Essay 1: Truth Be Told – Family Research & Narrative

☐ proposal (1 page, 1 pt.) due Thursday, January 21
☐ 10+ interview questions (1 page, 1 pt.) due Tuesday, January 23
☐ interview responses / notes (2+ pages, 1 pt.) due Tuesday, January 28
☐ outline (2+ pages, 1 pt.) due Thursday, January 30
☐ rough draft (4+ pages, 2 pts.) due Tuesday, February 4
☐ meet with a tutor, SI, PAL, or me by Monday, February 10
☐ final draft (4+ pages, 10 pts.) due Tuesday, February 11

All of these must be typed using MLA format, except for the interview responses / notes (optional to type).

Topic

This semester’s textbook, The Best We Could Do, is a graphic-novel memoir expressing the author’s life as a Vietnamese-American. The book also tells the story of her parents and their experiences in Vietnam, during the war, and immigrating to the United States as refugees. Thi Bui combines images and words very effectively to portray family and social history.

In your essay, you will write about one of your family members or relatives. Interview your family member or relative (and possibly another family member or close family friend), and write a descriptive, narrative essay (4+ pages, 6+ paragraphs).

Possible topics include a turning point, military service, a journey, an obstacle overcome, a personal challenge, a difficult childhood / adolescence, an interesting event, an adventure, or a story of immigration. You might even focus on a moment or day that significantly changed that person’s life; you can also connect the person’s personal history to the broader social history. The event should have made a significant impact on him / her and might relate to the idea of the American dream. Include direct quotations from the people whom you interview in your essay; you should take notes and possibly record the interviews.

Audience & Purpose

Assume that your reader is not familiar with your family’s story. The goal of your essay is to tell your family member’s story in an interesting way.

Reading Requirement

• selections from Writing Commons and other articles (posted on my website)
Structure & Content Checklist

_____ Write an informative yet creative title for your essay; write an inventive hook as well.
_____ Identify your family member in the introduction.
_____ Your thesis statement should clearly state the person, event, and significance while previewing the essay.
_____ Organize your supporting paragraphs carefully. Include clear topic sentences and transitions.

**You must incorporate descriptive details and two quotes from your interview in every supporting paragraph.**

_____ You should add your own commentary or feelings to each supporting paragraph.
_____ Write a strong conclusion that wraps up the essay. You should also mention how the story affected you.
_____ Edit and proofread your sentences so that they are as clear and correct as possible.
_____ Include a properly formatted works cited page with the interviews listed.
_____ Format your paper properly: double-spaced, one-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font.

Process – You must complete and submit all of the following with the final draft:

_____ final draft & works cited page
_____ tutoring receipt or my comments**
_____ rough draft(s) & works cited page
_____ peer review sheet
_____ outline
_____ interview responses & notes
_____ interview questions
_____ proposal

** You must visit SI, the PAL, a tutor, or my advice hours for this essay.

• Bring your assignment sheet, notes, and draft with you when you see a tutor at the Language Success Center.
• Please feel free to visit my advice hours (MW 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. & TTh 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.) or email me (neil.watkins@chaffey.edu) at any point in your writing process.

Proposal Questions – 1 page, typed, due Tuesday, January 21

1. Whom do you plan to write about? Why have you chosen this family member?
2. What do you already know about this person?
3. What do you need to find about him or her?
4. What do you want your reader to learn or understand from your essay?
5. What obstacles or challenges might you face as you write? How will you overcome those?
6. When & where will you write the essay?

Students’ Advice for Essay 1

“Follow the professor’s instructions, go to his website, and read his notes and the sample essays. They are really helpful.”

“Take one step at a time. If you think about everything at once, you will panic and get in your own way.”

“Remember to write visually; descriptive details will give your essay dimension and a vivid sense that readers love.”

“Do not be scared to let your emotions show in your work!”