

Beth Flynn  
 UN1001, Amazing Lives  
 Fisher 125  
 T,Th 9:35-10:50 a.m.  
 Spring, 2005  
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 Office Hours: T,Th 11-12:20 and by appointment

### **Texts:**

Dylan, Bob. Chronicles, Vol. 1. Simon & Schuster,2004. ISBN: 0743230760.  
 King, Stephen. On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft. New York: Pocket Books,2000.  
 McBride,James. The Color of Water: A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother. New York: RiverheadBooks, 1996.  
 ISBN: 1-57322-022-1.  
 Nafisi,Azar. Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books.New York:Random House, 2003. ISBN: 0375504907.  
 Tan,Amy. The Opposite of Fate: Memories of a Writing Life. New York: Penguin Books, 2003. ISBN:0-14-20.004898.

### **Supplies:**

You'll need a file folder to hold your portfolio of responses, drafts, critique sheets, and graded papers. I'll bring in some used ones if you'd prefer not to buy a new one. I will be collecting response statements on the days they are due. I will collect drafts and critique sheets on the day formal essays are due and graded essays shortly after they are returned. Please have the file folder by Thursday of week one.

### **Purpose:**

In "Amazing Lives" we will read, discuss, and write about autobiographies by individuals who overcame considerable adversity to achieve success.

### **Writing Assignments:**

#### Response Journal:

For selected readings indicated on the syllabus, you should submit in-class or out-of-class response statements of at least 125 words. The response should demonstrate that you have read the assignment meaningfully and should discuss the assignment in terms of course content and goals. Some possibilities would be to focus on important themes, or relationships between themes and the author of the selection, or important passages, words, sentences, images or phrases, or connections between the selection and other selections assigned that day or previous course readings or readings done elsewhere. The responses will provide you an opportunity to reflect on the material you have read and to record your reactions in a focused way. These responses are not formal and need not be polished or well organized. The act of writing should stimulate you to make connections you might not previously have made. One of these in-class or out-of-class responses should be sent to the entire class via e-mail at [flynn1001-l@mtu.edu](mailto:flynn1001-l@mtu.edu). To count as a response on a particular day, an e-mail message should be sent before the class in which the response is due and printed out and submitted the day the response is due.

#### Portfolio Analysis

Please prepare a portfolio analysis (at least a page long) that provides a commentary on responses, drafts and critique sheets, and final papers. What are some strengths of your performance on these assignments? What are some limitations?

#### Formal Writing:

Three formal papers will be required.

The first is a three-page essay (approximately 750 words) in which you describe your own life, making connections with Dylan's Chronicles and/or King's On Writing. Has your life, so far, been amazing, unexciting, or some combination of the two? Who and what influenced your decisions? What are your goals?

The second is a three-page essay (approximately 750 words) in which you compare the experiences of McBride and Nafisi by making specific references to their works. Whose life do you think is more amazing? Why?

The third is a three-page essay (approximately 750 words) in which you read an article about Dylan, King, McBride, Nafisi, or Tan that is not autobiographical and explain how it informs the work of the author. Describe the new material and then make connections between it and material in the autobiography. Then evaluate the new material. Does it seem to represent the author or his or her work fairly? Is it well-written? Why or why not. Be sure to provide complete bibliographical information for the citation. For correct MLA format see <http://webster.comnet.edu/mla/index.shtml>.

You will need to submit proposals for and drafts of these essays. The proposal is a brief, tentative description of what you intend to write about in the essay. One paragraph is sufficient, though it could be longer. You are free to change your topic after you have submitted the proposal. The draft should be your best effort rather than a first draft. The feedback you receive on it from a classmate will be more valuable if you think the essay is close to being ready to submit.

### ***Presentations:***

You will have an opportunity to present essays # 1, 2, and 3 in three- or four-minute presentations. The presentation should be based on the paper you have submitted but should be tailored for oral delivery. Please use at least one overhead that provides an outline of your paper and a thesis statement. Please include a paper copy of the outline and thesis statement with your paper. Make sure to put a complete heading on the outline including your name, my name, the date, the course number, and the assignment number.

### ***Reports/Discussions:***

Once during the term make a five-minute report on background material that informs the reading assignment for that day or start the class discussion for that day's reading. If you prepare a report, be sure to submit an outline of it. If you start the discussion, submit the question or questions that you use to stimulate discussion.

### ***Attendance:***

Attendance is mandatory. Much of the course involves conversation about course readings. If you miss those conversations, you will have missed a good deal of the course content. More than three unexcused absences will affect your grade.

### ***Late Papers:***

Since the course emphasizes the revision process and since it is important that presentations be based on finished essays, drafts and final essays must be submitted on time. Late papers will affect your grade.

### ***Grades:***

Your grade will be based on the following:

Portfolio (responses, e-mail(s), critiques, outlines/questions)	25%
Presentation # 1	5%
Presentation # 2	5 %
Presentation # 3	5%
Formal essay # 1	20 %
Formal essay # 2	20 %

## Formal essay # 3

20%

**Criteria for Evaluation:**

## A Papers and Presentations:

The author makes an original contribution so that the reader becomes involved and learns from the piece or presentation.

The central point of the essay is clear, and the parts of the essay have been connected effectively. The outline for the presentation is correct in form and effective.

Support for the point is appropriate for the intended audience and convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration.

There are few if any errors.

## B Papers and Presentations:

The writing or speaking is clear, but the contribution does not seem especially original or new.

The central point is clear, but the parts of the essay or talk could be connected more effectively.

Support for the point is adequate for the intended audience and fairly convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have been taken into consideration to an extent.

There are some errors.

## C Papers and Presentations:

Takes some effort on the part of the reader or listener to get through the essay or talk.

The paper or talk does not have a strong focus, and it is not always clear how the parts support the thesis.

Support for the point is not especially appropriate for the intended audience and not especially convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have not always been taken into consideration.

There are a number of errors.

## D Papers and Presentations:

The reader or listener cannot figure out what point the writer or speaker is trying to make.

The central point is not at all clear, and the parts do not support it.

Support for the point is inappropriate for the intended audience and not convincing.

The reader's or listener's needs have not been taken into consideration.

There are many errors.

## F Papers and Presentations:

The paper or talk does not respond to the assignment at all or has not been handed in or presented.

**Other:**

When papers are returned, most papers will have a letter grade on them. If you receive a grade lower than A, you may revise the essay and submit it no later than two weeks after it is returned. A few papers, though, will have an "R" on them. This means that the paper must be revised within two weeks of the time the paper was returned, and only the revision will be graded. I will usually suggest that individuals who receive Rs see me before revising. Please include the original paper with the revision!

Remember that formal essays should have titles. Please leave at least an inch margin on the sides and top and bottom of the paper and remember to number the pages on papers. Label all work including presentation outlines. Include your name, my name, the course number and time, the date, and the course assignment. Be sure to indicate if the paper is a draft, a formal paper, or a revision. Please do NOT submit drafts and formal essays electronically.

MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access

to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head or chair, or the Affirmative Action Office (7-3310).

It may be necessary to alter the syllabus as the semester proceeds in order to better meet the instructional needs of the class.

Plagiarism--using the ideas or words of others without acknowledging the source--is unethical and a violation of University policy. Plagiarism cases will be handled by the Dean of Students. Some consequences of plagiarism could be failure of a paper or course. The University has subscribed to an anti-plagiarism service that can detect plagiarized material. If you have questions about the proper way to cite the ideas of someone else, please see me.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### Week 1 (January 11-13)

T Introduction  
Th Dylan, pp. 225-246. In-class response # 1.

#### Week 2 (January 18-20)

T Dylan, pp. 246-267. Out-of-class response #2.  
Th Dylan, pp. 267-293. In-class response # 3.

#### Week 3 (January 25-27)

T King, "C.V.," ch. 1-14. Proposal foressay # 1 due.  
Th King, "C.V.," ch. 15-23. In-class response # 4.

#### Week 4 (February 1-3)

T King, "C.V.," ch. 24-31. Draft of essay # 1 due.  
Th King, "C.V.," ch. 32-38, "On Living," ch. 1-7. In-class response # 5.

#### Week 5 (February 8)

T Essay # 1 due. Presentations.

#### Week 6 (February 15-17)

T Presentations.  
Th McBride, ch. 1-4. In-class response # 6.

#### Week 7 (February 22-24)

T McBride, ch. 5-7. Proposal for essay # 2 due.  
Th McBride, ch. 8-10. In-class response # 7.

#### Week 8 (March 1-3)

T McBride, ch. 20-23. Draft of essay # 2 due.  
Th McBride, ch. 24-25. Epilogue. In-class response # 8.

#### Week 9 (March 15-17)

T Essay # 2 due. Presentations.  
Th Presentations.

## Week 10 (March 22-24)

T Nafisi, Lolita, ch. 1-5. Out-of-class response # 9 due.  
Th Nafisi, Lolita, ch. 6-13. In-class response #10.

## Week 11 (March 29-31)

T Nafisi, Lolita, ch. 14-22. Out-of-class response # 11 due.  
Th Library tour. Meet in the lobby of the library. In-class response # 12.

## Week 12 (April 5-7)

T Tan, pp.7-39. Proposal for essay # 3 due  
Th Tan, pp.41-69. In-class response # 13.

## Week 13 (April 12-14)

T Tan, pp.357-366. Draft of essay # 3 due.  
Th Tan, pp.367-398. In-class response # 14.

## Week 14 (April 19-21)

T Essay # 3 due. Presentations.  
Th Conclusion. Portfolio analysis due. Portfolios due.

