

HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

COURSE OUTLINE

1. COURSE TITLE

Biography Writing

2. COURSE CODE

WRIT2005

3. NO. OF UNITS

3 Units

4. OFFERING DEPARTMENT

Department of Humanities and Creative Writing

5. PREREQUISITES

Nil

6. MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

English

7. AIMS & OBJECTIVES

This course aims at introducing to students a particular genre of personal writing, the biography. In this reading and writing course, students will conceptualize, research, write and revise biographical narratives. Questions of how to structure and select, how lives can be written in an authentic way, and how to do justice to other's lives will be tackled. Students will also experience, through appreciating masterpieces of biographical writing, the diverse ways in which other authors have also written lives.

8. COURSE CONTENT

1. Introducing biography
2. Different biographical forms and narratives
3. Why write? A Preface
4. Data collection
 - a. Remembering lives
 - b. Conducting interviews
 - c. Doing research
5. Finding a form, writing a narrative

6. Versions of a life
 - a. Mixing fact and fiction
 - b. Inventing other lives
7. Life characters
8. The biographer's role: reflection and analysis

9. COURSE INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES (CILOs)

CILO	By the end of the course, students should be able to:
CILO 1	Outline the tradition, history and development of biography as a genre of writing with its own distinctive features.
CILO 2	Apply basic writing and narrative techniques commonly used in biographies.
CILO 3	Critically analyze biographies with diverse perspectives by applying theories in literary and cultural studies.
CILO 4	Produce biographical works and all the activities related to the product: conceptualization, research, and revision.
CILO 5	Evaluate the various stages of producing the biographical works.

10. TEACHING & LEARNING ACTIVITIES (TLAs)

CILO alignment	Type of TLA
1, 2, 3	Students will appreciate the specific features of biographical writing by examining and analyzing famous examples of such work, and present them in an organized manner of their own choice.
1, 2, 4	Students will do research and learn how to select relevant and useful data for the writing of biographies.
1, 2, 3, 4	Students will discuss and comment on various famous biographical works, the variety of writing strategies and structures used, and their cultural and literary impact.
1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Students will review their own and others' work and reflect on and analyze their own experiences as biographers. In the preparation of the reflective essay, students will reflect on the theoretical issues involved in writing a biography.

11. ASSESSMENT METHODS (AMs)

Type of Assessment Methods	Weighting	CILOs to be addressed	Description of Assessment Tasks
2 assignments	40 %	1, 2, 3, 4	Students will 1) research and write a dialogue with a celebrity (100 words);

			2) write an account (1500 words) of the significance of a moment or experience in the life of a writer on the assigned list.
Oral presentation	10 %	1, 2, 3	Students will make a short presentation on assigned masterpieces of biographical writing, in which they analyse the work in terms of its structure, style, function and significance.
Participation	5 %	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	Based on the students' participation in in-class activities, such as discussion, short writing exercise, and small group presentation.
Reflective essay	15 %	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	A reflective and analytical essay of 1500 - 2000 words on the research, planning and writing undertaken for items 1 and 2, including reflection on the theoretical issues involved in biographical writing.
Examination	30 %	1, 2, 3, 4	A written examination to test students' knowledge on the biographical genre, and their ability to apply writing strategies and skills learned in the course.

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