

Photovoicing American Identity: Reading Analysis and Photocollage¹

Assignment Overview

In his semi-autobiographical graphic novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian*, Sherman Alexie chronicles the experiences of Arnold Spirit Jr., a teen who leaves his reservation to attend an all-white high school. As we see in the novel, Arnold's Native American traditions and customs are often at odds with the mainstream, white American culture he finds himself in at school, and this leads to tension within his personal sense of American identity. In a 750-1000 word essay you will select at least 3 passages and/or graphics from 3 separate chapters and place them in conversation to answer the following question: How does Alexie's graphic novel resist "single stories" about American identity and challenge singular views of what it means to be American—the experiences, identities, social environments, cultural practices, and opportunities, associated with traditional representations of American life? Your essay should include a formal introduction; thesis statement; body paragraphs that offer supporting claims, counterclaims, and refutations drawn from Alexie's text; a conclusion; and Works Cited page. Your essay will also be accompanied by a photocollage of at least 5 original photos that represent your own personal view of American identity. There are **5 C/NC assignments** associated with this project (Peer-Review Draft, Author's Note, Peer-Reponses, Project Preface, Final Project).

Objectives

This assignment will ask students to engage course learning outcomes related to writing process (SLO 3), rhetorical situation (SLO 1.a, 1.b, 2), source integration (SLO 4), writing conventions (SLO 5, 6), and demonstrate understanding of rhetorical topics connected to persuasive writing including textual analysis, interpretive arguments, claims and counterclaims, and strategies of representation.

Instructions and Timeline

This project will be completed as a guided process involving several drafting activities and peer working group sessions. Please see below for the schedule of assignments due. Peer-review drafts, reflection letters, and the final project must be submitted by **11:59 PM** on the date due in order to be marked as Complete.

- | | |
|--------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| T 3/8 | Review assignment guidelines for Photovoicing American Identity; begin reading Alexie's <i>True Diary</i> . |
| T 3/15 | Complete drafting activities (group activity and writing studio). |
| R 3/17 | Complete drafting activities (writing exercise and writing studio). |
| T 3/22 | Post Draft 1 (C/NC) of your Photovoicing American Identity Essay and Author's Note (C/NC) to the peer-review discussion board; in-class peer-review studio. |

¹ This assignment was developed for use in the First-Year Writing Program at California State University, Los Angeles and is aligned with the Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) Framework. See First-Year Writing Program, Department of English, California State University, Los Angeles, <https://www.calstatela.edu/academic/english/composition-program> and Transparency in Learning and Teaching, Center for Effective Teaching and Learning, California State University, Los Angeles, <https://www.calstatela.edu/cetl/transparency-learning-and-teaching-tilt>.

- R 3/24 Read your assigned peers' drafts and post your **Peer Responses** (C/NC) to the peer-review discussion board.
- T 4/5 Complete drafting activities (writing exercise).
- R 4/7 Submit final **Photovoicing American Identity Reading Analysis** (C/NC) and **Project Preface** (C/NC) to the Canvas assignments folders; share photocollages.

Final Submission Checklist

Before submitting your final Photovoicing American Identity Project, please review the following checklist to make sure your submission meets the minimum requirements. Projects missing any of these criteria will be marked as Incomplete:

- The final word count for your essay must be between 750-1000 words in length.
- Your final submission must include reference to at least 3 passages and/or graphics from 3 separate chapters of Alexie's *True Diary*.
- All references to Alexie's novel should be incorporated, cited, and listed in a Works Cited page according to [MLA or APA guidelines](#).
- Along with your essay, you must upload a photocollage to the Canvas assignments folder. This piece should include at least 5 original photos (i.e.: photos you have personally taken) that represent your view of American identity.
- Both your essay and your photocollage must be original compositions.
- Your project must demonstrate clear and meaningful engagement with the assignment, that is, it should respond to the prompt and show that you have put effort into your work.

Final Project Submission Instructions

Submit your final Photovoicing American Identity Project and Project Preface to the Canvas assignments folders by **11:59 PM on Thursday, April 7, 2022**.

- Go to our Canvas course home page.
- Click on the Assignments link in the menu on the left-hand side of the page.
- Open the "Photovoicing American Identity" assignment.
- Click Add Submission and upload your essay in a Word document, and then add your photocollage in PDF or PPT format.
- Click Save Changes to submit.
- Open the "PAI Project Preface" assignment and repeat the above steps to upload your Project Preface as a Word document.

Evaluation

Throughout the process of drafting your Photovoicing American Identity Project, you will receive detailed feedback with questions, comments, and recommendations for future drafts. Assignments that are submitted on time and that meet the stated minimum requirements will be marked as **Complete**. Missing assignments and submissions that do not meet the stated minimum requirements will be marked as **Incomplete**. As per the course grading contract, ten or more Incomplete assignments will result in an NC for the course.