Spring 2022 Syllabus
Overview
Theme: *Investigating Stories: How Does the Personal Become Political?*

NOTES: All readings are due on the date listed. Please consult the detailed syllabus for unit descriptions and reading and discussion questions, as well as writing assignments.

This class meets Monday and Thursday evenings from 6:30-8:30.

Date	Professor	Reading Assignment Due
Tuesday, February 15	ALL FACULTY	**Entering the Conversation: Meeting Each Other as Learners** • Read: Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life* (excerpt)
Thursday, February 17	Vivé Griffith	**Creative Writing Class 1: Honoring Our Stories** • **Read:** Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, pages 3-37 • **Optional**: read the fun "Introduction" • **Write:** see detailed syllabus pages for prompt
Monday, February 21	Vivé Griffith	**Creative Writing Class 2: Structuring Our Narratives** • **Read:** Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, pages 38-60 • **Write:** see detailed syllabus pages for prompt
Thursday, February 24	Pat García	**Literature Class 1: The Danger of a Single Story** • **Read:** "A Private Experience" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie • **Watch**: "The Danger of a Single Story"
Monday, February 28	Pat García	**Literature Class 2: The Authentic Story** • **Read:** "Imitation" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie • **Read:** "Jumping Monkey Hill" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie • **Response Paper 1 Due**
Thursday, March 3	Pat García	**Literature Class 3: The Personal Story** • **Read:** "The Thing Around Your Neck" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Monday, March 7	Pat García	**Literature Class 4: The Political Story** • **Read:** "The Headstrong Historian" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie • **Response Paper 2 Due**
Thursday, March 10	A.R. Rogers	**Analytic Writing Class 1: How to Begin** • **Read:** *They Say, I Say,* "Don't Blame the Eater" • **Read:** *They Say, I Say,* "Hidden Intellectualism
Monday, March 14	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS	

Thursday, March 17	SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS	
Monday, March 21	A.R. Rogers	**Analytic Writing Class 2: What is a Sentence Boundary? Why do we quote** • **Read:** *They Say, I Say*, "As He Himself Puts It" • **Read:** Sentence Boundary Handout
Thursday, March 24	Karma Chávez	**US History Class 1: The Politics of Telling One's Story** • **Read:** *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, pp. ix-xxx • **Read:** *Prison Writings*, pp. 43-45 (course reader) **Paper 1 Due**
Monday, March 28	Karma Chávez	**US History Class 2: Becoming an Example** • **Read:** *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 1 (esp. pp. 3-20) • **Read:** *Prison Writings*, pp. 123-142 (course reader) • **Response Paper 3 Due**
Thursday, March 31	Karma Chávez	**US History Class 3: Becoming Politicized** • **Read:** *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 3 (esp. pp. 111-125) • **Read:** *Prison Writings*, pp. 89-91 (course reader)
Monday, April 4	Karma Chávez	**US History Class 4: Fighting for Freedom** • **Read:** *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 6 (esp. pp. 312-321, 342-349) • **Read:** *Prison Writings*, pp. 169-182 (course reader) • **Response Paper 4 Due**
Thursday, April 7	A.R. Rogers	**Analytic Writing Class 3: The PIE Paragraph** • **Read:** *They Say, I Say,* "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" • **Watch:** The PIE Paragraph
Monday, April 11	A.R. Rogers	**Analytic Writing Class 4: Responding to Prompts** • **Read:** *They Say, I Say,* "Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say" • **Read:** Formal Paper 2 prompt
Thursday, April 14	Janis Bergman-Carton	**Art History Class 1: Introduction to Visual Analysis** • **View:** "How to do visual (formal) analysis in art history" (Khan Academy, Smarthistory, September 18, 2017)
Monday, April 18	Janis Bergman-Carton	**Art History Class 2: Refashioning Images of Power in Portraiture** • **View: "**Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic" (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts), April 16, 2018 • **Response paper 5 will be written during class** • **Final Draft of Paper 2 Due**
Thursday, April 21	Janis Bergman-Carton	**Art History Class 3: Resisting Clichés and Stereotypes in Art**

		• **Read: "**Lalla Essaydi, An Interview by Ray Waterhouse," *NKA A Journal of African Art,* no. 24, 2009, 144-149.
Monday, April 25	Janis Bergman-Carton	**Art History Class 4: The Personal is Always Political** • **Read:** Abaki Beck, "Decolonizing Photography: A Conversation with Wendy Red Star," *Aperture,* December 14, 2016 • **Response Paper 6 Due**
Thursday, April 28	Matthew Daude Laurents	**Philosophy Class 1: Plato's Cave** • **Read:** Philosophy Class 1, Plato, *Republic* excerpt (course reader/Sakai)
Monday, May 2	Matthew Daude Laurents	**Philosophy Class 2: Socrates's *Apology*** • **Read:** Philosophy Class 2, Plato, *Apology* excerpt (course reader/Sakai) • **Response paper 7 Due**
Thursday, May 5	TBD	**Reflecting on the Semester: Where Have We Been and Where Are We Going?** • **Read:** reflective assignment sheet • **bring rough draft of reflective assignment to class**
Monday, May 9	Matthew Daude Laurents	**Philosophy Class 3: Socrates's *Apology,* continued, with an excursion** • **Read:** Philosophy Class 3, Plato, *Apology* excerpt, Aristophanes, *The Clouds* (course reader/Sakai) • **Response paper 8 Due**
Thursday, May 12	Matthew Daude Laurents	**Philosophy Class 4: Socrates's *Apology:* The End** • **Read:** Philosophy Class 4, Plato, *Apology* excerpt (course reader/Sakai)
Monday, May 16		**End of semester celebration!** **Reflective Assignment Due**

You did it! Congratulations on all of your hard work!

ANALYTIC WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

For each Monday class in the literature, art history, US history, and philosophy units, you will turn in an **response paper** in answer to a question posed in the syllabus. Response papers should be roughly one page, double-spaced, typed. These papers serve to lay the groundwork for productive in-class discussions, as well as a place to practice writing skills.

You will also be asked to turn in **two formal papers** during the semester. An assignment sheet for each paper will be provided.

All written assignments should be submitted to Sakai **on the due date before the start of class.** If you are experiencing technical difficulty uploading your work, please email it to A.R. Rogers at poetofwhat@gmail.com.

More about Response Papers:

The goal of these responses is to help you grapple with the texts. Through writing, you might find your understanding of assigned readings improves, or that you are left with questions that others may have as well. Either way, response papers lay the groundwork for our productive in-class discussions, and serve as a great place to practice writing skills.

Grading:

- In total, reading response papers will constitute **20% of your grade.**
- You will be assigned 8 response papers, each graded on a 10-pt scale.
- Late papers will earn a maximum of half credit. *Note: Response papers WILL NOT be accepted more than one class period after the original due date.*

Formal Papers:

You will hand in two short formal papers this semester, each about two pages long (roughly 500 words). These papers will respond to the work you're doing in the literature and US history units. Your first formal paper will explore Chimamanda Adichie's collection of short stories, *The Thing Around Your Neck*; in the second paper, you'll write in response to *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*. To help you prepare for formal papers, you will receive detailed guidelines.

Grading:

- In total, formal papers will constitute **35% of your grade.** (Formal Papers 1 – 15%, Formal Papers 2 - 20%)
- You will be provided guidelines in the form of an assignment sheet
- Each formal paper grade is made up of both process (i.e. the submission of timely drafts) and product (the quality of your final work), so it is very important to keep up with deadlines.

DETAILED SYLLABUS

Always read this section before preparing for class.

Tuesday, February 15

Entering the Conversation: Meeting Each Other as Learners
Full-Faculty Class

See assignment sheet for details (week 1 readings, Sakai)

Thursday, February 17

Creative Writing Unit with Vivé Griffith

Unit Overview:
Exploring Our Stories in Writing

Writing has power. Writers and teachers have long known this, and researchers can confirm it. For example, studies have found that simply writing about a traumatic experience for four days straight can help individuals overcome the experience as well as improve their immune systems and GPAs. We are more likely to reach our goals if we write them down. And in difficult times, poetry can make us feel less alone in the world. We know ourselves better when we place our stories on paper.

What's this got to do with the Creative Writing unit? This spring, plenty! We will begin our semester exploring how writing our own stories can help us understand ourselves and each other. We will begin to discover the power of writing while creating a safe space for listening and sharing. We'll also read from Anne Lamott's entertaining and inspiring *Bird by Bird*, a text that you just may find yourself returning in years to come. (I do.) We'll see if we know ourselves better when we place pieces of ourselves on paper.

Our assignments these two classes will warm you up for the rest of the writing you'll do this semester, help us form our community, and maybe shine a light on some of the ways you perceive and live your life. Let's have some fun!

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Creative Writing Class 1: Honoring Our Stories

Background: We will open the creative writing unit by writing and sharing some of our stories—the stories of our lives, our families, our history, our particular place in the world. In order to do this, we have to begin with believing our stories are worth telling. We have to honor them.

Telling our stories requires a balance of self-reflection and a fair amount of *chutzpah*, a wonderful Yiddish word reflecting a mixture of guts, audacity, courage, and brazenness. The self-reflection enables us to see our stories from the outside, as belonging to us and outside of us at the same time. The chutzpah encourages us to bring bravery to the process.

Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird* captures that pairing of self-reflection and chutzpah. Both Lamott's tone and subject matter make writing accessible. She reminds us that writing is hard, but important work.

Anne Lamott was born in San Francisco in 1954. She writes both novels and books of nonfiction centered on spirituality, parenthood, alcoholism, and, of course, writing. You can find a lot of her essays on the internet. Her most recent book is *Almost Everything: Notes On Hope.*

Here's a quote from her about her work: "I try to write the books I would love to come upon, that are honest, concerned with real lives, human hearts, spiritual transformation, families, secrets, wonder, craziness—and that can make me laugh. When I am reading a book like this, I feel rich and profoundly relieved to be in the presence of someone who will share the truth with me, and throw the lights on a little, and I try to write these kinds of books. Books, for me, are medicine."

Read: Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, pages 3-37 (Chapter called "Getting Started" through chapter called "School Lunches"). Optional: read the fun "Introduction" too.

Write: Anne Lamott says that writing short assignments about simple things like school lunches can "yield a bounty of detailed memory, raw material, and strange characters lurking in the shadows." So we will begin with a short assignment.

Below are three writing prompts. As a practice in free writing, please write for <u>five minutes</u> in response to each prompt. (In other words, this is 15 minutes of writing total.) Set a timer. Keep your hand moving.

1. Look around the room you are in while you do this assignment. Find an object in the room—something that catches your eye, or something you are using to prepare for class. Describe that object. If you need an opening line, try, "I will show you _____"
2. Teach me something. It doesn't have to be the traditional subjects. How about how to tie a shoe, be a good mother, clean out the refrigerator, change a tire? Something that is deep in your bones—driving in rush hour on I-35 each morning? Don't overthink it. Choose something and teach me how to do it.
3. Tell me the story of your name. You can interpret this in any way you'd like.

Bring all three pieces of writing with you on Thursday. Hand written is fine.

Bonus Poem (just for your enjoyment)

Instructions on Not Giving Up by Ada Limón

More than the fuchsia funnels breaking out
of the crabapple tree, more than the neighbor's
almost obscene display of cherry limbs shoving
their cotton candy-colored blossoms to the slate
sky of Spring rains, it's the greening of the trees

that really gets to me. When all the shock of white
and taffy, the world's baubles and trinkets, leave
the pavement strewn with the confetti of aftermath,
the leaves come. Patient, plodding, a green skin
growing over whatever winter did to us, a return
to the strange idea of continuous living despite
the mess of us, the hurt, the empty. Fine then,
I'll take it, the tree seems to say, a new slick leaf
unfurling like a fist to an open palm, I'll take it all.

Monday, February 21

Creative Writing Class 2: Structuring Our Narratives

Background: Today, with the help of Anne Lamott, we'll look at how a story gets told. Then we'll starting the process of writing our own Free Minds stories, considering what we each bring into the classroom with us as we begin. What parts of our story help us move forward? What parts of our story need to be overcome? What can Anne Lamott teach us about how to do both?

Read: Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*, pages 38-60 (Chapter called "Polaroids" through the chapter called "Plot")

Discussion Question:
(You do not have to turn in writing in response to this question, but you should come to class ready to discuss it.)
If you were to make a list of the lessons you can carry forward from Anne Lamott, what would they be?

Write: You will turn in at least one page of writing today, though you can still approach it as free writing and not more formal writing. Our goal is still to use the writing process to get limber, uncover our stories, and get to know each other. Today's writings may also prove valuable accompaniments to your journey through Free Minds.

You will write at least half a page each in response to two prompts. To begin, you can set a timer for 5-7 minutes and jump in:

- As I enter Free Minds, I am confident about _____
- Next, write a list of the fears you bring to the classroom. These may be logistical (how bad will traffic be on the way to class?) or internal (am I smart enough to read Plato?). You could begin with the prompt, "I am afraid _____." Try not to censor yourself. State your fears and we will both honor and work with them in class.

Bonus Poem (just for your enjoyment)

The Road Not Taken by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood

And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Thursday, February 24

Literature Unit with Professor Patricia García

Unit Overview:
Investigating Stories: How does the personal become political?

Welcome to our Free Minds community! I can't wait to share stories with you as part of the literature unit, and I want to hear your stories as well. We will be reading short stories from the collection *The Thing Around Your Neck* by the Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Achiche.

Raised in Nigeria, Adichie was educated in the United States and is the author of novels, essays, editorials, and also a noted TED talk speaker. Her two most famous talks are "The Danger of a Single Story" and "We Should All be Feminists." The second one was even sampled by Beyoncé in her song "Flawless." Adiche argues in these talks and in her literary works that we need to tell and to hear each other's stories in order to have a more complete understanding of the world and our place within it. Unfortunately, what we often read in schools or hear on the news is only one side of the story. Her short stories illustrate this as they deal with power, war, gender, education, and love. Likewise, her essays and editorials speak out on politics, culture, and, most recently grief and resilience in these Covid times.

Literature Class 1: The Danger of a Single Story

Background: Short story collections are one of my favorite things to read. I can read one story, feel a sense of accomplishment for having finished it, and then put the book down. How does a collection of stories work together to speak to a larger theme? This is one of the questions we will explore in reading stories in Free Minds. The first story we are reading is "A Private Experience." It's a powerful and difficult

story about war, religion, and violence. It's also the story of two women caught up in all of this for just a moment. As you read, consider when the private becomes public, especially in moments where the reasons for the violence are explored.

After you read the story, you should watch Adichie's TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story." What is this danger, and how do we avoid it? How does this talk address issues presented in "A Private Experience."

Read: "A Private Experience"
Watch: The Danger of a Single Story, TED talk

Discussion question:
(You do not have to turn in writing in response to this question, but you should come to class ready to discuss it.)
We learn a lot about both women in the story from both description as well as dialogue. Find examples of each to share with the class. How do these moments illustrate Adichie's arguments about the single story and its dangers?

Monday, February 28

Literature Class 2: The Authentic Story

These next two stories, "Imitation" and "Jumping Monkey Hill," offer new perspectives on the theme of "the danger of the single story." Adichie examines love, marriage, and immigration in "Imitation." What dynamics do you see in this marriage? How does their home and lifestyle reflect the American dream, especially as immigrants work to achieve it? What is missing?

In "Jumping Monkey Hill," we enter the world of the creative writing workshop. Our workshops will be supportive; this one is much less so, especially as they are competing for a prize. But, look for moments in which the writers bond over identity, literature, and friendship.

Read: "Imitation" and "Jumping Monkey Hill"

Response Paper 1 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
One of the big questions in "Jumping Monkey Hill" is about authenticity. Write your own definition of "authenticity" (it's ok to look it up, but write this in your own words or based on your experience). Who or what is authentic in the story, in your opinion? Who is not? Please use specific examples to support your answers.

Thursday, March 3

Literature Class 3: The Personal Story

Background: We are reading the title story of the collection "The Thing Around Your Neck." It's a challenging story, because to be quite honest, the "thing" is never defined and yet is an important

symbol in the story. As you read, consider what you think the "thing" is, and pay attention to Adichie's style of writing. Who is the narrator, and who is the audience? How would you break up the story by plot? What will happen next for the characters when the story is over? Finally, consider why this story is the title story of the collection.

Read: "The Thing Around Your Neck"

Discussion question:
(You do not have to turn in writing in response to this question, but you should come to class ready to discuss it.)
The use of "I" and "you" in this story is interesting, especially as it challenges us to learn about the narrator. Find examples of this, and consider how it helps create empathy or feelings of understanding with the narrator. Why are empathy and understanding important to countering the danger of a single story?

Monday, March 7

Literature Class 4: The Political Story

Background: The last story in the collection, "The Headstrong Historian" recounts more directly some of the history of Nigeria that has been introduced in other stories, including cultural conflicts, colonial history, and gender politics. The story also alludes to one of the most famous books by a fellow Nigerian writer: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. We don't need to have read that novel to understand this story, but it's helpful to know that Adichie is writing about how Nigeria's story is told in both the history and literature of the nation. In the story, consider how Nwangba responds to the personal and political changes in her life. How does her story influence her granddaughter Grace?

Read: "The Headstrong Historian"

Response Paper 2 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
Nwangba is a storyteller, as Grace points out. Choose one of the stories Nwangba tells, and briefly summarize it. What does this story reveal about her personal life? What does the story tell us about the political situation in her world?

Thursday, March 10

Analytic Writing with A.R. Rogers

Unit Overview:
In this unit, we'll learn to become more competent writers. We will have four full writing classes together this semester. The first two of those classes will focus on honing important skills like learning to confidently start writing a paper, writing strong sentences, and using quotations in our writing. These skills will prepare you to successfully write **formal paper 1, which is due Thursday, March 24**.

Our third and fourth classes will build on these skills, while introducing ideas from academic writing. We'll talk about developing an organized paragraph, the complete essay, and responding to others' ideas. We'll practice these in class, so that you feel ready to implement them in **formal paper 2, which is due Monday, April 18.** *(Helpful hint: mark these due dates in your calendar if you've not done so already!)*

Analytic Writing Class 1: How to Begin

Background: In this class, we're going to engage with three ways to begin writing. Facing the blank page (or screen) is often daunting to new and seasoned writers alike, but beginning is a *skill* just like anything else.

Often when we dread doing something (like starting a paper!), it's because we don't feel we have the necessary skills to complete the task. In this class, we'll spend most of our time doing in-class writing and trying out different strategies for beginning. We'll try our hands at free-writing, listing, cubing, and summarizing. I'll guide you through each of these exercises. You may not like all of these techniques, but it's my hope that you'll find one that works for you that you can apply to both response papers and formal papers.

It is imperative that you come to class having read the brief essays below, or it will be challenging for you to participate in this class.

Friendly reminder: Paper 1 is due Thursday, March 24!

Read: *They Say, I Say*, "Don't Blame the Eater," pgs. 245-247
They Say, I Say, "Hidden Intellectualism," pgs. 248-255

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.
After you've read each essay, consider the following questions:

- Did I like this text? Why or why not?
- Can I describe the essays?
- Can I summarize them?
- Do I understand what the author is trying to tell me?
- Is it like anything else I've read before? How so?
- Do the essays relate to my real, lived experience?
- If I were in a debate, would I argue for or against the author's message?

Monday, March 14 & Thursday, March 17

We will not meet for class this week. Enjoy your Spring Break!

Monday, March 21

Analytic Writing Class 2: What is a Sentence Boundary? Why do we Quote?

Background: In this class, we are will continue developing writing skills that will help us succeed, not just in this class, but in all college classes!

Tonight, we'll focus on crafting strong sentences and avoiding pitfalls like fragments and run-ons. We'll also discuss and practice using quotes in our writing. The first step to using quotes is understanding why we include them in the first place. After you've read the chapter and the linked handout, please consider the discussion questions before coming to class. We'll look at examples of correct and incorrect quote usage and practice quoting ourselves.

Friendly reminder: Paper 1 is due Thursday, March 24!

Read: *They Say, I Say*, "As He Himself Puts It," pgs. 43-52
and Sentence Boundary Handout

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

- Do you notice yourself writing run-ons or sentence fragments?
- After reading through the handout, can you identify one way you can correct these?
- After reading the chapter, how would you answer the following questions:
    - Why do writers use quotes in their writing?
    - Why do you think it's important for you to do this as a college writer?

Thursday, March 24

US History with Dr. Karma Chávez

Unit Overview:
Understanding mid-20th Century US History through Political Autobiography

The mid-late 20th Century was an important and tumultuous time in US history, especially regarding movements for social, racial, and economic justice and governmental response to such efforts. Many people are at least somewhat familiar with Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s efforts to obtain Black civil rights and public acts of civil disobedience such as Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her seat in the front of a Montgomery city bus. Many have also likely seen images of police turning fire hoses on Black protestors in Birmingham during the 1960s.

However, such examples only scratch the surface of the types of resistance people engaged in or the covert and overt government actions to repress dissent. A number of those revolutionaries who got caught in the crosshairs of local and federal police have since written about their experiences in the form known as political autobiography.

Political autobiographies are typically defined as those written by politicians to describe their political lives as opposed to their personal ones. Political biographies written by those engaged in struggles for

justice refuse to separate the personal and political as they tell their readers about specific political moments in history through the lens of their lived experiences.

In this unit, we will read excerpts from two political autobiographies (Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier) that shed light on social movements of the 1960s and 1970s in the United States and the repressive strategies of state, local, and federal law enforcement.

US History Class 1: The Politics of Telling One's Story

Background: Angela Davis is a professor, a communist, a feminist, and a Black liberation activist. She grew to international fame when in 1970 she was arrested after Jonathan Jackson took over a court room, which resulted in the deaths of Jackson, the judge, and the defendants in the trial. Davis was accused of purchasing the guns used in the incident. After becoming a fugitive, getting caught, and standing trial, Davis was acquitted of her charges in 1972. She published an autobiography about her life in 1974, which was recently released in its 3rd edition in January 2022.

Leonard Peltier is a Lakota, Dakota, Nakota, and Ojibwe man and member of the American Indian Movement (AIM). In 1975, he was on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota to protect the community which had been subject to numerous killings. FBI agents ambushed the community and Peltier and others were involved in a shootout which resulted in the deaths of two FBI agents. Peltier, the US's longest incarcerated Indigenous person, has been incarcerated since 1977. He has been the subject of longstanding campaigns for his release and done extensive community work from behind bars. In January 2022 he was diagnosed with COVID and his supporters have advocated for his release—he's been eligible for parole since 1993. In 1999, he published a collection of his writings. In this week's readings, both Davis and Peltier reflect on the politics of publishing their own stories.

Read: *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, pp. ix-xxx
Prison Writings, pp. 43-45 (course reader/Sakai)

Discussion Questions:
(You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.)

- Why do Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier choose to write about their own lives?
- Why are they seemingly reluctant to do so?

Note – turn in formal paper 1 on Sakai before class tonight.

Monday, March 28

US History Class 2: Becoming an Example

Background: Both Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier were actively involved in campaigns and actions for their respective movements, and prior to their arrests had been targeted by law enforcement and other governmental entities (California Governor Ronald Reagan and the University of California Board of Regents for Davis and the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Peltier). Neither, though, was a leader above and beyond anyone else in the movement. With their arrests and what they and their supporters viewed as

false charges, they became a cause and symbol for their movements. Law enforcement hoped to make an example of them that would stifle movement building. Their cases thus help us to understand social movements and law enforcement for sure, but also provide a lens with which to understand US American culture.

Read: *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 1 (esp. pp. 3-20)
and *Prison Writings*, pp. 123-142 (course reader/Sakai)

Response Paper 3 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
Describe something you've experienced that you think offers insight into the broader cultural, political, or economic situation in that historical moment? Try and remember details to make this as specific as possible. What broader situation or issue does your personal experience connect with?

Discussion Question:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to this question, but you should come to class ready to discuss it.
Based on the two excerpts you read for tonight, what is justice?

Thursday, March 31

US History Class 3: Becoming Politicized

Background: Davis and Peltier, both born in 1944, viewed and experienced some of the worst that US America had to offer for Black and American Indian people. Their experiences in the early years of their lives shaped their perspectives on issues such as white Americans, US politics, capitalism, and law enforcement. As they grew into adulthood, those views became more fully formed and different events and encounters sparked them to become active political beings with an analysis of power. Their processes of politicization offer us a lens to think about how and why people develop political worldviews in response to the world around them.

Read: *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 3 (esp. pp. 111-125)
and *Prison Writings*, pp. 89-91 (course reader/Sakai)

Discussion Questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

- How does Davis understand the rationale for the bombing of the 16th Street Baptist Church in 1964?
- How does this event seem to shape Davis' worldview?
- What happens to Peltier when watching the fishing rights protests on TV?

Monday, April 4

US History Class 4: Fighting for Freedom

Background: Things turn out very differently for Davis than they do for Peltier. Although both are captured fugitives who face trial for crimes they claim not to have committed, Davis wins her freedom, while nearly 50 years later, Peltier still fights for his.

These readings help us to understand the US legal system, where it intersects with politics, and the significance of freedom dreams for historically oppressed peoples in the United States.

Read: *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*, Pt. 6 (esp. pp. 312-321, 342-349)
and *Prison Writings*, pp. 169-182 (course reader/Sakai)

Response Paper 4 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
How has your political worldview come to be? What events, people, and or experiences have shaped your perspectives? Please be as specific and detailed as possible.

Discussion Questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

- Why does Davis get acquitted, and Peltier get convicted?
- What do their cases tell us about the US legal system?

Thursday, April 7

Analytic Writing Class 3: The PIE Paragraph

Background: In academic writing, a well-structured paragraph will take you far. Today, we'll introduce a structure I teach to all of my college writing students (and even use myself!): the PIE paragraph. PIE is an acronym that stands for Point, Illustration (or sometimes Information), and Explanation. A good body paragraph usually contains each of these three elements. Come to class having read the essay below. We'll use this essay to practice writing PIE paragraphs during class.

Friendly reminder: Paper 2 is due Monday, April 18!

Read: They Say, I Say, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," pgs. 261-273

Watch: The PIE Paragraph https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=taGNqdHOGzI

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.
After reading the text, consider the following:

- What did I think about this text? Did I like it? Do I agree? Why or why not?

- If I were describing this text to a friend, what would be the main idea I would want to share with my friend?
- Is there a quote in the essay that would help me communicate that idea?

After watching the video, consider the following:

- What does PIE stand for?
- Why do college writers use PIE and other paragraph-building techniques?

Monday, April 11

Analytic Writing Class 4:

Background: Tonight will be our final full writing class! As such, we'll spend time digging deep into the prompt for formal paper 2 and continuing to develop our skills of quoting and *responding* to those quotes.

By the end of class, it is my hope that you'll have a deeper understanding of the prompt, as well the necessity of bringing other voices into your text to state your own ideas about the subject matter. Make you sure you have *They Say, I Say* handy, as we'll use the exercises at the end of the chapter during class.

Friendly reminder: Paper 2 is due Monday, April 18!

Read: *They Say, I Say:* "Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say," pgs. 67-76
and Formal Paper 2 prompt

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.
Read through the formal paper 2 prompt (again) before coming to class.

- What is this prompt asking?
- Is it asking for multiple things from you?
- Can you make a clear list of the thing(s) it's asking?
- How do you think you might organize this paper?
- Considering the chapter's conversation of incorporating different perspectives (or different voices), whose perspective(s) do you think you'll incorporate into your paper?
- Why do you think college writers are asked to consider different voices in their papers?

Thursday, April 14

Art History Unit with Dr. Janis Bergman-Carton

Unit Overview:
Rethinking the Single Story in Art History

"Stories matter. Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories

can also repair that broken dignity….When we reject the single story, when we realize that there is never a single story about any place, we regain a kind of paradise."

-Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,"The Danger of a Single Story," TED Talk, October, 2009.

Art history in 2022 is radically different from the discipline that developed in Europe during the colonial period (roughly the 15th to the mid-20th century). The social revolutions of the 1960s brought new attention to groups previously marginalized in the history of art. Before the 1960s, art history was written essentially as a single story featuring exclusively European art created by white males. For the last fifty years, art historians have been addressing the limitations of previous narratives and also whose stories have not been included in art history, and why?

Our art history unit looks at work by three extraordinary artists representative of the expanded scope of art history in the 21st century, an art history that includes stories by artists of color, women, and creators from different hemispheres. I chose the art of Kehinde Wiley, Lalla Essaydi, and Wendy Red Star for this unit because their work is visually and intellectually compelling, and it also speaks directly to the theme of the art history unit: "Rethinking the Single Story in Art History."

We will take a deep dive into the visual strategies deployed by Wiley, Essaydi , and Red Star to transform single stories that "have been used to dispossess and to malign" into humanizing vehicles of empowerment.

Art History Class 1: Introduction to Visual Analysis

Background: Visual analysis is the core skill of art history. Tonight, in preparation for our study of art by Kehinde Wiley, Lalla Essaydi, and Wendy Red Star, we'll discuss the visual analysis attributes and skills (such as the use of color, line, composition, texture, and size) modeled in the video assigned for tonight's homework. This video offers a close reading of a famous painting in London's National Gallery by Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna in the Meadow, c. 1500.*

Take notes as you view the video about which techniques you want to discuss further or better understand. Visual analysis skills prepare us to recognize and understand the visual choices the artist made in creating the artwork. By observing and describing the separate parts of a painting, sculpture, or photograph, you come to a better understanding of the art work as a whole.

View: "How to do visual (formal) analysis in art history" (Khan Academy, Smarthistory, September 18, 2017).
https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/start-here-apah/intro-art-history-apah/v/visual-analysis

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

1. What visual techniques does Bellini use to ensure we see and understand the Madonna and child as the most important elements in the painting?

2. The painting is 2-D, a flat surface, but Bellini finds visual strategies to create the illusion of a 3-D space we could imagine entering. Name one or two devices he uses to create that illusion.

3. What visual technique does Bellini use to call attention to the intimate relationship between Madonna and Child?

Monday, April 18

Art History Class 2: Kehinde Wiley: Refashioning Images of Power in Portraiture

Background:
Kehinde Wiley is an American artist best known for making portraits that reimagine grandiose figures borrowed from Old Master paintings (like those of Giovanni Bellini). Wily attributes his interest in remaking portraiture for the 21st century to the experience of growing up as a young Black man in the U.S., hyper-aware of "how young Black bodies are seen."

In a recent series of paintings titled *A New Republic,* Wiley references famous heroic portraits in Western art by positioning contemporary Black sitters, from a range of social backgrounds, in the poses of the original historical or religious figures. Wiley's images – as part quotation, part intervention – raise questions about power, privilege, identity in art and draw attention to the absence of African Americans from earlier historical and cultural narratives. As you view the video and listen to Wiley describe his process, jot down two or three phrases you want to call attention to and discuss further in class.

View: "Kehinde Wiley: A New Republic" (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts), April 16, 2018

Response Paper 5:
We will do an in-class response paper about Wiley's art to leave plenty of time in advance of class for you to finish the formal paper that is due tonight. Come ready to write in response to the Kehinde Wiley video you have watched for tonight.

Please turn in formal paper 2 on Sakai tonight before the start of class.

Thursday, April 21

Art History Class 3: Lalla Essaydi: Resisting Clichés and Stereotypes in Art

Background:

Like Kehinde Wiley, Lalla Essaydi is a contemporary artist who has studied Western art history, savored its aesthetic richness and cultural power, and also recognized the potential for damage and "danger" in "a single story."

A Moroccan woman living in the West, Essaydi most often engages the "Orientalist" tradition in her work, particularly as it was manifested in a highly popular form of European painting in the nineteenth century. Orientalist art played an outsized role in the development of degrading stereotypical representations of Arab culture.

In painted large format photographs, Essaydi appropriates and reworks Orientalist imagery, inviting viewers to reconsider the Orientalist mythology. She writes, "In my art, I wish to present myself through multiple lenses—as artist, as Moroccan, as Saudi, as traditionalist, as Liberal, as Muslim. In short, I invite the viewer to resist stereotypes."

Read: "Lalla Essaydi, An Interview by Ray Waterhouse," *NKA A Journal of African Art,* no. 24, 2009, 144-149.

Discussion Questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

1. Why do you think Essaydi deliberately stages her photographs to remind us of demeaning nineteenth-century Orientalist paintings?
2. Essaydi stages some of her photographs in a now unoccupied building behind her girlhood home in Morocco. Young women in her family who were deemed disobedient were essentially banished to this space for a month of silence and reflection. Do you have any memories of spaces to which you were sent or you retreated as a child when you were deemed "disobedient"?

Monday, April 25

Art History Class 4: Wendy Red Star: The Personal is Always Political

Background:

Wendy Red Star, a Native American artist of the Apsáalooke (Crow) lineage, born in Billings, Montana in 1981, is known for her funny, surreal, but biting self-portrait photographs that poke fun at clichéd representations of Native Americans.

Red Star created a photography practice as a way to navigate her personal experience growing up on a Crow Indian Reservation, juxtaposed with her experience of mainstream contemporary society. Drawing on Target-brand Halloween costumes and other forms of pop culture, conceptual art strategies, and the Crow traditions within which she was raised, Red Star pushes photography in new directions—using self-portraiture, photo-collage, and mixed media—to bring to life her unique perspective on American history.

Read: Abaki Beck, "Decolonizing Photography: A Conversation with Wendy Red Star," *Aperture,* December 14, 2016

https://aperture.org/editorial/wendy-red-star/

Response Paper 6 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
Have you ever felt, or known someone who felt, negatively stereotyped rather than judged by your/their individual merits? Maybe be an offhand comment or joke at work or a social gathering you experienced as sexist, racist, or an ethnic slur. When I was younger, I had experiences like that at work in meetings dominated by male colleagues who interrupted and talked over me. In retrospect, I suspect it was part of an old school office culture in which young women were perceived as having less important things to say. At the time, however, I felt devastated and lost confidence for a while. In one page, describe an experience like that you have had (or a friend has had), how it made you feel, and how you responded—or wished you had responded.

Thursday, April 28

Philosophy with Matthew Daude Laurents

Unit Overview: Philosophy

Welcome to the philosophy unit! I'm Matthew, your philosophy prof. Before we dive in, let me make a few preliminary comments to help get us off on the right foot.

Philosophy is both a **subjectmatter** and a set of **methods**. This is a fancy way of saying that, as a discipline, you can look at philosophy as a set of texts written by philosophers, or as a set of methods that facilitate a certain kind of thinking that we call "philosophical." As definitions go, this is pretty unhelpful, so think about what people mean in ordinary circumstances when they use the word philosophy. Like, "You may play basketball like that, but that's not my philosophy."

When people use the word philosophy they often mean a "general picture" or the principles that lie behind something, like playing basketball. That's an important clue, because philosophy is about "big picture" issues — those so-called Big Questions, like what happens to us after we die, whether God exists, whether good and evil mean anything objective, and how we know that we know what we think we know about the world. That sort of thing.

A lot of what happens in philosophy involves using particular methods ("critical thinking skills" is the current buzzword) to clarify seemingly simple questions. Simple questions are almost always packed with assumptions and presuppositions, which are mostly unacknowledged beliefs about the world, about our ability to know things, even about what kind of thing we are—and many others. Philosophy involves trying to unpack what we believe that we don't realize we believe, about ordinary and extraordinary things. We try to examine those dimly acknowledged beliefs and ask hard questions—like whether those beliefs square up with other things we believe.

Philosophy is partly about what we believe that we don't realize that we believe. To explore this odd landscape, we're going to read some writings by a dead guy, Plato, to see how *he* does philosophy.

That's the "subjectmatter" part. But philosophy also asks what makes an answer "good" — as in, why should we be *convinced*. That's where arguments come into the picture, and argument-making is all about method.

We're going to practice habits of clear thinking in our discussion and in writing assignments. If you're already pretty good at thinking, congratulations. But: you can get even better. If you haven't given your brain much exercise, then philosophy is just what you need.

Along the way, assuming you're at least half awake, you'll probably end up asking yourself some questions about what you believe, too. Don't let the fact that you are questioning your beliefs trouble you too much: It's a fairly typical symptom of not being dead.

Philosophy Class 1: Plato's Cave

Background: Plato's allegory of the cave is one of the most famous and memorable images in all of Western philosophy. We will use this famous story to launch our discussion of what philosophy *is* and what it's *for*. Plato uses this story in *The Republic* to clarify his views about the nature of reality and our knowledge of what is real. We'll see in the story that it's *more* than just an entertaining story or a bad case of "what-if"! The point of the story is to prompt us to *think* about reality differently, and ask some challenging questions about how we know what we think we know. That should get the philosophical ball rolling.

Read: Philosophy Class 1 (course reader/Sakai), which includes the excerpt from Plato's *Republic* that involves the cave, plus some explanation of what Plato is up to in this story.

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

- What is the basic "story" of "The Cave"?
- What does this story *mean?* What is Plato trying to clarify with the story of the cave?
- Why is this story called an *allegory?* What is an allegory? What are the important elements of the "literal" story that have allegorical meanings?
- **Think for yourself**: Do you think what you see and hear and smell is the *most real* part of the world*?
    - Is there an "unseen" part? Is this unseen part — whatever you call it — more real than the part we experience with our senses and bodies?
    - How do these parts of the world connect with each other?

For our Thursday classes, I'll give you the seed of a conversation. Give it a try! You can start this conversation with members of our class, your family, friends, or anyone you feel comfortable with. The point is to share an exploration of ideas with someone.

Conversation Starter: What did you learn about what philosophy *is* and what it's *for* in our first philosophy class? Suppose I say that philosophy is for *everybody*. How would you say philosophy is relevant to people's daily lives?

*I'm using the term "world" to mean "everything there is." When we use the word that way, the *world* includes the physical universe, but it may include much *more* than just the material universe.

Monday, May 2

Philosophy Class 2: Socrates's *Apology*

Background: Socrates (470-399 BCE) is one of the most famous of all philosophers in the Western tradition. His *Apology* was *written* by Plato, but it purports to be Socrates's speech at his trial. Briefly, three Athenian leaders who were irritated by Socrates's constant questioning brought very serious (criminal) charges against him. They claimed he engaged in *impiety* (roughly, rejecting the traditional gods of Athens) and *corrupting the youth* of Athens. In his trial, the accusers presented their case against Socrates, and, as was customary in trials in ancient Athens, the accused was his own defense lawyer. *The Apology* is Plato's version of the speech that Socrates made to defend himself in court. In this opening passage, watch for Socrates's "two classes of accusers": We're going to concentrate on the *first* class of accusers, what we might call the "court of public opinion." This will give us insight into the ways in which Socrates's *personal* sense of a mission became a political issue for many Athenians — so political, in fact, that Socrates was tried for capital crimes.

Read: Philosophy Class 2 (course reader/Sakai), which includes the opening portion of Plato's *Apology*, plus some background on the social and political climate of Athens at the time of the trial. I also include a bit of explanation of the Athenian legal system, so we know what's going on.

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them.

- What does the word *apology* mean in the title of this book? Look up the word *apology*: What are the two main meanings of the word? Is Socrates "apologetic" — meaning, is he saying he's sorry for what he did?
- Anytos, Meletus, and Lycon bring serious criminal charges against Socrates: What do you think motivated them to bring charges that could result in the death penalty?
- What are Socrates's "two classes of accusers"? Why does Socrates think that the first class is more difficult to respond to?
- What does the Oracle at Delphi say about Socrates? What does Socrates do about this oracle's proclamation that no one is wiser than he is? How did this turn people against him?
- **Think for yourself**: Do you think Socrates was guilty of a crime? Is questioning authority a crime? When and how does questioning authority become problematic for society?

Response Paper 7 Prompt:
You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.
We know there are people who are rejected by society, one way or another, because they call in question something about society's values or authority. That's when an individual's *personal* perspective becomes *political*. Can you give an example of someone you admire for being critical of prevailing values?

What *should* society do about people who question mainstream social values? Can we have a genuinely pluralistic society if some members of the society reject the possibility of any other perspective than their own? Is a pluralistic society even *possible* for us? How?

Thursday, May 5

Reflecting on the Semester: Where Have We Been, and Where Are We Going?

We will spend this class session preparing your final reflective assignment, which you will turn in (and present a portion of) on the final night of class, May 16.

Read: Reflective Assignment handout (Sakai)

Bring: rough draft of your reflective essay

Monday, May 9

Philosophy Class 3: Socrates's *Apology*, continued, with an excursion

Background: We start this class with an excerpt from the play, *The Clouds*, by Aristophanes. *The Clouds* was written in 423 BCE, by which time Socrates was well-known (and either loved or, let's say, "disliked") by Athenians. Notice that the play was first performed about 23 years *before* Socrates's trial, an interesting detail, when you consider the way Socrates portrays the "first class" of accusers. In the second portion of our class, we read the section of Socrates's speech that deals with the "second class" of accusers, Anytos, Lycon, and Meletus.

Read: Philosophy Class 3 (course reader/Sakai), which includes a scene from Aristophanes's *The Clouds*, as well as more of *The Apology*.

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to these questions, but you should come to class ready to discuss them:
Consider the *character* named Socrates in Aristophanes's play: In what ways do you think Aristophanes is making fun of the "real" Socrates? Is Aristophanes's portrayal of the real Socrates accurate? What *is* accurate about the character?

- Why does Socrates think this play is so important in shaping public opinion against him?
- How does Socrates respond to the specific charges brought against him? Give one or two examples and explain.
- **Think for yourself**: Do you think what other people *believe* about you is important? Explain. What consequences do you think "public opinion" has for you as an individual and for your life? How do people's beliefs and perspectives about a person's personal life become political?

Response Paper 8 Prompt:

You will write a one page response to this question and hand it in on Sakai before the start of tonight's class.

Socrates says, “I am still even now going about and searching and investigating at the god’s behest anyone, whether citizen or foreigner, who I think is wise; and when he does not seem so to me, I give aid to the god and show that he is not wise.”

What does Socrates mean? How does he portray his questioning of people with a reputation for wisdom? Why is this “giving aid to the god”? Give at least one example from the philosophy reading to support your ideas.

Thursday, May 12

Philosophy Class 4: Socrates’s *Apology:* The End

Background: Depending on your perspective, *The Apology*’s ending is either really good or really bad. As you know, Socrates is narrowly convicted of the charges brought against him, and the court’s attention turns to the punishment phase of the trial. Socrates’s accusers propose the death penalty, and, after Socrates incendiary proposal for his “penalty,” the jury votes overwhelmingly to put him to death. Because of his philosophical perspective, Socrates claims that the outcome is actually good for him. He says he has remained true to his principles, and he famously states that “no evil can come to a good man, either in life or after death.”

Read: Philosophy Class 4 (course reader/Sakai), which includes the final portion of Plato’s *Apology.*

Discussion questions:
You do not have to turn in writing in response to this question, but you should come to class ready to discuss it.

- After Socrates is convicted of the charges, his accusers propose the death penalty. What is Socrates’s counter-proposal for his penalty? Why did his proposal infuriate the jury?
- What does it say about Socrates’s sense of personal *mission* that he told the court that, no matter what they said, he wouldn’t stop doing philosophy?
- Why does Socrates claim that the death penalty is actually a good outcome for him?
- Why, in his view, is the worse judgment on those who voted to execute him?
- **Think for yourself**: Socrates says he could have made a different sort of defense and said what the jurors wanted to hear, and he probably would have been acquitted. Then he famously says, “I much prefer to die after [my] defense than to live after a defense of the other sort.” What do you think of this? Is it better to stick to your principles and die, or are there reasons to compromise your values and live?
- What does Socrates mean when he says, “It is not hard to escape death; it is much harder to escape wickedness, for wickedness runs faster than death”? Does Socrates escape? From what? What about his accusers or the people who voted for the death penalty. Do *they* escape?

Monday, May 16

Come to class ready to share and celebrate.

Your reflective assignment is due tonight.

You did it! Congratulations on all of your hard work this semester!