

## **“Outsider” Narrative**

### **Due:**

Draft 1 Due Wednesday 09/05

Final Draft Due Wednesday 09/12

**Aim for 750-1000 words of narrative. If you are producing a visual project, aim for 500-750 words of explanation.**

Over the course of the semester, you will be reading and discussing the power that language and perception have on people struggling with the isolation that often occurs when they are classified as “outsiders”. There are many reasons that people come to be perceived as other; other is contextually determined. Consider the situation of a person who speaks a different language in a monolingual community, a person who disrupts conventionally agreed upon gender roles, or a person stricken by a misunderstood illness. All these people are perceived as different and run the risk of being targeted and mistreated by their larger community. Although it could, mistreatment doesn’t always mean violence; maybe it’s silence. We refuse to see them or hear them because doing so requires taking a stance that might be unpopular.

We’ve all been there and done that. We’ve been the kid in class that got bullied, the bully, or the kid that watched it happen. We’ve all been judged unfairly and done the same to others. We’ve all experienced the feeling that something about us just isn’t right....because it’s not what we see being praised in our own context.

So what do we do? It depends. Sometimes we hide, sometimes attack, and sometimes we watch. None of those actions or lack thereof, helps vulnerable people, and they disadvantage our own growth as human beings. Growth takes effort and it’s often painful, but it’s essential. If you want to be a good doctor, you have to be willing to look past perceived differences toward an individual’s humanity and worth.

For your first essay, tell me an “outsider” story. The “outsider” could be you, it could be a classmate or family member; maybe you witnessed an “outsider” story, or maybe you joined with a group against an “outsider”. Like I said before, we’ve all been there and done that. So be as honest as you can. Understanding how you felt in a situation, or why you acted the way you did is inextricably linked to your capacity to treat others fairly and well moving forward.

The way you tell the story is your choice. Use the language you want; make it look like you want. It can be typed, handwritten, drawn or collaged. Visual documents should include a statement of goals and choices that describe your purpose for the composition and the reasons you made the choices you made with regard to images.

This story will be peer-reviewed and discussed in the class so push your limits, but make sure you tell a story that you’re comfortable sharing. This is a difficult assignment; it might make you uncomfortable, but that’s kind of the point.