

Using the Book-in-Common: *Hidden America* by Jeanne Marie Laskas

Exam Copies & Questions: First Year Initiatives (firstyear@louisville.edu)
Original English Dept. presentation: <https://goo.gl/hpr6QF>

What is *Hidden America*? Chapter summaries at <https://goo.gl/MYMQ0x>

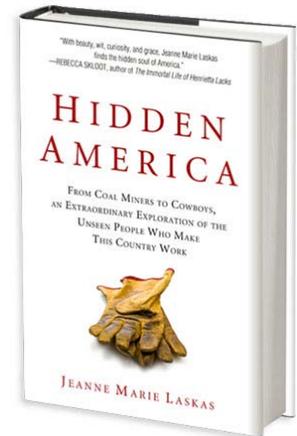
Pros and Cons for Use in Composition Classes

PROS

- May connect with students' lives
- Plenty of relevant research topics
- Chapters can stand alone, are accessible
- Combines research and narrative

CONS

- May need to provide comprehensive background reading
- Not a model for academic writing
- Does not illustrate how to "take a position"



Using *Hidden America* in English 101/102

GOALS:

- Using primary and secondary sources
- Research methods: conducting interviews, coding data, integrating sources
- Cultural / community focus

IDEAS GENERATED BY ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS:

- Profile a culture, discourse community, etc. related to labor issues
- Investigate a workplace (or labor issue) in the university or local community
- Create an assignment where students find what labor issues are (specifically "hidden in Louisville")-- For example: UPS, Churchill Downs, the bourbon industry, UofL, etc.
- Discuss writing in different contexts
- What is hidden in students' own lives? What is their "hidden America"?
- Building off the personal literacy narrative, write a "work history narrative" or "family work history narrative"
- Look at our students as a "hidden" population (our adjunct faculty too)
- Ethics of representation and how to tell someone else's stories
- Politics and how who we vote for might be "hidden" OR how politicians exploit these populations to get votes
- Compare visual and textual representations of work (also circulation!)

Using *Hidden America* in English 306/303

GOALS:

- Genre analysis in workplace / organization
- Writing to a workplace / professional audience (like the "negative message" email / memo)
- Intervene on behalf of community (i.e. grant writing, press release, social media)

Hearing from the Author

Jeanne Marie Laskas is under deadline to finish a new book based off her January 2017 article "[To Obama with Love, and Hate, and Desperation.](#)" In lieu of the traditional campus visit, Ms. Laskas has answered the following questions in a video that will be ready to share to instructors in early August.

English Composition

1. What kinds of ethical considerations did you encounter when making the choice to tell other people's stories rather than providing a venue for their words only?
2. How do you see your work as developing the tradition of writing about work in American Life (*Working, Nickel and Dimed* etc.)?
3. How, and to what effect, did you combine voice, tone and other literary devices differently based on the lives of the people you were documenting?

Orientation and Transition

1. In what way have your own values, talents and gifts, interests, and chosen audience converged into the work you find meaningful today?
2. "If you don't know who you are and why you're here, how are you supposed to know where you're going?" (Bill Johnson) How does this relate to your role as an author, including the many decisions you make as a result?
3. As new students transition to college life, they encounter increased responsibility and autonomy, uncertainty, excitement, new perspectives and opportunities, and a whole host of other positive and challenging experiences. What advice do you think the people of Hidden America would have for these students in transition? What advice do you have?

Fall 2017 & Spring 2018 Co-Curricular Events

First Year Initiatives and its partners will host events related to themes in the book. From debates and lectures to a service project, these events help bring the issues to life. Events are added throughout the semester: <http://louisville.edu/firstyear/book-in-common/book-in-common-events> or UofL New Cards app.

Campus Cardinal Debate

October 18

6 – 7:30 p.m., Chao Auditorium, Ekstrom Library

The award-winning Malcolm X Debate Program and FYI invite you to a fun and fast-moving debate on hot topics related to "Hidden America."

Book-in-Common Connections Service Event

October 28

Join FYI and Engage Lead Serve Board for a variety of service opportunities related to "Hidden America." See app or web for details.

Critical Thinking Composition Contest Submission Deadline

December 12

First year and upperclass students, who do **you** think is part of our "hidden" America? Answer that question in your written or digital composition and be eligible for one of several \$300 and \$100 scholarships. See app or web for details.