

**Syllabus**  
**UNCA ARTS AND IDEAS - 310:003**  
**Art as a Reflection and Expression of the Self -**  
**Tuesday and Thursday- 1:45-3:00 p.m. –CH 102**

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**Course Description:** Artists use photos, films, paintings or words to express their personal experience and shape the narrative of their life. We'll look at examples of autobiographical art and explore art-making activities to better understand our own experiences and personal stories. Through journaling, mixed media and digital storytelling, we will approach art as a tool for self-reflection and self-identity.

**Course Objectives:** Students will view and discuss examples of autobiographical art in several mediums, including visual, literary, and digital media. In addition, students will create their own autobiographical art through participation in creative writing, visual journaling, mixed media, and storytelling exercises. By examining the stories of our own lives and the autobiographical art of others, we will gain a greater understanding of how art making is a tool for self-reflection and self-identity.

**Class Requirements:**

**Attendance and Participation** –All students are expected to have read and be able to thoughtfully comment on the assigned viewing/reading material. Students will also participate in a variety of in-class creative exercises designed to explore new techniques and shape life narrative materials. These exercises will often be recorded in your art journal. Although many of these exercises will be taken from your texts, some will come from other materials. It is very important that you are present to participate in these exercises and share in the work of your classmates. If you must be absent, due to an illness or emergency, it is your responsibility to make up any missed work. I suggest that you get the name and telephone number of at least two of your classmates, who you can call and get assignment information from.

**Art Journal-** This will be your most important text. Your journal will be the place where you will maintain your responses to the creative exercises we explore in class as well as the place where you will keep your homework journal assignments. This is not a traditional “words only” journal. (Though that may be an aspect of your journal if you wish). You will be expected to try the various visual approaches to journal keeping as described in your text, *The Decorated Page*. Your journal will be collected twice- once at

midterm and again at the end of the semester. You will not receive a grade for your journal at midterm.

**Life Story** -You will “tell” a story, based on an autobiographical event. There are many options of how to approach this. You can perform your story live, read from a text you have written, or record it on audio or video.

**Heritage Shadow Box/Cultural Treasure Chest**- You will create a shadow box, a kind of 3-D journal that explores your history and personal heritage, answering the question “Who am I and where do I come from?” Your shadow box will be a mixed media collage that may contain artifacts, photos, quotes, stories and music that reflect who you are.

**Midterm**- Each student will research and present information about a piece of autobiographical artwork from an artist that interests you. The art can be in any form, literary, visual, musical, etc.... Students will research the work, show it to the class, and create a 5-8 minute presentation about the work of the artist. Some questions to keep in mind are: How do you respond to this work? What do you like about it? What does this person’s work say about their identity? Can you borrow some techniques from this artist for your own work? Propose a follow-up exercise, based on or inspired by the artist that you have presented that your classmates can use as a way to explore their own story. The proposed follow-up exercise should be typed, with copies for each student. Make sure that the artist’s work that you are presenting is in some way autobiographical.

**Final Project**- You will create a final autobiographical art project. This can be in any form. It may be a poem, a memory book, a short story, a photo collage, a painting, an altered book, a digital story, an autobiographical comic strip, or a song. It may grow from one of the journaling or storytelling exercises we explore in class.

**Outside Art Events/ Art Responses**- You will attend 2 ticketed art events outside of class time. Both Art Spiegelman and Faith Ringgold draw on autobiographical elements to create their deeply personal art. These events are in the evening and listed on your syllabus. The cost for each event is \$6. Tickets must be purchased in advance. More information is listed below. You will need to create a response to each of these events- it can be a reflection paper or a journal entry. Your responses should be included in your journal.

### **Art Spiegelman**

**Sep 11 • 7 PM -Thomas Wolfe Auditorium SPECIAL UNCA-only tickets at Highsmith Box Office \$6 UNCA students \$15 UNCA faculty/staff/alumni/NCCCR**

Pulitzer Prize-winning illustrator Art Spiegelman is the creator of “Maus,” a gripping graphic novel about the Holocaust, and “In the Shadow of No Towers,” a personal work about his experiences during the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He will discuss the history of independent comics and his experiences after more than 40 years in his field.

**Faith Ringgold**

**Nov 18 • 7 PM**

**SPECIAL UNCA-only tickets at Highsmith -Diana Wortham Theatre**

**\$6 UNCA students \$15 UNCA faculty/staff/alumni/NCCCR**

Multi-faceted Faith Ringgold talks about her work as a painter, textile artist, children's book author and illustrator who explores African- American experience in her work.

**Tickets**

Though many events listed are free, events that require tickets do offer campus discount rates to UNC Asheville students, faculty, staff, NCCCR members, WCU students at UNC Asheville and alumni. Campus discount ticket prices vary with events and may be purchased in person at the Highsmith University Union Box Office with your OneCard (CatCard for WCU). Campus discount tickets are limited and may not be available at the door on the evenings of events so advance purchase is highly recommended.

Cultural & Special Events has ONLINE TICKETING now available at <http://www.uncatickets.com>

For more information -Highsmith Box Office 828.232.5000

Located on the street level, immediately inside the main entrance

Hours are M-F, 9am-9pm, Sa/Su 2-6pm when classes are in session

Texts:

*Telling Your Own Stories*- Donald Davis

*The Decorated Page* -Gwen Diehn

Additional assignments, as described in your syllabus, can be found online or will be given as handouts .

Grades:

Participation:	20%
Journal	40%
Heritage box	10%
Midterm	
Presentation	10%
Story	10%
Final Project	10%

## Assignment Schedule

(Please note that this schedule is likely to change throughout the semester)

September

- Tues. 19: Discuss overview of class, syllabus, and journal keeping.
- Thurs. 21: The Value of Stories in Our Lives  
Read: Davis: p 6-15  
Listening assignment: This American Life: In Dog We Trust #154 – Act One: The Youth in Asia  
[http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio\\_Episode.aspx?episode=154](http://www.thisamericanlife.org/Radio_Episode.aspx?episode=154)  
In class free writing exercise  
(Homework: Davis – p.10- Journal Prompt: Can you remember a time when you got in trouble for something you had already been told not to do?)
- Tues. 26: More about Crisis and Stories  
Read: Davis pp 16-23  
Diehn pp 6-10, Materials & Supplies: 11-29  
In class writing exercise  
(Homework: story corps or babysitting)
- Thurs. 28: Working with the Visual Journal  
Read: Diehn :Illuminated manuscripts: 30-32 Techniques 33-65  
In class: Preparing pages & customizing a cover  
Bring in art supplies and journals  
(Homework: Prepare pages in your journal using at least 2 techniques found in Diehn’s text)
- September
- Tuesday 2: Intro to story circles –Bring in an object that has meaning for you- one that you can tell a story about  
Read : Davis- 25-35  
In class story circle
- Thurs. 4: Shaking up your Journal  
Read Diehn: Layouts 69-83  
Use one of the different layouts to answer the prompt for today’s assignment  
(Homework- Choose a DIFFERENT layout method to use in your journal this week. Now journal about your day or your present circumstances, feelings, etc with this format.)

Tues: 9: TBA

Thurs. 11: **Art Spiegelman • 7 PM -Thomas Wolfe Auditorium**

(Please read about Spiegel man's work before his talk

<http://lambiek.net/artists/s/spiegelman.htm>

<http://www.albany.edu/museum/wwwmuseum/holo/Spiegelman.htm>)-

Tues. 16: Identity & Storytelling

Read: Etheridge Knight- "Another poem for me (after recovering from an O.D.) "The Idea of Ancestors" (handouts)

Watch: Stories from the Center for Digital Storytelling:

Mixed Race Me:

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=7>

Trans Guy

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=7>

Bring in a COPY of a pix of yourself that you like. Don't bring in the original photo if you cannot mark on it. You need to be able to cut it up, write on it, etc

Thurs. 18: Heritage Stories – Visual journal entry about "Where you come from"

Diehn: Applications 89-127

What is the best journal application for you to explore the issue of cultural identity ? Lists ? Memory Books? Storytelling?

Tues. 23: Present Heritage shadow boxes

Thurs. 25: Finish presenting Heritage shadow boxes

Davis: 36-39- A Story Form format

In-class writing exercise

(Homework- Respond to one of the prompts in Davis pp 40-49. Your entry should combine both a visual and a written response)

Tues 30: Stories of place

Davis- pp50-54, 56-75 ; 84-88

Diehn:105-107

Watch: Center for Digital Storytelling

The Mountain

<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=8>

In class story circle/journal exercise

(Homework- create a journal entry about place from one of Davis's prompts pp 84-88. You can choose to write or create a "Birdseye View " and map as explained in Diehn's book on pp 105-107)

October

Thurs. 2: More About Place

Diehn- pp 67-68, 84-88  
Hannah Hinchman Handouts  
Class Fieldtrip to Botanical Gardens ?

Tues. 7: Student Presentations on Artists  
Turn in journals for mid-term evaluation

Thurs. 9: Student presentations on artists

## FALL BREAK

(Homework- Create a reflection page about a moment of Fall Break. You can incorporate photos, collage materials, and other artifacts )

October

Tues. 16: Stories about People  
Read :Davis pp 90-105  
Alice Walker poems - “Women” “Three Dollars Cash”  
“Uncles”(handouts)  
In class writing and storytelling exercises  
(Homework – Journal to one of the prompts in Davis pp 92-105)

Thurs 21: VIPs in your life  
Who has been a big influence on your life?  
Watch Stories from the Center for Digital Storytelling  
Sacrificios:  
<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=4>  
Ironing:  
<http://www.storycenter.org/stories/index.php?cat=4>  
Bring in of 1-3 copies photos of someone who was or is an important person in your life. Bring in COPIES of photos- something you can mark up

Tues 23: Stories as Performance  
Read: Davis: 76-83; Extreme Exposure (handouts)  
Read about the Moth:  
<http://www.themoth.org/about>  
Listen to Doreen B- “Locked Out”  
Jeffery Rudell – “Under the Influence”  
<http://www.themoth.org/listen>

(Homework- Make a preliminary decision about which story you want to work with. Bring that story to class to begin work on your performance. If you think you might want to add visuals- bring photos in hard or digital form)

- Thurs. 28: Performing Your Story  
Practice storytelling with a partner
- Tues 30: Perform or present an autobiographical story to class. It can be about you, a family member or friend, or a place that is special to you. Keep in mind Davis' story format for good stories
- Thurs. 4: Finish all Stories  
Journal exercise from The Decorated Page- TBA
- November  
Tues. 6: Visual Journal Exercise- TBA
- Thurs 13: TBA
- Tues 18: Faith Ringgold • 7 PM -**Diana Wortham Theatre**
- Thurs 20: Autobiographical Comics- In- class exercise and handouts
- Tues 25: Continue to work on Comic strip/Discuss final project
- December  
Tues: 2 Plan class exhibit or event  
In class journal work/ work on final projects
- Thurs 4: Class exhibit ?  
TURN IN JOURNALS
- Tues 16: 11:30- 2:00 PM – FINAL EXAM-  
Present final projects  
Journals returned