

The object of writing is to grow a personality which in the end enables one to transcend it.

■ *Lawrence Durrell*

The text you write must prove to me that it desires me. This proof exists: it is writing. Writing is: the science of the various places of language, it's Kama Sutra (the science has but one treatise: writing itself).

■ *Barthes, Pleasures of the Text, p.6*

The qualities of a first-rate writer cannot be defined, but only experienced. It is just the thing in him which escapes analysis that makes him first-rate. One can catalog all the qualities that he shares with other writers, but the thing that is his very own, his timber, this cannot be defined or explained any more than the quality of a beautiful speaking voice can be.

■ *Willa Cather*

At the moment the writing is the only thing that gives me access to some real silence and solitude. Also I find that it helps me to pray because, when I pause at my work, I find that the mirror inside me is surprisingly clean and deep and serene and God shines there and is immediately found, without hunting, as if He had come close to me while I was writing and I had not observed His coming. And this I think should be the cause of great joy, and to me it is.

■ *Thomas Merton, Echoing Silence, p.14*

Senior Colloquium

*REL 401 (Fall 2016)
Tue 1:30-4:20 (EU Hall)*

Instructor: Dr. Syed Rizwan Zamir

Office: Preyer 201A [Ph: (704) 894 2950]

Email: rizamir@davidson.edu (on the weekends I will have limited access to email)

Office Hours: Wed 1:30- 4:30. Do let me know if you intend to visit.

NOTE: If you are unable to meet during these times, schedule appointment through email.

DESCRIPTION OF THE SENIOR COLLOQUIUM:

The Colloquium calls together the senior Religion majors to support carrying out a semester-long endeavor of accomplishing a capstone project. Being the centerpiece of the course, all of our class meetings are directly or indirectly intended to help yield this task. Each student is asked to independently imagine, develop and complete a project that is valuable to her/him, one that displays all the intellectual skills that were acquired throughout the undergraduate studies, and gives evidence of student's training and background in religious studies. These projects will be presented at the semester-end symposium in front of the faculty and students of the department of Religion, along with your reflections on the process. With the help of our able librarians and IT staff, various options for sharing your projects beyond the symposium audience will be carefully explored throughout the semester.

LEARNING OUTCOME:

It is expected that by the end of the course, the students will have conducted and developed an independent capstone project that would show reasonable expertise in the genre of their choice and the methods appropriate to their project.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Everyone's an Author with Readings (Second Edition) 2nd Edition by [Andrea Lunsford](#) (Author), [Michal Brody](#) (Author), [Lisa Ede](#) (Author), [Beverly Moss](#) (Author), [Carole Clark Papper](#) (Author), [Keith Walters](#) (Author)

From https://www.amazon.com/Everyones-Author-Readings-Second-Lunsford/dp/0393265293/ref=sr_1_3?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1468348495&sr=1-3&keywords=everyone%27s+an+author

Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader by [Vine Deloria Jr.](#) (Author), [Sam Scinta](#) (Editor), [Kristen Foehner](#) (Editor)

From <https://www.amazon.com/Spirit-Reason-Vine-Deloria-Reader/dp/1555914306/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1468349579&sr=1_1&keywords=Spirit+and+Reason%3A+The+Vine+Deloria%2C+Jr.+Reader>

The Writing Life Paperback – November 12, 2013 by [Annie Dillard](#) (Author)

From <https://www.amazon.com/Writing-Life-Annie-Dillard/dp/0060919884/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1468349600&sr=1_1&keywords=writing+life>

The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian: Commemorative Edition with Letters while Living with Black Elk (Perennial Philosophy) Paperback – February 22, 2007 by [Joseph Epes Brown](#) (Author), [Michael Oren Fitzgerald](#) (Editor), [Ake Hultkrantz](#) (Introduction)

From <http://www.amazon.com/Spiritual-Legacy-American-Indian-Commemorative/dp/1933316365?ie=UTF8&psc=1&redirect=true&ref=ox_sc_act_title_1&smid=ATVPDKIKXoDER>

The Sacred Pipe: Black Elk's Account of the Seven Rites of the Oglala Sioux (The Civilization of the American Indian Series) Later Printing Edition by [Joseph Epes Brown](#) (Author)

From <http://www.amazon.com/Sacred-Pipe-Account-Civilization-American/dp/0806121246/ref=la_Book1TPHPo_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1464525451&sr=1_1>

The Grade Business:

Research & Presentation of your genre	10%
Interpretive Reflections (5% each, 500 words)– 3	15%
All Participation, Class Presentations & Small Assignments	10%
Your Labor of Love (The Capstone Project)	40%
Final Presentation & Accompanying Reflection Essay (1000 words)	15%
Sharing & Preserving of the Project	10%

COURSE OUTLINE

Ongoing Notes (FYIs, Announcements etc.):

1. Pay attention to items highlighted in green. Those require your special attention, individually or collectively.
2. At some point we will also discuss how to best “archive” your “labor-of-love” (your

capstone project) this semester. I am in conversation with archivist Caitlin Christian-Lamb about it and she may visit us during our weekly meeting sometime.

PART I: INTRODUCTION

[Setting up the Stage: Being a Writer & Writing about Religion]

Week I (Aug 23): The Writing Life & Phenomenon of Religion I

Readings:

1. Anne Dillard, *The Writing Life* (Chapters 1, 2 & 3); covered 1 & 2
2. *The Sacred Pipe*, xiii-66 did not get to cover it

Week II (Aug 30): The Writing Life & Phenomenon of Religion II

Readings:

1. Anne Dillard, *The Writing Life* (Chapters 4, 5 & 6); 3, 4 & 5 were assigned
2. *The Sacred Pipe*, 66-138 [xiii-66 were discussed to some extent]

IR I (500 words): Due Aug 30

Week III (Sep 6): The Writing Life & Phenomenon of Religion III

Readings:

1. Anne Dillard, *The Writing Life* (Chapters 6 & 7);
2. Thomas Merton "Advice to Writers" in *Echoing Silence* (197-209) - dropbox
3. *The Sacred Pipe*, "The Sun Dance" & "Preparing a Girl for Womanhood" pp. 67-100 & 101-126
4. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*, "Editor's Preface", "Preface" & "Introduction" (ix-xxiv) & Chapter 7 (77-80)

IR II (500 words): Due Sep 6

PART II: ZOOMING IN

Week IV (Sep 13): The Need for Rhetoric and Writing & Scholarly Study of Religion

Readings:

1. *Everyone's an Author* [Review] "The Need for Rhetoric and Writing" (1-57) & "Choosing Genres" (105-115)
2. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*, Chapter 1, 2, 3 & 4 (1-51)

NOTE: By now you must have finalized:

1. *your genre,*
2. *the intended audience of your project,*
3. *a list of names of willing and resourceful helpers and interlocutors at Davidson (and beyond) for your project,*
4. *a schedule/working plan so you could track your progress,*
5. *your preferences for spaces that seem conducive for your work,*
6. *obtaining consent of a formal mentor from within Davidson faculty who will guide you through the rest of the process, and*
7. *if applicable, your IRB approval*

IR III (500 words): Due Sep 13

Week V (Sep 20):

Readings:

1. *The Spiritual Legacy of the American Indian*, Chapter 5, 6, 8, 9 & 10 (53-76 & 81-97)
2. **Presentations:** Sections from *Everyone's an Author* "PART II: Genres of Writing"
 - 1) *Arguing a Position* (116-158) – Student name?
 - 2) *Writing a Narrative* (159-200) – Student name?
 - 3) *Writing Analytically* (201-251) – Student name?
 - 4) *Reporting Information* (252-296) – Student name?
 - 5) *Writing a Review* (297-339) – Student name?
 - 6) *Making a Proposal* (340-372) – Student name?
 - 7) *Research* (443-53) – Student name?

NOTE: By now you must have finalized a bibliography of sources that are needed for your project and begun writing

Week VI (Sep 27):

Readings:

1. *Everyone's an Author* "PART II: Writing Processes" (75-104)
2. *Spirit and Reason: The Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader* (3-16, 32-60, 63-77 & 101-126)

Week VII (Oct 4):

Readings:

1. *The Vine Deloria, Jr. Reader* (129-158, 199-205, 223-240, 275-304 & 339-353/368)

FALL BREAK
FRIDAY, October 7 (4:30 P.M.) – WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12 (8:30 A.M.)

[Week VIII (Oct 11): No class this week because of the Fall Break]

Week IX (Oct 18):

Presentations

(Present three “classics” in your genre of choice and their reception. What made each work a classic? What have you learned about the genre from these works, and how these works are influencing your own capstone project this semester? In addition to these three classics you are strongly recommended to read works that explicitly discuss various aspects of your genre and help your understanding of how it works.)

PART III: THE SALON

Week X (Oct 25): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings:

1. *Everyone’s an Author*, “Style” (637-686) - Review

Week XI (Nov 1): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings:

1. *Everyone’s an Author*, “Design and Delivery” (739-779) - Review

Week XII (Nov 8): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings: You decide!

Week XIII (Nov 15): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings: You decide!

Week XIV (Nov 22): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings: You decide!

THANKSGIVING BREAK

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22 (4:30 P.M.) – MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28 (8:30 A.M.)

Week XV (Nov 29): Salon (in Groups?)

Readings: You decide!

PART IV: SHARING YOUR LABOR-OF-LOVE

Week XVI (Dec 9): The Finish Line

Readings:

1. Review *Everyone's an Author*, "Design and Delivery" (780-792 & 802-814)

SYMPOSIUM

You will present (or/and be present to) "your labor of love" in front of Religion department, hopefully including religion majors and minors as well. Hopefully there will be good discussion and you will receive helpful feedback.

Reflection Essay (1000 words) is also due on the Symposium Day

What did you learn from the process? What worked, what did not? What hurdles did you face? What changes would you make, or suggest that the instructor should make? Is there a life of this project beyond this semester? (Remember you may choose to develop it further for various reasons, including the Honors)

FINE-TUNING, FINALIZING AND SHARING OF THE CAPSTONE PROJECT

With the help of our able librarians you will prepare your capstone project for library archives.

We will also explore the various possibilities of sharing your project with a wider audience.