auto-plagiarism (or *your* previous work). Your assignments for this course should be *your original work for this course*. Let's clarify more. Plagiarism is not JUST copy-and-paste. AND it does not JUST apply to words. If I find, or suspect, plagiarism, I am obligated to report it, and the guilty party will face the appropriate consequences. Thus, cite! AND you should even cite when you write your drafts and journal entries! Improper documentation in any assignment may be considered plagiarism. If you have questions, ask. Also, it is always better to cite too much ☺

* *Plagiarism, of any sort, will result in a zero on assignment at minimum, will be reported, and will receive any additional, appropriate consequence deemed necessary (i.e., failing the course, being removed from the university).*

Classroom Protocol

You are expected to arrive to class on time with all required materials and to participate intellectually, critically, and respectfully. Please note that this course relies largely on class discussions, peer evaluations, and constructive feedback, and **you are expected to participate and to be respectful at all times**. In addition, misuse of electronics will not be tolerated. I refuse to ban these without reason – as they are not the problem – but how, when, where, and why they are used can be disruptive and hinder learning. Thus, think of your role as a student. **Your cell phone must be turned to silent and stored away** (or off or left at home, if you are easily tempted). No texting. No facebooking. However, you may have your laptop, if needed and if used appropriately (i.e., to take notes, for group activities). Do not abuse this privilege. **The first inappropriate use of laptop/wireless will result in banning this privilege for ALL for the rest of the semester**. You do not want to be that person. (I am serious!) Also, **no food is allowed in class** (due to being considerate of others). Drinks (without an odor and with proper lids) are ok if you properly dispose of your waste. Generally speaking, **any form of inappropriate and/or distracting behavior will not be tolerated** (i.e., newspaper reading, sleeping, private conversations.) If necessary, I may ask you to leave, and/or you will be counted as absent.

Campus Respect Compact and Statement on Diversity

You are expected to uphold UNCW's Respect Compact, which honors inclusivity and believes in an exchange of ideas from all, promoting mutual respect and sustaining a civil and diverse community with a willingness to learn from all: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/pdc/documents/SeahawkRespectCompact.pdf>. UNCW supports policies, curricula, and co-curricular activities that encourage an understanding of and appreciation for all: <http://uncw.edu/diversity/>.

Religious Observance Policy

You are expected to attend class regularly and in accordance with the course attendance policy. However, you are also entitled to two excused absences for religious observances per academic year (per NC SL 2010-2011). You must inform me in writing the first week of class if you will be using any of these permissible absences, indicating the date(s). In addition, please inform the Registrar the first week of class, who will then confirm your intentions to miss class with the impacted instructors. Please note that any absence for religious purposes that does not have a written request the first week of class, adhering to this procedure, will be counted as unexcused to be fair to all participants.

Services and Resources

Yourself, your campus, and me!

First, **you are your own resource!** It sounds corny. But college is your job, *your* learning process. It will prepare you for *your* future goals, career, if you let it. Thus, you should work towards developing skills that will translate to other disciplines, other objectives while you also work towards becoming more self-aware. This may mean that you will have to learn how to study, how to manage your time better, how to plan ahead...in short, learn how you learn.

UNCW has a **University Learning Center (ULC)**, which is good to know! This free Center is to assist with your academic skills. I encourage you to use it! Visit their website for complete details: <http://uncw.edu/ulc/about/index.html>.

There is a **Writing Center** with peer readers. For more info, and to make an appointment, visit the following website: <http://uncw.edu/ulc/writing/index.html>. When writing, be sure to plan ahead and utilize these resources. ☺

You can get help with their writing in three ways:

1. The Writing Center (DE1003) provides one-on-one writing consultations led by faculty recommended peer writing tutors who are trained to help students develop specific revision plans.
2. You can also receive electronic response to your developing papers through the Online Writing & Learning (OWL) program and obtain writing resources: <http://uncw.edu/ulc/writing/owl.html>.
3. You can drop-in at the Writing Lab (DE 1003) for help with quick questions about your developing papers. The Writing Lab is staffed with a writing tutor and has a few computers and other writing resources.

The **Randall Library** and **Learning Commons** are also helpful resources for research, computers, group activities, etc.

UNCW is committed to equal educational opportunities and offers reasonable accommodations for students who have documented disabilities. Please work with **Disability Services** (962-7555) to make appropriate arrangements, providing me with documentation, within the first two weeks of the semester: <http://www.uncw.edu/stuaff/disability/>.

UNCW does not tolerate any kind of violence or harassment. If you are experiencing emergencies of this nature, you should call 911 or UNCW CARE (962-2273). There are a number of available **Crisis resources** for individuals concerned with any violent or harassing situation; refer to the following link: <http://www.uncw.edu/wsrc/crisis.html>.

Lastly, **I am here to help!** I will look at drafts almost any time. (This does not mean I will pre-grade drafts, but we can discuss your writing process. However, I *will not* look at a major paper the day before it is due – as you should have managed your time more wisely and should have been engaged in an *extended* writing process.) **Notes:** The best way to get in touch with me is **email**; I check it frequently. However, you should work on assignments in advance and plan accordingly – as I do not check email at all hours of the day ☺ To be specific, I will check email up until 6pm Sundays-Thursdays and up until 4pm on Fridays. Also, you have my **cell**; use it during designated times and when necessary. Please be responsible and respectful. And you are (of course) *always* welcome to visit my **office** during office hours, to make appointments within and outside these hours, or to take your chances and just drop by! ☺

*** If you have questions or suggestions throughout the course, please let me know. I invite any and all feedback. ***

Tentative Course Schedule of Assignments

A tentative schedule is below with the disclaimer that this is subject to change, in any way, as the course progresses. I will update you with changes, additions, deletions accordingly. It is your responsibility to be aware of any change.

W1	12-Jan	Intro to Course
W2	17-Jan	Public Trauma... By today, watch one of the three pre-selected movies on a 'trauma' topic. These movies are on reserve at the library. (You have a choice to watch the following: <i>Trouble the Water</i> , <i>Children of the Holocaust</i> , or <i>WTC, the first 24 hours</i>) <u>Due by class time:</u> Journal 1 (J1): Response to the movie, the trauma, the representation of the trauma, and your overall reaction. Some questions to consider may include the following: Why do you think you feel the way you did/do? Would you classify the event as a form of 'trauma'? Why, or why not? How did it assist in defining 'trauma' for you?
	19-Jan	<i>The Katrina Papers</i> (pgs. 8-71)
W3	24-Jan	<i>The Katrina Papers</i> (pgs. 77-134, 202-3, & 232-233) <u>Due:</u> J2: Response to Katrina and this genre. Some questions to consider: How did reading these journal selections, these 'Katrina papers' change your original perception of this 'trauma'? Do you have a different understanding? Why/not? Explain. Why read journal entries? Is there a difference between reading someone's journal entries and a narrative? Explain. Is one more effective? Why?
	26-Jan	Selections from <i>Compassion and Courage in the Aftermath of Traumatic Loss</i> (p.1-58; BB)
W4	31-Jan	Theory on and Background of Trauma... Herman's Ch. 1, pgs. 7-32; Tal's Introduction, pgs. 1-22 (course packet, p. 1-13)
	02-Feb	Herman's Ch. 2, pgs. 33-50; Herman's Ch. 3, pgs. 51- 73; Caruth, p. 1-8 (packet, p. 14-19) <u>Due:</u> J3: Expand upon the definition of 'trauma.' How has it been defined? And how has these readings further developed its definition and your understanding? What questions do you have regarding our developing understanding of what classifies/makes/defines 'trauma'? Do you feel as if any 'event/experience' is prioritized, ignored, forgotten? Do you agree/disagree with these authors? How would you define 'trauma' now? Etc.
W5	07-Feb	Herman's Ch. 5, pgs. 96-114 & on PTSD (121-123); Caruth, pgs. 91-112 (packet, p. 20-31)
	09-Feb	Gilmore, pgs. 1-33 (supplemental course packet, p. 32-49) Due: Essay 1

W6 **Personal Trauma: Illness and Death...**

14-Feb Selections from *After Shocks* (2 poems and intro, course packet, p. 50-51; 52-58)
16-Feb Stanley & Hoffman selections from *Stories of Illness and Healing*: Stanley, pgs. 22-30 (course packet, p. 59-64), and Hoffman, pgs. 172-6 (course packet, p. 65-67); Reiter's *Writing Away the Demons*: Ch. 11, pgs. 200-215
Due: J4: TBA – in appropriate BB folder under “Course Content” → “Journal Prompts”

W7 **Some Information on Healing...**

21-Feb Herman's Ch. 7 & 8, pgs. 133-154, 155-159, and Ch. 9 & 10 (175-195, 196-213)
23-Feb DeSalvo pgs.1-7 & 40-61 (course packet, p. 68-81); Reiter's *Writing Away the Demons* Intro, pgs. 1-17, and Reiter's Ch. 8, pgs. 150-167
Due: J5: TBA

W8

28-Feb Malchiodi, pgs. 18-36 (course packet, p. 82-91); Malchiodi, pgs. 148-171 (course packet, p. 92-104); Reiter chapter (TBA)
01-March Lorde's *Cancer Journals*, pgs. 7-55
Due: J6: TBA

W9

06-March Lorde's *Cancer Journals*, pgs. 56-79; Reiter's Ch. 3, pgs. 62-76
08-March *About My Hair* (selections from book; posted on Blackboard). Please print these out.
Due: Essay 2

W10

13-March Spring Break – YAY! (Be safe and have fun.)
15-March Spring Break – YAY! (Be safe and have fun.)

W11

20-March Didion, pgs. 1-82; selected chapter from Reiter's text (TBA)
22-March Didion, pgs. 83-158
Due: J7: TBA

W12

27-March Didion, pgs. 159-227; Reiter Chapter (TBA)
Personal and Violent Trauma...
29-March Tal, pgs.154-198 (packet, p.105-128); 3poems from *After Shocks* (packet p. 129-131)
Due: J8: TBA

W13

03-April Reiter's chapter 5 (pgs. 97-110), chapter 9 (pgs. 168-181), and chapter 4 (pgs. 77-96)
05-April Easter Holiday – NO CLASS – Happy holidays!

W14

10-April Fraser, pgs. 3-106
Optional: If you have your prospectus done, turn it in today for quicker return/feedback.
12-April Fraser, pgs. 107-208
Due: J9: TBA
Due *by* today: Prospectus of Final Essay

W15

17-April Fraser, pgs. 209-254
Due: Essay 3

W16

19-April Francisco, pgs. 1-93

W16

24-April Francisco, pgs. 95-159

Due: J10: TBA
26-April Francisco, pgs. 160-222

W17

01-May Reading Day – No Class
Due: Annotated Bibliography of Final Essay. Please upload to BB by 9am.

08-May Exam Day: Final Essay is Due Day of Exam – with an in-class exam component