

# The New Commons Project      Autobiography Project

## **OVERVIEW**

James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* blends autobiography with social criticism. In this project, we ask you to create an autobiographical project that comments on society in a substantial way. You need not replicate Baldwin's approach; in fact, you are required to create your project on a digital platform (like a film, podcast, infographic, video game, etc.). However, the project should blend a creative depiction of your life with a connection to a broader societal concern. In the end, you will also submit a brief rationale that explains the relationship between your personal experience and the larger social issue.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- 1) Build on your understanding of Baldwin by reflecting on your own experience in a creative way.
- 2) Compose a creative work that comments on this experience according to genre standards.
- 3) Connect the creative work's themes to a broader societal concern in an essay.

## **RATIONALE**

One of the main reasons Baldwin's work is so powerful for modern readers is his vulnerability. His bravery in sharing fears, aspirations, experiences, and failures through his writing gives his larger social commentary greater impact. In this project, you will take up the same process by reflecting on your own experience, undertaking a creative project, and considering its relation to society.

## **REQUIRED ELEMENTS**

- 1) Craft an autobiographical creative work in your chosen genre (equivalent of four pages).
- 2) This autobiographical work should demonstrate proficiency within the selected genre.
- 3) The essay (one page) should explicitly link the creative work to a societal issue.

## **GRADING CATEGORIES (listed in order of importance)**

- 1) Creativity: Students should use this project as an opportunity to integrate creativity into the course. Therefore, students are encouraged to think outside of the box while conceptualizing and composing their projects.
- 2) Genre: Students should demonstrate an understanding of the key elements of the genre in which they choose to compose their creative work.
- 3) Essay: Students should explain how the creative project relates to a societal issue in a one-page essay.