

Assignment Introduction

One of the powerful experiences of GS 420 is the sharing of life stories. By sharing your own story, you begin the journey of your own self-discovery and self-reflection. We cannot possibly begin to understand the disability experience of someone else unless we can examine our own experiences with life. Everyone's story is unique, and yet, we all struggle with life's challenges and we all care about issues that are meaningful to us. This experience of storytelling can bond us together in our diversity. To write and share your story is to grow in who you are and at the same time, gain a more profound understanding of the people who will share their stories with you in this course.

Some of you will feel more comfortable with writing a timeline of your life so far, dividing your life into periods. Others may want to describe your life thematically, or perhaps allegorically. You get to choose how you share your story.

Your story is considered confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the instructors and teaching assistants (who assist with grading during the semester). You are not required to include parts of your story that you are uncomfortable sharing. However, sometimes sharing or exploring challenging areas of our life can be a step in pressing through.

Learning Objectives

1. Students will summarize their life story.
2. Students will explain moments, people, and activities that have made them who they are.
3. Students will examine their current assumptions and ideas about disability.
4. Students will share what they hope to learn from this course.

Assignment Content Requirements

Your assignment should include the following:

1. Introduce yourself and your major and minor if applicable.
2. Describe the culture and community that you take pride in, participate in, or identify with.
3. Explain important activities, events, or life experiences that have influenced who you are today.
4. Write a brief reflection on your current assumptions and ideas about disability and/or previous disability experiences.
5. Share what you hope to learn from this course.
6. Include a photo of yourself that is current, identifiable, and appropriate. This picture should be inserted at the end of your essay. If you are not comfortable including a photo, you may substitute an image that reflects your personality, interests, or hobbies.

Assignment Format Requirements

- 2-3 Pages
- Essay Format (Microsoft Word)
- 12-Point Font, Double Spaced

Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Meets Standard (10 pts)	Approaching Standard (9-5 pts)	Below Standard (0-4 pts)
Assignment Content	Assignment content includes all required parts.	Assignment is missing some required parts.	Assignment does not meet the full requirements and is missing substantial content.
Thoughtful Responses to Each Section	Responses demonstrate clear understanding of the questions/prompts. Responses are thoughtful, cohesive, descriptive, and complete.	Responses demonstrate partial understanding of the questions/prompts, and/or responses are incomplete.	Responses do not demonstrate understanding of the questions/prompts, and/or minimal effort is evident.
Written Expression	Writing flows and is easy to comprehend and grade. Uses appropriate grammar and punctuation to clearly express thoughts.	Writing includes some errors in grammar and/or punctuation, or is lacking in clear expression, but it is comprehensible enough that the reader can understand.	Writing has many errors in grammar and/or punctuation and is confusing or difficult to understand.