

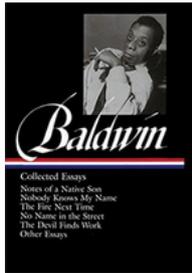
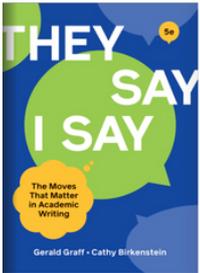


COMPOSITION I: BALDWIN AND THE ESSAY

COURSE MEETINGS: T/TH, 8-9:50AM

COURSE MATERIALS

TEXTBOOKS



- *They Say / I Say*, by Graff and Birkenstein, 5th edition
- *Baldwin: Collected Essays*, Library of America, 1998

HARDWARE

- A computer with internet for access to course communications, assignments, and evaluation
- A writing journal

SOFTWARE

- An active Georgia Tech Canvas account
- A word-processing tool such as Microsoft Office

DR. LERUD'S CONTACT INFO

✉ elerud3@gatech.edu

📍 Office Location: Skiles 103

🕒 Office Hours: MW, 4pm-5pm

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In one of his earliest collections of essays, James Baldwin introduced himself to his readers by explaining, “I want to be an honest man and a good writer.” From the beginning, writing well was a central aim of Baldwin’s intellectual and ethical project, a goal which helped shape him into one of the greatest essayists of his generation—and one of the world’s foremost thinkers on racism and inequality, global diaspora, Black culture, American identity, the Christian church, and religiosity. What was “good writing” to Baldwin? What is “good” about his work to us today?

In this class, we will focus on a selection of Baldwin’s essays, meeting him at various points in his writing life, to explore how Baldwin honed his thinking while honing his craft. Learning from Baldwin in this project-based class, you can expect to strengthen your own ability to write and think, acquiring the skills of college-level composition as you do so.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Georgia Tech has set three overarching goals for all English 1101 courses:

Primary Learning Goal: Communication

To demonstrate proficiency in the process of articulating and organizing rhetorical arguments in written, oral, visual, and nonverbal modes, using concrete support and conventional language.

Secondary Learning Goal: Critical Thinking

To be able to judge factual claims and theories on the basis of evidence.

Secondary Learning Goal: Humanities, Fine Arts, and Ethics

To be able to describe relationships among languages, philosophies, cultures, literature, ethics, or the arts.

CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP (10%)

How you prepare for, contribute to, and support our community matters. Some assignments within this category may be completed during class, such as quizzes, group activities, and free-writing.

WRITING JOURNAL (25%)

Regular journaling assignments are informal writing opportunities, a chance to reflect on assigned materials and record your reactions before our all-class discussions.

ESSAY 1 - AUTOBIOGRAPHY (10%)

Introduce yourself to the class and identify your writing goals, following Baldwin's model, "Autobiographical Notes."

ESSAY 2 - INTERVIEW ESSAY (15%)

Conduct your own interview and record your findings in this reportage-style piece.

ESSAY 3 - RESEARCH ESSAY (30%)

Make an argumentative claim drawing on your own individual research. Associated assignments include a proposal, draft thesis, and annotated bibliography.

ESSAY 4 - THE OPEN LETTER (30%)

A time-honored genre for cultural critique, this type of writing invites you to draw on personal experience, interviews, and research to craft an argument calling for major social reform.

FINAL PORTFOLIO (15%)

In lieu of a final exam, you will produce a portfolio of the work you have completed this term. The portfolio will demonstrate how you have met specific course outcomes through short interpretive essays and a long-form reflective essay. You are strongly encouraged to prepare for the final portfolio throughout the term by maintaining a cumulative file of drafts and other process documents.

ASSIGNMENTS

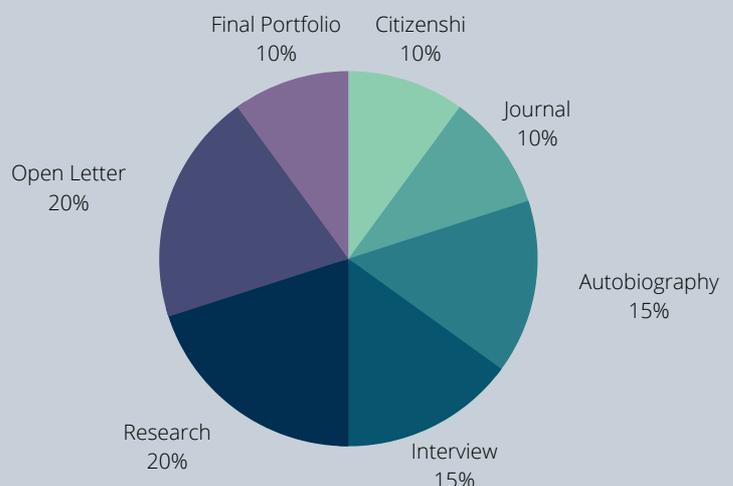
This term, you will complete four major essay projects, (abbreviated as E1, E2, E3, and E4) and a final portfolio. To prepare for each essay, you'll complete several process documents--like pre-writing, proposals, peer reviews, annotated bibliographies, and reflections--which are designed to help you prepare and polish your writing.

Essays in this course are written in cycles. This means that they are submitted first in an early version, commented on, revised, and submitted again in a second version. Because the quality of instructor and peer feedback is a function of the quality of the first version of an essay, first versions are to be complete and written in formal, academic prose.

The left-hand panel offers short descriptions of major essays, together with the other tasks that comprise your graded material this term. Eager for more details? Don't worry: before we embark on each new essay project, you will receive full descriptions of all related assignments on Canvas, together with all deadlines. For now, see the Course Schedule, below, for all due dates.

GRADE PERCENTAGES PIE CHART

Use this diagram to help you visualize how each assignment fits within the overall workload of the course.



ASSESSMENT

The work you submit for a grade in this class will be evaluated in a variety of ways. Sometimes, your peers and I will assess your work before you submit it for a grade, which gives you an opportunity to make changes. At other times, items you turn in may be assigned credit based on level of completion or a specific point system. Final versions of your primary artifacts will receive written feedback from me, and I will also use feedback charts and rubrics to communicate with you about your work. At the end of the term, letter grades will be determined using the guidelines below.

PERCENTAGE RANGE FOR FINAL GRADES

AVERAGE	GRADE
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C-
70-72%	C
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

POLICIES**ATTENDANCE**

You may need to be absent from scheduled classes for health-related and personal reasons. If you are absent, you are responsible for all material covered in your absences, and you are responsible for the academic consequences of your absences. Please discuss planned absences with me as soon as possible after the beginning of an academic term. It may not always be possible for you to make up work completed during the classes you miss.

TURNING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise indicated. Work turned in after the due date loses 10% of the assignment's value (one letter grade) per day, including weekends and holidays. You may ask for an extension if the assignment is due more than 72 hours (3 days) later, and the earlier the better. I may not grant the extension. Missing work is counted as a "zero."

REVISING ASSIGNMENTS

In this class, you will have an opportunity to revise some of your work, often after it has been reviewed by your peers or instructor. When you revise, do not assume that your readers have noted every error on your documents; although they will identify some errors and specific ideas for improvement, it's ultimately up to you to revise carefully and proofread thoroughly—a good habit to get into.

ETHICAL ENGAGEMENT WITH COURSE CONTENT

Engaging Baldwin today means taking on contemporary discussions about race and power in our communities, including issues related to the Black Lives Matter movement. Many of the texts we will explore together deal with difficult issues and have troubling and disturbing content. Religion, sexuality, and politics will be in our reading and conversation; cruelty and violence are often present in texts about culture and history. We will be thoughtful in taking up issues that can and should disturb us, as they raise special ethical, intellectual, and emotional challenges..

IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES...

While the policies on this page will apply in most situations, I understand that things happen in our lives that are outside of our control. I'm always willing to make special accommodations when situations require. Please do your best to keep in me the loop and communicate in advance so I can support you.

COURSE SCHEDULE

HOW TO READ THIS SCHEDULE

The course calendar below is organized by course part and week, and each class meeting day is itemized within each week. Weekly objectives are provided in the headings for each week; these objectives offer context for the specific action items identified for each day, listed under the headings "Readings and Materials" and "Deliverables." All action items are to be completed prior to class meeting time unless otherwise noted.

PART 1 - AUTOBIOGRAPHY ESSAY

We'll spend the part of the class getting oriented to course operations, and we'll also jump right into our first essay project, a chance to introduce yourself to our class.

WEEK 1

OBJECTIVES

- Understand course policies, assignments, schedule, and Canvas functions
- Introduce yourself and start getting to know our class community
- Meet Baldwin and begin building awareness of his approach to writing
- Identify the conventions and components of autobiographical writing

**Tuesday,
June 22**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Course syllabus (completed in class)

DELIVERABLES

- "About me" notecard (completed in class)

**Thursday,
June 24**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Baldwin, Collected Essays, "Autobiographical Notes"

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #1

WEEK 2**OBJECTIVES**

- Explore constructive peer review and editing habits, acting as listener and learner
- Understand the opportunities of revision
- Respond to feedback and employ basic revision strategies

**Tuesday,
June 29**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- none

DELIVERABLES

- E1 Draft
- E1 Peer Review (completed in class)

**Thursday,
July 1**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- TSIS, Ch. 11, "What I really want to say is: Revising Substantially"

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #2
- E1 Revision Plan (completed in class)

PART 2 - INTERVIEW ESSAY

Baldwin learned about the world around him by asking questions of those he met. You'll learn to do likewise in this assignment, analyzing and reporting your findings.

WEEK 3**OBJECTIVES**

- Finalize your first essay project
- Identify the affordance of the interview essay genre
- Continue exploring Baldwin's life and context

**Tuesday,
July 6**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E1 Final Essay
- E1 Reflection (completed in class)

**Thursday,
July 8**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Baldwin, Collected Essays, "A Fly in Buttermilk"

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #3

WEEK 4**OBJECTIVES**

- Identify question strategies, drawing on podcast interview techniques
- Recognize the process and purpose of proposing a project
- Explore ethical considerations for research with human subjects

**Tuesday,
July 13****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- Baldwin, selections from *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #4
- E2 Proposal

**Thursday,
July 15****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- Purdue OWL, "Email Etiquette" and "Email Etiquette for Students"

DELIVERABLES

- E2 Query E-mail
- E2 Draft Questions

WEEK 5**OBJECTIVES**

- Begin conducting interviews and analyzing results
- Refine our question composition process
- Expand knowledge of Baldwin's life and context, discoverable through his interviews

**Tuesday,
July 20****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- James Baldwin interview with David C. Estes (on Canvas)

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #5

**Thursday,
July 22****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- James Baldwin interview with Studs Terkel (on Canvas)

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #6

WEEK 6**OBJECTIVES**

- Explore academic writing as a product of intellectual exchange (a "they say/I say" model)
- Understand the benefits of outlining essay projects and developing outlining strategies
- Continue individual interview analysis

**Tuesday,
July 27**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- TSIS, Part 1: "They Say"

DELIVERABLES

- E2 Annotated Interview Transcript
- E2 Outline (completed in class)

**Thursday,
July 29**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- TSIS, Part 2: "I Say"

DELIVERABLES

- E2 Introduction and conclusion
- E2 Peer Review (completed in class)

WEEK 7**OBJECTIVES**

- Finalize your second essay project
- Refine understanding of the opportunities of revision, responding to feedback and implementing advanced re-writing strategies

**Tuesday,
August 3**

Fall Holiday - no classes

**Thursday,
August 5**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E2 Final Essay
- E2 Reflection

PART 3 - RESEARCH ESSAY

The advent of the internet has fundamentally changed how we acquire information, but ethical research remains crucial to argumentation. We'll spend the next four weeks exploring why and developing a skillset for academic research writing.

WEEK 8

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the significance of question formation to the research process
- Identify the conventions and components of academic research writing
- Explore individual areas of interest related to Baldwin's life and writing

**Tuesday,
August 10**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Review journal entries 1-6

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Pre-writing
- E3 Draft Question (completed in class)

**Thursday,
August 12**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- 1-2 Additional Baldwin essays of your choice

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Annotated Bibliography, Part 1

WEEK 9

OBJECTIVES

- Continue exploring the conventions and components of academic research writing, focusing on identifying and classifying source material
- Understand conventions of academic essay introductions and conclusions

**Tuesday,
August 17**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- 2-3 non-Baldwin resources selected for E3

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Annotated Bibliography, Part 1

**Thursday,
August 19**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Draft Introduction and Outline

WEEK 10**OBJECTIVES**

- Refine knowledge of editing and draft review, implementing advanced strategies for peer critique
- Prepare for individual conferences with instructor

**Tuesday,
August 24**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Draft
- E3 Peer Review Letter #1

**Thursday,
August 26**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- A peer's draft E3 essay

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Peer Review Letter #2
- A conference appointment (completed in class)

WEEK 11 - CONFERENCES WITH DR. LERUD**OBJECTIVES**

- Identify areas of strength and improvement for E3
- Develop strategies for one-on-one writing conferences and professor engagement

Class Meetings Cancelled for Individual
Conferences

**Tuesday,
August 31
and
Thursday,
Sept. 2**

DELIVERABLES: BRING WITH YOU TO YOUR CONFERENCE THE FOLLOWING:

- E3 Peer Reviews
- E3 Revision Plan
- E3 Draft

PART 4 - THE OPEN LETTER

What's considered by many as Baldwin's most famous, most important essay was written as an open letter to his nephew. Why this humble form for such a grand purpose? Our final essay assignment is a chance to find out why.

WEEK 12 OBJECTIVES

- Finalize your first essay project
- Identify the conventions and components of open-letter cultural commentary
- Assess Baldwin's overall argumentative style

**Tuesday,
Sept. 7**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E3 Final Essay
- E3 Reflection

**Thursday,
Sept. 9**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Baldwin, Collected Essays, "My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew"

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #7

WEEK 13 OBJECTIVES

- Begin crafting your individual approach to the open-letter essay
- Continue to assess Baldwin's overall argumentative style, comparing to your own

**Tuesday,
Sept. 14**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Baldwin, Collected Essays, "Down at the Cross: Letter from a Region in My Mind"

DELIVERABLES

- Journal #8
- E4 Proposal (completed in class)

**Thursday,
Sept. 16**

Thanksgiving Holiday - no classes

WEEK 14**OBJECTIVES**

- Employ advanced peer review strategies for responding to classmates' writing
 - Engage advanced revision strategies for finalizing E4
-

**Tuesday,
Sept. 21****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E4 Draft
 - E4 Peer Review (completed in class)
-

**Thursday,
Sept. 23****READINGS AND MATERIALS**

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E4 Revision Plan

PART 5 - CONCLUSIONS

As we near the end of our time together, we will conclude by reflecting on what's worked well, what you've learned, and all that you've accomplished this term.

WEEK 15

OBJECTIVES

- Finalize your fourth essay project
- Identify the conventions and components of writing portfolios
- Prepare and assemble draft materials for Final Portfolio

**Tuesday,
Sept. 28**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- E4 Final Essay
- E4 Reflection

**Thursday,
Sept. 30**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- Final portfolio resources, available on Canvas

DELIVERABLES

- Final Portfolio Reflective Essay Outline

WEEK 16 - FINAL EXAMS WEEK (NO COURSE MEETING)

OBJECTIVES

- Finalize all remaining course activities

**Thursday,
Oct. 5**

READINGS AND MATERIALS

- None

DELIVERABLES

- Final Portfolio due on Canvas by 10pm