

## EN 103 Proposal – Fall 2011

Greg Houser  
ghouser@crimson.ua.edu

### **EN103: Finding Alabama's Voice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Students will compile oral histories of current residents of Tuscaloosa, and beyond, using multimedia.

#### **Overview:**

Based loosely on the Works Progress Administration's Alabama Writer's Project, this course will culminate with students, in teams of two, producing an audio recording of an oral history of a citizen of Alabama that will be hosted on a web site. Students will also have the option of producing a video record of their oral history. Throughout the course students will learn to use the tools required to produce the history while examining and researching what it means to be an Alabamian in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **Course Objectives:**

- students will understand and use the writing/revision process as tools for analyzing topics and evaluating their own writing;
- students will revise their work with attention to purpose, development, style, grammar, punctuation, and spelling;
- students will collaborate productively with their peers and instructor;
- students will use a variety of rhetorical strategies and processes of analyzing;
- students will use writing strategies and processes to write for different audiences and purposes;
- students will understand their part in the university discourse community and how its written conventions operate;
- students will understand and apply the principles of formal argumentation in their writing;
- students will locate, evaluate, and synthesize source material in order to write extended papers incorporating source material;
- students will use at least one citation format correctly and understand that there are different formats for different disciplines;
- students will summarize, paraphrase, and quote source material accurately and ethically;
- students will reflect on their own development as writers.
- students will use new media to preserve Alabama's current history

## **Units of Study:**

### **Unit 1:** What is an Oral History?

Students will be introduced to the WPA Alabama Writer's project by reading selected stories from the project. They'll then be introduced to interview techniques and basic radio production through the use of *This American Life* and articles on Transom.com. Students will read the *Tuscaloosa News*, *Al.com*, the *Crimson White* and other statewide media to spur discussion and begin preliminary research for their history subjects.

### **Unit 2:** How Do I Make an Oral History?

Students will be given tutorials on recording and editing software at Sanford Media Lab. Guest speakers who produce documentaries locally and journalists will speak to the class and discuss story shaping and interview techniques. Students will continue to read local newspapers and begin to narrow their subjects down.

### **Unit 3:** Making an Oral History.

Students will interview their proposed subjects. They will record their oral histories and edit them in the media lab for posting on a web site. They will finish up with a portfolio composed of: the oral recording, a photograph of their subject, a written transcript of their oral history and a personal reflection.

## **Possible Texts:**

*The Curious Writer* Bruce Ballenger

*Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* James Agee, Walker Percy

*Writings from Readings* Stephen Wilhoit

*A Writer's Reference* Diana Hacker

*The Tuscaloosa News*

*The Crimson White*

*Al.com*

*This American Life*

Film projects produced in UA's Documenting Justice course

## **Writing Assignments:**

**Personal History** – Students will compose a personal history of their own and their relationship with Alabama, technology and the complications of producing a multimedia project and what they hope to gain from the class.

**Film/Radio Review** – Students will critique either a radio show (*This American Life*, *Radiolab* for instance) or a movie that deals with a personal story.

Midterm Research Proposal – Students will write a research proposal for their ideal subject of their oral history. They will detail any foreseeable complications and make a case for why their subject would make a good, representative history.

Research Paper – Students will interview their subjects. While the final oral history will focus on one 5-10 minute story of the students choosing, for the research paper students will use their subjects as an entry point to research and explore a local issue. Topics could range from the effects of the April 27, 2011 tornado, HB56, the nature of food in the south to race, class, and other socio-economic issues.

Final Portfolio – Students will produce their final oral history, a written transcription, a photo of their subject and a personal reflection on the process. The final products will be uploaded to a web site.