

### **Your “Social Class Autobiography” (Wendy R. Williams)**

Each of us comes to the table with a different experience with social class. Think deeply about your own story with social class. In this assignment, you will have the opportunity to tell your “Social Class Autobiography.” By taking time to analyze your own story, you may find a level of understanding and acceptance that you had not previously recognized. Moreover, by sharing our personal stories, we refuse to share in the “code of silence” around social class. In your own social class autobiography, making sure to link your experiences to class privilege or deprivation (or both), as well as to connect it explicitly to some of the ideas we have discussed in class like poverty, wealth, education, mental illness, violence, prison, and the American Dream. Finally, reflect on what you have learned from the experience of examining your personal “Social Class Autobiography.”

This paper should include an introduction and a conclusion, and it should address the following questions:

- 1) Pick at least two events from your life that are related to social class and describe what occurred. These should be compelling, not trivial, events.
- 2) After explaining what occurred, in a separate paragraph, take time to analyze the meaning of each experience. What does each event reveal about poverty, wealth, inequality or privilege? Specifically, make connections to specific class topics (like the American Dream, education, mental health, etc.) that were illustrated in this experience. Be detailed and thorough.
- 3) Reflect on what you have learned from examining social class in your life.

Your paper must be typed in Times 12-point font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides. Create a title for your Autobiography and put your name on it. Staple the pages together (but do not put your paper in a binder or folder). Your autobiography must be at least 2-3 pages long.

A hard copy of your paper is due at the beginning of your class period. Any paper turned in after class starts will not be accepted. There is absolutely no make-up for the paper without a verified excuse. If you do have an emergency, you must notify us within 24 hours so that we can arrange an acceptable extension time. We will accept your paper electronically (e.g., email it to me) without any penalty only if it is an emergency.

Your paper will be graded as follows:

- 1) Telling a compelling story about two instances of social class in your life (50 points).
- 2) Analysis of the meaning of each experience as it relates to social class and connection to course content (30 points).
- 3) Reflection on what you learned from examining these events (10 points).
- 4) Title, good grammar, spelling and syntax (10 points total)