

## Assignment

For your second paper, you'll write an essay about your life and work as an English major. Along with the next project, in which you'll look back at your experience in college more generally, this essay is meant to help you meet the Integrative Experience goals of reflecting on and integrating your learning in college so far. You'll begin this project by reviewing the design of the UMass Amherst English major and taking an inventory of all the English courses YOU took in college – here and elsewhere. Then, over the next two weeks, through writing, you'll *own* that work, taking responsibility for your choice of major, considering well your experiences in and of that major, and looking back candidly at what you've accomplished – and failed to accomplish – in your major and what that might mean for you now and in the future.

We'll also do a short speech assignment, in which you'll talk with us about a text you studied in a college English course (a novel, play, poem, etc.) that has meant a lot to you. Like the inventory, the hope is that this exercise will help inspire your essay.

The paper can take any form you choose. Options include a) writing a narrative of your journey over time as an English major, a story of your membership and evolution in this discipline; b) reflecting critically on your strengths and weaknesses, enthusiasms and goals, successes and failures, in English Studies; c) using a case study approach – e.g., focusing on a single project that meant a lot to you or a single text (novel, play, poem, article, etc.) that changed you in some way; or d) taking some other approach.

Your final paper should be around 1,000 – 1,500 words (about 4-6 pages typed, with 1.5 or 2.0 line spacing, 12-point font, and one-inch margins) and will need to be revised substantially through at least two drafts. Generative writing will be assigned to help spur your ideas, and peer response will be used to help you hone your composition.

As before, please remember that much of your writing in this class will be “public” to varying degrees – I will read what you write in early drafts, and several classmates will as well. And through our course blog, your final papers will be more broadly available. Talk to me if you're concerned about your or other people's privacy – I will also be on the lookout for issues connected to the *publicity* of your writing.

The key due dates for this assignment are

- M 2/26: speeches begin!
- M 3/04: initial draft of essay due (bring 2 copies to class);
- M 3/11: final, copyedited version of essay due.

See the syllabus for policies regarding attendance and due dates.