

## A LIVING LABORATORY ACTIVITY

<b>Activity Title:</b>	<b>From Autoethnography to Autobiographical Literature, Art &amp; Performance: The Student as Intellectual, Artist &amp; Expert</b>
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Dionne Bennett, Ph.D.</b>
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<b>Course:</b>	<b>AFR 2250</b>
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### Activity Description:

- Students will engage in a Race, Gender & Class AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ASSIGNMENT in which they analyze and write about their first, their most significant, and their most inspiring experiences in relationship to the social categories of race or ethnicity, gender or sexuality, or class/SES or in relationship to other social categories, institutions, or practices such as: culture, religion, nation, age, ability, health, family, education, language etc.
- Students will then use these autoethnographic experiences as inspirations for the creation of one autobiographical literary text (short story, poetry, theater scene, digital story etc.) AND a second literary, visual, or performance text, which may be based on the same autoethnographic experience as the literary text or on a different experience.
- Students will post their chosen autoethnographic experiences and their literary texts on Open Lab, and they will write short essay responses to each other's creative work on Open Lab.
- Students will perform presentations of their own work, write and present analyses of other students' work, and engage in a dialogue based on those presentations.
- Students will then form creative collaboration coalitions (aka groups) of 3-4 students; these coalitions will combine elements of their creative work to create new literary, art or performance works.
- Students will present these new collaborative literary, art, or performance works to the class. They will post the literary collaborations or scannable images on Open Lab.
- Students will write an academic essay in which they analyze 1) fiction and non-fiction assigned readings 2) one of their creative works and/or their autoethnographic writing assignment 3) one of the autoethnographic writing assignments of a classmate and/or one of the creative productions of a classmate and/or of their collaboration group.
- Students will write a reflection blog about the entire experience, which they will post on Open Lab

### Learning Goals:

The goals of this activity include challenging students to:

1. Utilize autoethnographic writing assignments to analyze how the intersectional social constructions of race, gender and other social variables have influenced their lives as they think critically and creatively about their experiences, social locations, and cultural perspectives;
2. Develop qualitative diversity appreciation and skills through recognizing the internal, interpersonal and institutional complexity of their own lives, the lives of their classmates, and the lives of people who represent diverse communities, cultures, worldviews, and experiences;
3. Engage in an active interdisciplinary practices as they use their intellectual, creative, and emotional skills to demonstrate how a single experience, behavior or narrative or can be represented and re-presented through diverse disciplines, media, and genres and as they analyze how social sciences and humanities disciplines and diverse texts, media, and genres ask and answer different yet interdependent questions;
4. Collaborate with their classmates through writing, performance, and online activities to achieve experiences of dialogic cognition inside and out of the classroom;
5. Challenge students to respect and value their existing knowledge and their present and past experiences and to use that knowledge and experience as foundations for producing new knowledge and experiences.

**Timing:** The activity will be initiated at the beginning of the semester with the autoethnographic writing assignment, and the remaining activities will continue throughout the semester. The students will be expected to work on all elements of the assignment outside of class and to present their work product during the class.

**Logistics:** Students will receive a version of the attached assignment sheet at the beginning of the semester. They will, also, receive instruction during the class and before each separate activity.

**Assessment:** All activities will be assessed using the Evaluation Rubrics included below. The initial activities will be assessed in terms of effort, creativity, and insight. The final essay will be evaluated both in terms of effort, creativity, and insight AND in terms of mastery of academic writing skills. These skills will be developed throughout the semester using the earlier activities and other assignments as scaffolding activities.

### **General Education Student Learning Outcomes**

These incorporate General Education Learning Outcomes from multiple areas including:

#### **KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, INTEGRATION & VALUES, ETHICS, AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- Students will develop general and transferable critical and creative thinking, reading, writing and speech skills.
- Students will develop specific and transferable social and cultural analysis skills that will enable them to think, write, read and speak critically and creatively about the concepts of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, nation, language, etc.
- Students will learn to appreciate diverse academic disciplines by empirically exploring how they can approach a concept, behavior, or narrative by applying diverse disciplinary frameworks and methods in the arts, social sciences, and humanities.
- Students will use the arts, social sciences, and humanities as a forum to study values and ethical principles in ways that are directly relevant to their lived experiences and identities.
- Students will derive meaning from their own experiences by engaging in critical and creative analyses of events and behaviors in their own lives.
- Students will appreciate diversity not only by learning about the experiences of other individuals in the class, but learning how to recognize and understand the multiplicity of diverse identities and experiences that inform their own social locations and lives.

#### **High Impact Educational Practices:**

##### **Assignment:**

- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Open Digital Pedagogy (the OpenLab)

##### **Entire Course:**

- Capstone Courses and Projects
- Writing-Intensive Courses
- Undergraduate Research (Ethnographic Research and Writing)
- Diversity/Global Learning
- Collaborative Assignments and Projects
- Open Digital Pedagogy (the OpenLab)

**Additional Information: See Attached Assignment Description Form and Assignment Evaluation Rubrics**

**Living Lab Activity**  
**Professor: Dionne Bennett**  
**Course: AFR 2250**  
**Development: Spring 2014**

**FROM AUTOETHNOGRAPHY TO AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL**  
**LITERATURE, ART & PERFORMANCE:**  
**THE STUDENT AS INTELLECTUAL, ARTIST & EXPERT**

**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:**

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**PART 1: RACE, GENDER, CLASS AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ASSIGNMENT**  
**(SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW)**

- a. Please complete Part 1 of the assignment, which consists of the Race, Gender, Class Assignment.
- b. Please post the paragraph that you will use in Part 2 of the assignment on open lab to share with your classmates. (You are free to post more than one all paragraphs, but you are only required to share one.)
- c. Please be prepared to discuss your entries with the class.



## **PART 2: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE (BROADLY DEFINED)**

- a. Using one of the events that you described the Race, Gender, Class Autoethnography Paragraphs for inspiration, please do one or more of the following:
  1. Write a short story
  2. Write a folktale, myth, or legend
  3. Write one longer poem or two-three short poems
  4. Write one longer or two shorter song/rhyme lyrics
  5. Write a dramatic scene or short play
  6. Create a digital story that combines creative writing and technology and may combine visual images.
  7. Write another creative writing text that you may discuss with the professor.
  
- b. Using the same or another event that you described in the Race, Gender, Class Autoethnography Paragraphs, please do one or more of the following:
  1. Write a second text using one of the formats from section a.
  2. Create a Visual Art text or sculpture using any medium of your choice including, found objects, graphic design, or other technology
  3. Create a Comic Strip, Graphic Short Story (using graphic novels as models) or Storyboard of at least 4 panels.
  4. Create a song or another musical text
  5. Create a dance or another kinesthetic text
  6. Create a theatrical scene or performance art presentation
  7. Create a photo essay or short video
  8. Create another creative text that you may discuss with the professor.
  
- c. Please post your creative writing text or texts from part a on open lab to share with your classmates. Please bring your other items to class.

## **PART 3: REFLECTIVE RESPONSE ANALYSIS ESSAYS PRESENTATIONS AND DIALOGIC COGNITION ACTIVITY**

- a. Review the posts that your classmates have posted on Open Lab or artwork that they have presented in class.
- b. Please write an analysis of texts written and art produced by two of your classmates. I will assign these so that all assignments are reviewed. You will need to write at least one page for each text.
- c. Please post your analysis on open lab to share with your classmates.
- d. Present Parts One & Two in class and explain how they relate to your autoethnographic assignment
- e. Present your analysis of other student's work.
- f. Respond to the analyses of your work and participate in a dialogue with your classmates.
- g. Discuss if and how reading or hearing the analysis of other students has informed your understanding of your own work

**PART 4: COLLABORATIVE LITERATURE PROJECT**

- a. Choose one of your assignments from part 2 or 3 to contribute the collaborative literature project.
- b. Informed by your selections, we will form Groups of 3 or 4 members who will combine their work to create a new text or a new artwork.
- c. Create a new story, art work, or performance using elements from each person's project.

**PART 5: FINAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS PROJECT**

- a. Write a reflection blog about the experience, which they will post to the Open Lab
- b. Write a formal essay in which you analyze
  - 1) Two fiction and Two non-fiction assigned readings
  - 2) One of your creative productions and/or your autoethnographic writing assignment
  - 3) One of the autoethnographic writing assignments of a classmate and/or one of the creative productions of a classmate and/or or the project created by your collaboration group.

**RACE, GENDER, CLASS AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

**NOTE: YOU MAY REPLACE ONE OF THE THREE CATEGORIES BELOW – RACE, GENDER & CLASS - WITH ANOTHER SOCIAL CATEGORY, INSTITUTION, OR PRACTICE SUCH AS: CULTURE, RELIGION, NATION, AGE, ABILITY, HEALTH, FAMILY, EDUCATION, LANGUAGE ETC.**

**PLEASE COMPLETE ALL ITEMS**

1) ETHNICITY and/or RACE – FIRST EXPERIENCES

- a) Describe the first time you became aware of ethnicity and/or race OR the first major experience that made you aware of how ethnicity and/or race can affect people. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life when you started to become aware of this concept.) If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.

(1A) ETHNICITY and/or RACE – MOST POWERFUL OR SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES

(You may choose 1A as an alternative to 1)

- a) Reflect upon and prepare to discuss the most significant experience you have had with ethnicity and/or race during the course of your life.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.

2) ETHNICITY and/or RACE – RESISTANCE AND/OR INSPIRATION AND/OR CELEBRATION EXPERIENCE

- a) Describe an experience related to ethnicity and/or race in which you challenged discrimination or experienced a sense of pride or accomplishment. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life in which these feelings of resistance or accomplishment were at the forefront of your consciousness. If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.

3) GENDER and/or SEXUALITY – FIRST EXPERIENCES

- a) Describe the first time you became aware of gender and/or sexuality OR the first major experience that made you aware of how gender and/or sexuality can affect people. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life when you started to become aware of this concept.) If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.

(3A) GENDER and/or SEXUALITY – MOST POWERFUL OR SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES

(You may choose 1A as an alternative to 1)

- a) Reflect upon and prepare to discuss the most significant experience you have had with gender and/or sexuality during the course of your life.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.
- 4) GENDER and/or SEXUALITY – RESISTANCE AND/OR INSPIRATION AND/OR CELEBRATION EXPERIENCE

- a) Describe an experience related to gender and/or sexuality in which you challenged discrimination or experienced a sense of pride or accomplishment. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life in which these feelings of resistance or accomplishment were at the forefront of your consciousness. If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
  - b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
  - c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.
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#### 5) CLASS & MONEY – FIRST EXPERIENCES

- a) Describe the first time you became aware of socioeconomic class and/or money OR the first major experience that made you aware of how socioeconomic class and/or money can affect people. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life when you started to become aware of this concept.) If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.
- d)

#### (5A) CLASS & MONEY – MOST POWERFUL OR SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCES

(You may choose 1A as an alternative to 1)

- a) Reflect upon and prepare to discuss the most significant experience you have had with socioeconomic class and/or money during the course of your life.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.

#### 6) CLASS & MONEY – RESISTANCE AND/OR INSPIRATION AND/OR CELEBRATION EXPERIENCE

- a) Describe an experience related to socioeconomic class and/or money in which you challenged discrimination or experienced a sense of pride or accomplishment. (First try to think of a specific experience. If you cannot recall an experience, describe a period in your life in which these feelings of resistance or accomplishment were at the forefront of your consciousness. If you are feeling ambitious you can write about more than one experience or period.
- b) Describe how the experience or period affected you when it occurred.
- c) Describe how the experience continues to affect you now.



Evaluation Rubrics

<b>Evaluation Rubric – Autoethnography &amp; Autobiography Assignments</b>		
<b>Excellent Effort &amp; Work</b>	<b>Good Effort &amp; Work</b>	<b>Rethink, Rewrite, and Resubmit</b>
<p>This work demonstrates thoughtful, substantive, and complex consideration, analysis, creativity, and intellectual labor. You challenged yourself to meaningfully explore and engage your unique intellectual and creative processes. Well done!</p>	<p>This work demonstrates some thoughtfulness, substance, and complexity, and includes some interesting ideas and elements. It is a good effort that could be even stronger if you invested more analysis, creativity, and/or intellectual labor in your process. Consider rethinking and rewriting so that your work more fully reflects your abilities.</p>	<p>This work does not adequately reflect your abilities. Please rethink , resubmit, and rewrite so you can fully benefit from the assignment.</p>

Final Essay Evaluation Rubric								
<b>THESIS</b>	Topic was contextualized (culturally/politically/historically)	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Thesis was a specific and focused position on the topic.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Thesis was complete (claim + explanation) and thorough in answering key why/how questions about its claim.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Thesis was clearly-stated and convincing.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Thesis was original and/or intellectually innovative.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
<b>RESEARCH</b>	Class sources were effectively included.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Outside sources were effectively included.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Sources were reliable and thoughtfully selected.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Sources were incorporated successfully into essay.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Sources were properly cited.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
<b>ANALYSIS</b>	<u>Themes:</u>							
	Analysis effectively explored the thesis of the paper.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis thoroughly isolated/examined selected elements.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis incorporated a range of ideas about topic.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis presented clear and convincing claims and concepts.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	<u>Evidence</u>							
	Analysis incorporated adequate amount of evidence.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Evidence was described thoroughly and effectively.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Evidence successfully demonstrated themes/claims.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Quotations and paraphrasing were used effectively.							
	<u>Interpretation and Evaluation</u>							
	Interpretations were logical explanations of the evidence.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Interpretations were effectively linked to evidence.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Interpretations of the evidence were thorough and complex.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Interpretations of the evidence were original/innovative.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis structure balanced claims, evidence & interpretations.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis was presented clearly and logically.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis was convincing, compelling and well-argued.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	Analysis effectively proved thesis and completed argument.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	<u>Intersectionality</u>							
Race and/or Ethnicity were thoroughly analyzed & contextualized.								
Gender and/or sexuality were thoroughly analyzed & contextualized.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective	
Socioeconomic Status and/or related social and cultural status variables were thoroughly analyzed and contextualized.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective	
Intersectional/simultaneous analysis of Race/Gender/Class and/or an intersectional analysis of other relevant social variables was successfully conducted.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective	
<b>STRUCTURE/ GRAMMAR/ STYLE</b>	Overall structure was logical and consistent.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	The writing style and structure were clear and focused.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	The writing had few or no grammar/syntax/spelling problems.	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	The style & tone were formal & mature. (academic style)	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective
	The style and tone presented the author's original "voice." (personal style)	Excellent	5	4	3	2	1	Ineffective

