

Damien Center Project

Purpose: This semester, we are studying HIV & AIDS narratives from a variety of genres, time periods, and locations. However, it is also crucial to pay attention to the real-life narratives of people living with HIV and AIDS in our own time and place. This community-engaged learning opportunity will allow us to connect with people in our own area who are affected by HIV and AIDS. Founded in 1988, the Albany Damien Center was one of the first AIDS centers in the nation and continues to offer programming and residence to those living with HIV/AIDS in the Capital Region. You can learn more here: <http://www.albanydamiencenter.org/our-history.html>).

The Damien Center has graciously agreed to work with our class this semester. Our project will be to **conduct interviews of current members at the Damien Center** who wish to tell their stories. Our job will be to ask thoughtful questions, listen to their stories, and transcribe what they share with us. This is an opportunity for us to go beyond the classroom and into the real world and for them to have active, thoughtful listeners who will record their experiences.

This assignment has several components:

- 1) Because many of these stories will be incredibly sensitive, personal, and traumatic, staff members from the Damien Center will come to our class on **W 2/12** to conduct a **confidentiality training** that we all must complete. This is incredibly important as it will help us respect and protect the privacy of our interviewees.
- 2) In further preparation for your interviews, we will **prepare a set of interview questions** for you to ask. We will workshop these on **W 2/12 in class**.
- 3) Each of you (individually or in groups) will conduct an interview with a Damien Center member. We will conduct interviews on two days: **W 2/19 and W 3/4**.
- 4) You will create a transcript of your interview, due on **SUNDAY 4/5 by 11:59 pm**. It is incredibly important that you all do this carefully and thoroughly, as we will be sharing our transcripts with the Damien Center for their use. Each "team" will work together to produce one transcript.
- 5) Individually, you will write a **two-page reflection essay** on the experience of visiting the Damien Center and conducting the interview. You may write about the experience in any way you like, but you should consider the following question: how does the narrative that the Damien Center member told you resonate with/challenge/complicate/provide a different perspective from those we have read in class? This is also due **SUNDAY 4/5 by 11:59 pm**.

Rubric

-This assignment is worth **125 points**:

- Questions: 5 points (for completion as a class)
- Interview: 30 points
- Transcript: 30 points
- Reflection essay: 60 points