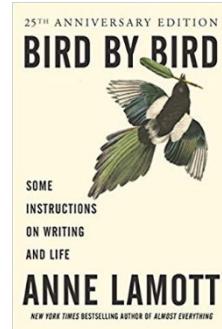


## Bird by Bird: Writing with Animals (English 380W)



Instructor: Dr. Melissa Yang (she/hers)  
Email: [melissa.yang@emory.edu](mailto:melissa.yang@emory.edu)

Office Hours: Callaway N201A by appointment via  
<https://melissatyang.youcanbook.me/>  
Additional meeting times are available by email.



### Course Description

For centuries, writing with animals was the only way humans knew how to write; we penned tales with quills plucked from geese on calf-skin vellum and bound our books in leather. In the years since, our writing technologies and relationships with animals have both evolved. This writing-intensive seminar invites students to investigate intertwined histories and narratives of writing and animals through texts, field trips, and research-based critical and creative writing and multimodal composing.

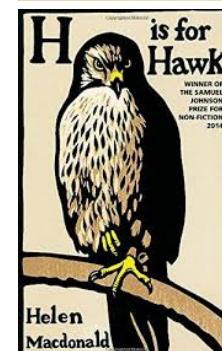
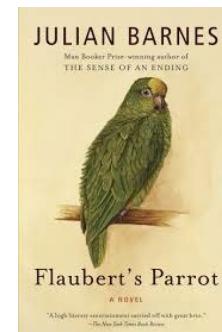
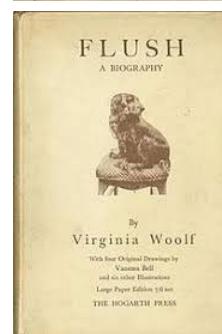
Major projects include an animal profile modeled on a medieval bestiary entry, a biographical exploration of a literary animal in the vein of *Flush: A Biography*, Virginia Woolf's 1933 first-person narration of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's dog, and an open-ended "wild card" multimodal composition.

### Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- ✓ Develop your writing **process**. You will practice exploring and narrowing down topics of choice, engaging in critical inquiry, drafting, revising, editing, and reflecting.
- ✓ Compose **ethical scholarship** using **evidence-based research** and academic resources. Summarize, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the ideas of others as you undertake scholarly inquiry in order produce your own arguments.
- ✓ Compose with attention to **controlling ideas** (theses), **expression**, and **structure**, using patterns appropriate for your genre(s) of choice.
- ✓ Compose projects in **multiple genres**, using multiple modes with attention to rhetorical situations.
- ✓ Critically read and creatively respond to a range of historical and contemporary materials with attention to cultural and rhetorical constructions of non-human animals and the environment.

*Note: This course fulfills the Continuing Writing (WRT) requirement. In addition, materials for this course will be used for an assessment of Continuing Writing across Emory University. Faculty readers will have access to your final reflection and an anonymized sample of your writing from this course. These outside readers will be rating your work based on evidence of your achievement of the writing, revision, and reflection-based outcomes listed above. They will not have access to your grades, nor have any say on your grades.*



## **Course Materials**

The central forum for all our course materials will be a Box folder. All readings required for the course will be provided to you here, except *H is for Hawk* by Helen Macdonald, which is available as an E-Book through the Emory Library. If you prefer to read hard copies of books, please purchase this along with *Flush* by Virginia Woolf and *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes.

Please spend some time familiarizing yourself with the course Box. Once you receive an invitation, create a new folder with your full name in the “Student Portfolios” section. You must submit all your coursework in this folder unless otherwise specified. Final submissions should also be copied into the “Final Assignment Submissions” section for grading. I will be examining your portfolio progress to assign you a holistic final grade at the end of the semester, and all final assignments can be further revised until the end of the term.

Note that everything you do on Box is visible to others in your section—you are welcome to view each other's assignments, but the author will know who has clicked on his/her work. While you are encouraged to learn from each other's work, it is important that your own work is original and you do not copy your classmates.

All your work will be named as a means of empowering you to take ownership of your craft. Workshops will not be anonymous unless anonymity is requested. If you are writing about sensitive materials and/or do not feel comfortable with this arrangement, please reach out and we can work around this together.

## **Course Assessment**

In order to receive a passing grade for this course, you are required to submit all assignments listed above. The general grading breakdown for the semester is 80% essays and assignments and 20% attendance and participation.

### **Explanation of Letter Grades**

A: An excellent response to the assignment that exceeds expectations, often in surprising ways. Demonstrates a sophisticated use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and design techniques.

B: A strong response to the assignment that follows all guidelines and demonstrates an effective use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and design techniques. May have minor but distracting problems.

C: An average response to the assignment. Demonstrates acceptable use of rhetorical knowledge, writing, and design technique. May have problems that distract reader.

D: A poor response to the assignment. Demonstrates a lack of rhetorical knowledge and writing and design technique. May have significant problems that distract reader; see me.

F: A failure to respond to the assignment appropriately. May involve lack of effort, plagiarism, or otherwise; see me.

## **Course Policies**

### *Attendance*

Attendance is essential. Aside from documented absences for school-related activities, you may miss three classes without incident. For every class you miss after the third, your participation

score may be lowered one-third of a letter grade. If you miss any class periods as a result of the Add/Drop/Swap period, you are responsible for completing all reading and writing assignments from that time. Meet me with appropriate documentation if you feel your situation warrants an exception to the course attendance policy.

#### *Late work*

All assignments are due by the time and date specified. I only accept late work with advance permission via email. Even with advance arrangement, late work may impact your grade. Meet with me if you feel your situation warrants an exception to this rule.

#### *Contact/Communication*

Email is the best way to contact me if you have questions or concerns. Generally, I will respond to all student emails within 24 hours except on weekends and holidays. Likewise, there may be instances when I will need to contact you by email. It is your responsibility to check your Emory-based email account at least once every 24 hours on weekdays.

#### *Academic Integrity*

The Honor Code (<http://catalog.college.emory.edu/academic/policies-regulations/honor-code.html>) is in effect throughout the semester. By taking this course, you affirm that it is a violation of the code to cheat on exams, to plagiarize, to deviate from the teacher's instructions about collaboration on work that is submitted for grades, to give false information to a faculty member, and to undertake any other form of academic misconduct. You agree that the instructor is entitled to move you to another seat during examinations, without explanation. You also affirm that if you witness others violating the code you have a duty to report them to the honor council.

I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously. Should I suspect that you engage in academic dishonesty in this course, I will refer the case to Emory's Honor Council. You may also receive an F on the assignment(s) in question. Important Student Resources.

### **Important Student Resources**

#### *Accessibility and Accommodations*

I strive to create an inclusive learning environment for all. I am invested in your success in this class and at Emory, so please let me know if anything is standing in the way of your doing your best work. This can include your own learning strengths, any classroom dynamics that you find uncomfortable, ESOL issues, disability or chronic illness, and/or personal issues that impact your work. I will hold such conversations in strict confidence.

The Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) works with students who have disabilities to provide reasonable accommodations. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must contact OAS. It is the responsibility of the student to register with OAS. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive and that disability accommodations are not provided until an accommodation letter has been processed. Students registered with OAS who have a letter outlining their academic accommodations, are strongly encouraged to coordinate a meeting time with your professor that will be best for both to discuss a protocol to implement the accommodations as needed throughout the semester. This meeting should occur as early in the semester as possible. Contact the Office of Accessibility Services for more information at (404) 727-

9877 or accessibility@emory.edu. Additional information is available at the OAS website at <http://equityandinclusion.emory.edu/access/students/index.html>.

#### *Writing Center Tutoring*

Tutors in the Emory Writing Center are available to support Emory College students as they work on papers, discussion posts, websites, and other projects. Writing Center tutors work on idea development, structure, use of sources, grammar, and word choice. They do not proofread for students. Instead, they discuss strategies and resources students can use as they write, revise, and edit their own work. Tutors also support the literacy needs of English Language Learners; several tutors are ELL Specialists, who have received additional training. The Writing Center is located in Callaway N111. Learn more about the Writing Center and make an appointment through the EWC website: <http://www.writingcenter.emory.edu/>.

Note: While I *will* be working as a writing center tutor this semester, my primary role is to tutor PhD dissertations. Thus, if other tutors are available, I generally recommend scheduling to meet with other tutors to receive outside feedback rather than coming directly to me in this context. You are always welcome to schedule an office hour appointment with me instead or in addition.

#### *Emory Counseling Services*

Free and confidential counseling services and support are available from the Emory Counseling Center (404) 727-7450. This can be an invaluable resource when stress makes your work more challenging than it ought to be. <http://studenthealth.emory.edu/cs/>

#### **Syllabus Note**

This syllabus incorporates and adapts materials provided by the Emory Writing Program. Please note that our schedule may change as the semester progresses. I will inform you of such changes in class and via the course website. Please check the digital reading schedule and Box files before every class. Specific topics and assignments may be tailored to flexibly accommodate student interests as discussed in class.