

Prepared by: G. Dyer
Reviewed by: K. Carlson
Reviewed by: J. Grimes
Reviewed by: B. Devine
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English (ENGL) 1775 Creative Writing: Nonfiction (3) CSU

Advisory: Successful completion of English 1500 and English 1700 with a grade of “C” or better

Total Hours: 48 hours lecture

Catalog Description: This course is a creative writing workshop dedicated to the creation of creative nonfiction. Memoir, creative essays, book and film reviews, and creative critical writing will be explored. Course requires analysis of published and unpublished nonfiction, study of the theory of nonfiction, create of original nonfiction, revision of nonfiction, assembling a manuscript of nonfiction, and exploring venues for publishing nonfiction.

Type of Class/Course: Degree Credit

Texts: Students will read two works of nonfiction from the following list:

- Adams, Henry. *The Education of Henry Adams*. Lexington: Feather Trail Press, 2009. Print.
- Carson, Rachel. *Silent Spring*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1962. Print.
- Bloom, Harold. *Wallace Stevens: The Poems of Our Climate*. Ithaca, Cornell University, 1995. Print.
- Borges, Jorge Luis. *Selected Non-fictions*. Ed. Eliot Weinberger. Trans. Ester Allen, Suzanne Jill Levine, and Eliot Weinberger. New York: Viking, 1999. Print.
- Dillard, Annie. *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Reprint edition. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998. Print.
- Easterbrook, Gregg. *A Moment on the Earth: The Coming of Age of Environmental Optimism*. New York: Viking, 1995. Print.
- Ebert, Roger. *I Hated, Hated, Hated This Movie*. Kansas City: Andrews McNeel Publishing, 2000. Print.
- Eggers, Dave. *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*. New York: Vintage, 2001. Print.
- Eggers, Dave. *Zeitoun*. New York: Vintage, 2009. Print.
- Eliot, T.S. *Selected Essays: 1917-1932*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1932. Print.
- Gladwell, Malcolm. *Blink*. New York: Little Brown, 2005. Print.
- Grealy, Lucy. *Autobiography of a Face*. New York: Little Brown, 2005. Print.
- Guest, Barbara. *Forces of Imagination: Writing on Writing*. Berkeley: Kelsey St. Press, 2003. Print.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *A Moveable Feast*. New York: Scribner, 2009. Print.
- Hochschild, Adam. *Bury the Chains: Prophets and Rebels in the Fight to Free an Empire's Slaves*. New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005. Print.
- Jarnot, Lisa. *Robert Duncan: Ambassador from Venus*. Berkeley: University of California, 2012. Print.
- Kingston, Maxine Hong. *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*. Vintage International Edition. New York: Vintage, 1989.
- Mortenson, Greg, and David Oliver Relin. *Three cups of Tea*. New York: Viking, 2006. Print.
- Nafisis, Azar. *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. New York: Random House, 2003. Print.
- Nabokov, Vladimir. *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*. New York: Vintage, 1989. Print.
- Sontag, Susan. *At the Same Time: Essays and Speeches*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007. Print.

Spicer, Jack. *The House That Jack Built: The Collected Lectures of Jack Spicer*. Ed. Peter Gizzi. Hanover: Wesley University Press, 1998. Print.

Tan, Amy. *The Opposite of Fate: Memoirs of a Writing Life*. New York: Penguin, 2003. Print.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *Wampeters, Foma, & Granfaloons (Opinions)*. New York, Dell, 1989. Print.

Vonnegut, Kurt. *A Man Without a Country*. New York, Dell, 2005. Print.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery*. New York: Doubelday, Page, and Company, 1901. Print.

Walker, Alice. *Anything We Love Can Be Saved*. New York: Ballantine, 1997. Print.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Orlando: Harcourt, 1929. Print.

X, Malcolm, and Alex Haley. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. One World/Ballantine, 1992. Print.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, a successful student will be able to:

1. Create original nonfiction,
2. Analyze structure of various forms of nonfiction, including memoir, reviews, creative essays, and creative critical pieces,
3. Interpret content of nonfiction,
4. Relate nonfiction to its cultural context,
5. Criticize nonfiction,
6. Synthesize criticism of one's own nonfiction,
7. Revise nonfiction,
8. Prepare a manuscript of nonfiction,
9. Research places of publication for fiction, and
10. Be part of a community of writers.

Course Scope and Content:

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| Unit I | Memoir |
| | A. Theme |
| | B. Introduction |
| | C. Uses of dialog in memoir |
| | D. Relevance to audience |
| | E. Structure of narrative |
| | F. Description |
| | G. Pacing |
| | H. Flashback/Flashforward |
| | I. Backstory |
| | J. Symbolism |
| | K. Description |
| | L. Action |
| | M. Voice |
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| Unit II | Film and Book Reviews |
| | A. Tone |
| | B. Slant |
| | C. Spoilers |
| | D. Purpose |
| | E. Content of reviewed piece |

- F. Form of reviewed piece
- G. Marketability of review

- Unit III Creative Essays
- A. Thesis
 - B. Purpose
 - C. Audience
 - D. Thesis
 - E. Introduction
 - F. Epigraph
 - G. Description
 - H. Figurative language
 - I. Consonance, assonance, and alliteration
 - J. Illustration
 - K. Organizational patterns
 - L. Style
 - M. Voice
 - N. Diction

- Unit IV Creative Literary Criticism
- A. Interpretation of content
 - B. Analysis of form
 - C. Standard academic conventions of literary discourse
 - D. Diverging from standard academic conventions of literary discourse
 - E. Voice
 - F. Meta-criticism
 - G. Identifying appropriate audiences/places of publication for creative criticism
 - H. Primary and secondary sources
 - I. Research resources
 - J. Synthesizing research
 - K. Direct quotation, paraphrase, attributive tags, and citation
 - L. Securing rights to use portions of sources when publishing criticism

- Unit V Writing Process
- A. Sources of composition
 - B. Drafting
 - C. Revision
 - D. Editing
 - E. Citation

- Unit VI Evaluation of Nonfiction
- A. Interpretation of content
 - B. Analysis of form
 - C. Evaluation of aesthetics
 - D. Relationship between text and audience
 - E. Cultural context
 - F. Synthesizing criticism from peers for revision of original pieces

- Unit VII Publication

- A. Researching publication venues
- B. The literary magazine
- C. Websites
- D. Blogs
- E. Small press manuscript contests
- F. Self-publishing
- G. Cover letter
- H. Query letter
- I. Manuscript format
- J. Simultaneous submission policies
- K. Literary agents

Learning Activities Required Outside of Class:

The students in this class will spend a minimum of 6 hours per week outside of the regular class time doing the following:

- 1. Completing required reading,
- 2. Writing analysis and imitations of published nonfiction,
- 3. Creating original nonfiction,
- 4. Writing critiques of classmates' submissions,
- 5. Preparing an original manuscript,
- 6. Observing or participating in an activity related to course content, and
- 7. Researching venues for publication.

Methods of Instruction:

- 1. Class meeting will involve brief lecture, discussion and extended group critique,
- 2. Student selected examples of published works will be discussed for the purpose of demonstrating techniques and establishing standards of evaluation,
- 3. Student writings will be submitted and distributed the week before submission,
- 4. Frequent revision will be required,
- 5. Assignments concerning the theory of nonfiction will be given, and the experiences of professional writers will be considered, and
- 6. Frequent student-instructor conferences via an online discussion group will be conducted.

Methods of Evaluation:

- 1. Substantial verbal assignments, including:
 - a. Weekly submissions,
 - b. Presentation on selected readings,
 - c. Written and spoken critique of classmates submissions, and
 - d. Submission for publication assignment, delineating a publication's submission policy and including a cover letter and prospective submission by the student.
- 2. A final project, including:
 - a. A ten page collection of individual work, in chapbook form