



The University of North Carolina at Wilmington
Graduate Liberal Studies 592-002 Philosophical Issues in Personal Identity: Transformation Through
Impossible Experience
Tuesdays 3:30-6:15 pm in Bear Hall 102
Spring 2017

Instructor: Patricia Turrisi

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Office Hours: By appointment and Tuesday, 2:00-3:30 pm

Course web site:

<https://learn.uncw.edu> (BlackboardLearn site by course prefix, number and semester
GLS592002 Spring 2017)

Course Description:

Lives change.

Lives are interrupted.

Plans change.

This course is about the personal identities we have, ones that have become lost or broken, and others that have been found anew. We examine lives that were interrupted and formed again on a different model. Did they see a change coming? How did they respond? Was their change for the better or worse? How do these lives challenge the notion that each person has a unified personal identity that persists over time?

Required Texts: The texts below have been ordered from the UNCW Bookstore. You may also purchase them online.

Augustine, *Confessions*
Helen Keller, *The Story of My Life*
Dennis LeHane, *Mystic River*
Michael Paul Mason, *Head Cases*
Whitley Strieber, *Communion*
Anne Strieber, *Communion Letters*
William Styron, *Darkness Visible*

Online Readings: Please see the course website for online readings.

David Hume, "Of Personal Identity," Book I, Part 4, Section 6 of *A Treatise of Human Nature*

John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity," Chapter XXVII *Of Identity and Diversity*

Additional readings will be posted throughout the semester.

Films:

The Conformist
The Miracle Worker
Mystic River
The Other

Other Course Materials:

MLA Handbook, 8th edition
Microsoft Word

Course Objective:

To examine and analyze personal identity within the context of interrupted lives, especially under the influence of trauma or fortune, against claims for one side or the other that personal identity is unified and continuous over a lifetime.

Course Organization:

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

1. Your active participation in this class is crucial to its success and yours. Therefore, active participation is required of all participants. Because of its interactive, group nature, I depend on you to build and shape the course. Active participation includes, but is not limited to:

- Checking course email and announcements regularly.
- Asking questions in a timely manner (not the night before the assignment is due.)
- Participating in discussion through active listening, raising issues, and relevant commentary.

2. Assignments must be completed on time. Assignments submitted after the due date will result in a lower grade or may not be accepted at all per instructors' discretion. If you are unable to contribute to the weekly discussion or will not be able to turn in an assignment by deadline,

please contact the instructor in advance of the deadline (at least 24 hours) in order to make alternate arrangements.

3. Each student is expected to contribute to course discussions/peer-to-peer feedback and adhere to the guidelines provided therein.

Since participation is a key criterion for evaluating your grade in the course, you are expected to meet deadlines consistently and contribute to the class discussion/peer-to-peer feedback. If you miss a deadline, you must nonetheless attend to each reading and assignment.

Generally speaking, should you miss more than one deadline or fail to turn in an assignment, your final grade will be affected. Unfortunately, our personal lives are sometimes complicated by unpredictable emergencies and developments. If, for some reason, you encounter unexpected difficulties in meeting the attendance/participation policy, contact the instructor and we will talk about what is the best solution for your situation.

Similarly, you are expected to complete reading and written assignments on schedule.

Evaluation:

Your final grade is based on the entirety of your performance on all the requirements in the course:

Written assignments in preparation for or in response to class discussions = 30%

Oral Presentations in Class = 20%

Final research project = 50%

When grading formal assignments, two factors have the most significance: content and presentation.

For content, I look at the sophistication of your argument and how well you support it. Supplying relevant evidence for a conclusion that matters to you is essential to a successful paper.

As far as presentation, I look at diction, syntax and word choice. That doesn't mean you have to break out the thesaurus every time you sit down to write in order to find fancy synonyms (in fact, that often ends in disaster) or that you have to write labyrinthine sentences. Rather it means that you use the words that most specifically describe what you want to say and that you use the syntax that most clearly conveys your message.

Please note: You *must* curb any tendency you may have to use the five paragraph essay style intro/conclusion/topic sentences favored by high-school students ("Since the beginning of time, storytelling has been a form of communication"/"There is no right or wrong opinion about the reason there is evil in the world."). These types of sentences express only the disappointing fact that what follows them may not be worth the effort to read either. Moreover, these sorts of hackneyed presumptions have no place in the kind of fresh, bright, and insightful writing I wish you to develop. The motivation that should drive all your written assignments is the urge to communicate something as yet unknown to your reader, in an intelligent and appealing fashion. Generally, the matters that remain unknown unless you reveal them concern your sensibility, your considered views of the world – how you see things and why, what you feel deeply and the

consequences therein. So if you present a compelling argument with verifiable evidence, you'll be in good shape.

Respect for others

This class involves a good deal of interaction with your classmates. What constitutes truth can be a very divisive topic, and since one of the goals of the class is to enhance your argumentation skills, intellectual confrontation is necessary. You are encouraged to disagree with us and/or your classmates so long as you do so in a respectful manner.

Email Procedure

In the subject line or body of the email, include the course name (GLS592 for shorthand). I teach many students, so this detail is important. Allow 24 hours for a response before following up with another email addressing the same content. All emailed assignments must be saved as a **.doc** file.

Format for Essays

For your essays, please note that the default format for most versions of Microsoft Word do not follow MLA format. Your essay should be in 12 pt. Times or Times New Roman Font, 1-1.25 inch margins, double-spaced, with no extra spaces between paragraphs. Save according to the assignments instructions, making sure it is a **.doc** file.

Please do not use a website to do your citations for you because the websites often do them incorrectly. As a graduate student, you should be able to do your own correct citations and formatting. I am happy to help you with questions on these topics, and you should always consult your MLA manual first, taking the time to closely search for your answer. When emailing an instructor about MLA citations, include the manual's page numbers where you have already checked and failed to find your answer. Purdue University's website is also an excellent resource: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Grading Scale:

Grade	Grade Point	
A	4.00	Excellent
A-	3.67	
B+	3.33	
B	3.00	Completely satisfactory
B-	2.67	
C+	2.33	
C	2.00	Minimally acceptable
F	0	Failure
I		Work incomplete

W

Withdraw passing

GLS Student Learning outcomes:

1. the ability to apply critical theories to a subject [related to the course];
2. the ability to make connections between various theories and ideas to the subject ;
3. the ability to apply creative solutions to the problems raised within the subject;
4. the ability to express oneself articulately in writing;
5. the ability to express oneself articulately orally; and
6. (a) the ability to conduct complex research, synthesize it, and argue persuasively in support of a claim based on evidence; and (b) the ability to analyze the value and significance of one's own creative work, and to situate it within the context of similar creative works

Technology/Web Access:

This course is designed as a face to face class with online elements. The class web page, located in Blackboard, is a link to content, assignments and other materials for the course. You are expected to check the web page on a regular basis for updated information.

You have access through UNCW SeaPort or directly by using this URL address: <https://learn.uncw.edu/>

Activities and assignments will be available to any computer with Internet access. You are responsible for having an Internet service provider (ISP) that offers a stable and non-interrupted connection into our course website, and for having computer access that is stable and easily obtained. You may need a headset equipped with a microphone in order to communicate via Skype. Please promptly set up a Skype account if you do not have one already. Add patty.turrisi to your contacts.

Technology Assistance Center (TAC)

For problems and computer help or assistance contact the UNCW ITSD Computer Help Desk at tac@uncw.edu or visit

Location: Randall Library, first floor

Phone: (910) 962-4357

Additional Services:

The University Writing Center, located in DePaolo Hall and online at <http://uncw.edu/ulc/writing/center.html>, provides assistance to students who wish to improve their writing skills.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES:

Religious Observance:

North Carolina General Statute 116-11(3a) and UNC policy authorizes a minimum of two excused absences each academic year for religious observances required by the faith of a student. Students must submit a request for an excused absence, within SeaNet, seven days prior to the religious observance. The student shall be given the opportunity to make up any tests or other work missed due to an excused absence for a religious observance.

Academic Integrity

All members of the UNCW community are expected to follow the academic Honor Code. Read the UNCW Honor Code carefully. The "Academic Honor Code" can be found in the Student Handbook of Student Life, Section V. Please regard this as a warning that all UNCW students and faculty are held to the terms of the Academic Honor Code.

Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated in this class. Please be especially familiar with UNCW's position on plagiarism as outlined in the UNCW Student Handbook. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty in which you take someone else's ideas and represent them as your own. Here are some examples of plagiarism:

- You write about someone else's work in your paper and do not give them credit for it by referencing them.
- You give a presentation and use someone else's ideas and do not state that the ideas are the other persons.
- You get facts from your textbook or some other reference material and do not reference that material.

All written work must be authored by the student and written solely for this course. Students agree to use course evaluation materials such as assignments, tests, and instructor feedback for their own learning purposes only. Copy and/or distribution of such course materials is strictly prohibited. If a student drops or withdraws from the course and re-enrolls in the course in a later semester, all written work must be authored by the student in the present semester.

I expect you to complete your own work. If you use ideas and excerpts generated by other people and/or sources, you must cite and properly reference them in your work. See the MLA Manual's chapters on plagiarism.

Students with disabilities

Students with diagnosed disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (962-7555). Please give me a copy of the letter you receive from Office of Disability Services detailing class accommodations you may need. Students with disabilities, regardless of formal certification, may discuss them with Dr. T. with the guarantee of confidentiality.

Student Conduct

UNCW practices a zero-tolerance policy for violence and harassment of any kind. For emergencies contact UNCW CARE at 962-2273, Campus Police at 962-3184, or Wilmington Police at 911. For University or community resources visit <https://mail.uncw.edu/exchweb/bin/redirect.asp>.

ATTENDANCE:

Attendance at all regularly scheduled class sessions is required. Work covered in any missed class sessions must be made up in a timely fashion.



CALENDAR

Note: Calendar is subject to change. Changes will be announced in class and by e-mail.

THE CHALLENGE	January 10	Introduction to the problem of personal identity. Challenges to the unified and continuous theory of personal identity
	January 17	David Hume, "Of Personal Identity," Book I, Part 4, Section 6 of <i>A Treatise of Human Nature</i> John Locke, "Of Identity and Diversity," Chapter XXVII Of <i>Identity and Diversity</i>
HEAD CASES	January 24	Michael Paul Mason, <i>Head Cases</i>
	January 31	continued
DISORDER AND EARLY SORROW	February 7	<i>The Miracle Worker</i>
	February 14	Helen Keller, <i>The Story of My Life</i> Thomas Mann, "Disorder and Early Sorrow"
	February 21	<i>Mystic River</i> (film)
	February 28	Dennis LeHane, <i>Mystic River</i>
	March 7	Spring Break No classes
	March 14	<i>The Conformist</i>
GETTING RELIGION	March 21	Augustine, <i>Confessions</i>
	March 28	continued
MADNESS	April 4	William Styron, <i>Darkness Visible</i>
OTHER WORLDS	April 11	Whitley Strieber, <i>Communion</i>
	April 18	Anne Strieber, <i>Communion Letters</i>
	April 25	continued
FINAL ASSIGNMENT	May 2	Due today