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# Fantasy Autobiography

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**Abstract**

This assignment is for a Fantasy Autobiography essay in the Liberal Arts: Social Sciences and Humanities FYS. It includes a research element as well as reflection. It is a high-stakes assignment worth 15% of the course grade and involves secondary research with an option to include primary research and auto-ethnography.

There are three low-stakes writing tasks, a co-curricular activity write-up, and a presentation that lead up to this final essay. Students collect data at each of these stages and compile a draft that is a narrative of their past experiences as a student in high school, and that weaves in their LaGuardia experiences (in-class and co-curricular) and then visualizes a story of future professional success.

Students revise the Autobiography draft over Week 9-10 using instructor feedback (on both content and mechanics) and present a condensed version of their essay to the class using a Powerpoint slideshow.

**Relevant Course Objectives:**

The following instructional objectives are the goals of the course (what the instructor expects to achieve):

1. Familiarize students with the types of research and methods utilized in the liberal arts.
2. Provide students with fundamental writing, reading and speaking opportunities necessary to develop essential skills for college success.
3. Familiarize students with key academic support resources related to student life and engage them in using these resources to advance academic success.
4. Connect students with their advising team, which will guide them in setting goals, exploring educational and career options, and developing an individualized educational plan.
5. Design opportunities for students to situate and contextualize their learning by making connections across disciplines, to prior learning, and to non-academic learning experiences, including co-curricular learning.

## Assignment

**Assignment Description:** “The largest assignment is a written paper in which you create a fantasy autobiography for yourself. Imagine that you are 60 and writing about the career and personal growth you’ve experienced since you left high school. The paper should have a research component through which you discuss the history of LaGuardia and how you used its resources to make a place for yourself in this institution and beyond. Also do research on the jobs/careers you had, and provide examples of how you coped with failures and successes. This paper will be typed and at least 1000 words long. It will constitute 15% of your final grade.”

There are three low-stakes writing tasks, a co-curricular activity write-up, and a presentation that lead up to this final essay (see prompts and rubric below). Students collect data at each of these stages and compile a draft that is a narrative of their past experiences as a student in high school, and that weaves in their LaGuardia experiences (in-class and co-curricular) and then visualizes a story of future professional success.

The staging includes

- I. a library session in which students start thinking about their goals in a concrete way, particularly through exploring relevant career databases. They are expected to look into a career or profession that interests them, including the educational requirements, day-to-day tasks, income, and prospects related to this. The librarian shows them the main career databases to which they have access to get them started on research.
- II. an informational visit by a staff member from the Career Services office, who introduces students to Career Services.
- III. a visit from a representative of the Transfer Services office, who discusses processes to select and transfer to a four-year school.
- IV. a class visit to the Writing Center

*(Writing prompt that covers stages I-IV: **Reflection 2 Week 6: Workshop:** We will visit the library, the Writing Center, and the LaGuardia and Wagner Archives in order to learn about these resources. We will also have presenters coming to class from a variety of campus offices (such as Campus Life and Transfer Services.) Take notes on these occasions. Then think about which workshop or visit was an eye-opener and provided you with the ability to succeed at an upcoming task (academic or non-academic). What would you have found challenging or simply not considered if you hadn’t had that workshop or visit? 400 words.)*

- V. attending information sessions and events hosted by various departments, programs, and student clubs.

*(Writing prompt that covers Stage V: **Attend an Event or a Club Meeting:** For this task, attend either a club or an event (that I will advertise on our course website) and answer the following series of questions:*

1. *How did you decide which club/event to choose?*
  2. *How long did you spend at the club/event and were you an active or passive attendee?*
  3. *Name one of the club/event organizers that you met and whose email address you obtained.*
  4. *Write a 4-sentence email that you would write to the organizer about the club/event you attended.*
  5. *What club or event do you want to see at LaGuardia and when should it be held?)*
- VI. Students revise the Autobiography draft over Week 9-10 using instructor feedback (on both content and mechanics) and present a condensed version of their essay to the class using a Powerpoint slideshow.

*(Writing prompts for low-stakes reflections and a presentation that feed into Stage VI:*

- **Reflection 1 Week 2: About Me:** *Think about a time in your past when you learned how to do something well. This could be an academic task (e.g. studying for a test), or a non-academic one (e.g. changing a flat tire). How did you go from low ability to high ability at this task? What strategies and resources did you use? What did this process teach you about yourself? 400 words.*
- **Week 8** *You will also be required to do an **oral presentation** about your first semester here at LaGuardia. I want you to explore your background, and your academic and career goals. Following the ideas in your textbook about what it takes to succeed, consider what you've done to contribute to your success in high school and what you plan for your career at LaGuardia and beyond. What challenges did you face and what lies between you and your goals? I expect you to incorporate visual materials in your presentation. You will have to use the Pechakucha format – 20 visual slides total with a time limit of 20 seconds per slide. (See this video for help: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=32WEzM3LFhw>) This will count for 10% of your final grade.*

### **Presentation Rubric**

	Score 0	Score 0.5-2.00	Score 2.00-3.00
<i>Analytical literacy: Demonstrate an ability to understand the assignment</i>	<i>Presentation ignores all the elements of the process.</i>	<i>Presentation shows a basic understanding of the task but does not address all the elements of the process.</i>	<i>Presentation shows a clear understanding of the task and addresses each element extensively.</i>

<i>Body Language: Demonstrate an ability to engage the audience</i>	<i>Presenter does not acknowledge the audience at all</i>	<i>Presenter occasionally faces the audience (not the professor) and attempts to keep listeners' attention (through eye-contact and by inviting and responding to questions.)</i>	<i>Presenter always faces the audience (not the professor) and keeps listeners' attention (through eye-contact and by inviting and responding to questions.)</i>
<i>Structure and Visual aids: Demonstrate an ability to present information in a logically organized Pechakucha</i>	<i>Presentation is unable to place ideas in a logical structure within a topic-based Pechakucha.</i>	<i>Presentation shows a few connections between ideas and is topic-centered. There may be gaps that affect comprehension but the Pechakucha is coherent.</i>	<i>Presentation shows clear connections between all ideas and is topic-centered. There are no gaps that affect comprehension of the Pechakucha.</i>
<i>Pacing: Demonstrate an ability to convey ideas at a steady rate</i>	<i>Presentation is either too rushed and short (under 5 mins) or too slow and long (over 8 mins)</i>	<i>Presentation is between 5-7 minutes, showing that it was well-rehearsed. (1 pt)</i>	

- Week 9 Reflection 3: Cover Letter:** *Using the tips in Chapter 9 of You Majored in What?, write a cover letter for an application to a 4 year college or a scholarship. Do research: How does one find an internship? How does one transfer within CUNY versus elsewhere? What does a certain job require in terms of daily tasks? How does LaGuardia fit into your story? Use the library search engine. Reflect on what you did in this class to create a portrait of yourself as a student that deserves to win this opportunity. E.g. Review the preparation you put into your presentation. What did you think worked well during the presentation and why? What skills and resources did the course help you develop leading up to this presentation that will be contribute to your success in the future? 400 words)*