

Term Information

Effective Term Autumn 2020
Previous Value Summer 2016

Course Change Information

What change is being proposed? (If more than one, what changes are being proposed?)

To add option of online delivery of existing course

What is the rationale for the proposed change(s)?

Ongoing accommodation of faculty and students by means of flexibility in Instruction Mode.

What are the programmatic implications of the proposed change(s)?

(e.g. program requirements to be added or removed, changes to be made in available resources, effect on other programs that use the course)?

N/A

Is approval of the request contingent upon the approval of other course or curricular program request? No

Is this a request to withdraw the course? No

General Information

Course Bulletin Listing/Subject Area	English
Fiscal Unit/Academic Org	English - D0537
College/Academic Group	Arts and Sciences
Level/Career	Undergraduate
Course Number/Catalog	4568
Course Title	Advanced Creative Nonfiction Writing
Transcript Abbreviation	AdvCreatNonfiction
Course Description	Advanced workshop in the writing of creative nonfiction. This is a class for serious students of creative writing. Admission is by portfolio submission to the instructor.
Semester Credit Hours/Units	Fixed: 3

Offering Information

Length Of Course	14 Week, 12 Week, 8 Week, 7 Week, 6 Week, 4 Week
Flexibly Scheduled Course	Never
Does any section of this course have a distance education component?	Yes
Is any section of the course offered	100% at a distance
<i>Previous Value</i>	<i>No</i>
Grading Basis	Letter Grade
Repeatable	Yes
Allow Multiple Enrollments in Term	No
Max Credit Hours/Units Allowed	9
Max Completions Allowed	3
Course Components	Lecture
Grade Roster Component	Lecture
Credit Available by Exam	No
Admission Condition Course	No
Off Campus	Never

Campus of Offering Columbus, Lima, Mansfield, Marion, Newark

Prerequisites and Exclusions

Prerequisites/Corequisites Prereq: 2268 and permission of instructor.
Exclusions
Electronically Enforced No

Cross-Listings

Cross-Listings

Subject/CIP Code

Subject/CIP Code 23.1302
Subsidy Level Baccalaureate Course
Intended Rank Sophomore, Junior, Senior

Requirement/Elective Designation

The course is an elective (for this or other units) or is a service course for other units

Course Details

Course goals or learning objectives/outcomes • Students demonstrate advanced skills in writing creative nonfiction.

Content Topic List • Creative nonfiction with an emphasis on memoir
• Various forms of memoir
• Elements of creative nonfiction

Sought Concurrence No

Attachments

- ENG 4568.docx: Tech Review
(Other Supporting Documentation. Owner: Lowry,Debra Susan)
- ENG 4568 - AUT2020 syllabus.docx: DL Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Lowry,Debra Susan)
- ENGLISH 4568 syllabus - washuta f2f.docx: Standard Syllabus
(Syllabus. Owner: Lowry,Debra Susan)

Comments

COURSE CHANGE REQUEST
4568 - Status: PENDING

Last Updated: Heysel,Garett Robert
07/09/2020

Workflow Information

Status	User(s)	Date/Time	Step
Submitted	Lowry,Debra Susan	07/09/2020 02:30 PM	Submitted for Approval
Approved	Lowry,Debra Susan	07/09/2020 02:31 PM	Unit Approval
Approved	Heysel,Garett Robert	07/09/2020 08:42 PM	College Approval
Pending Approval	Jenkins,Mary Ellen Bigler Hanlin,Deborah Kay Oldroyd,Shelby Quinn Vankeerbergen,Bernadette Chantal	07/09/2020 08:42 PM	ASCCAO Approval



SYLLABUS

ENG 4568

Advanced Creative Nonfiction Writing
Autumn 2020 – Online

COURSE OVERVIEW

Instructor

Professor Elissa Washuta

Pronouns: she/her/hers

Email address: washuta.2@osu.edu

Office hours: By appointment via Zoom

Course description

This course is devoted to furthering your development of the craft of creative nonfiction. Through studying published nonfiction pieces and craft texts, developing new work, responding to peers' manuscripts, and revising your essays, you will continue to refine your individual approach and further your understanding of how to most effectively use craft elements to shape your work.

The structure of this course is reflective of my belief that the semester's most significant possible outcome is not that you will produce publishable work—although that is certainly a fine objective—but that you will develop tools, skills, and processes that you can employ long after the semester ends. You will write, read, respond, listen, and discuss, and through fully engaging in this work, you will become a stronger creative nonfiction writer.

This fully online course is designed to provide a structured experience in which you'll be able to focus on close reading, generative writing, guided revision, and critique. It won't be the same as a face-to-face workshop; you will have more time alone with the course materials and you'll be supported by your professor and peers in developing skills that you can carry with you in your writing life beyond this semester.

Course learning outcomes

- By studying examples and craft texts, you will learn to identify elements of nonfiction craft and analyze how they can be used to achieve desired effects.
- By studying and discussing example texts, and through the workshop process, you'll develop tools for reading, analyzing, and critiquing essays.
- Practicing generating new work will allow you to apply what you learned from the study of example texts.
- Receiving feedback on your work and using it during the revision process will allow you to become stronger, more discerning editors.
- Self-guided practice and study, with robust support from the instructor and peers, will prepare you for the often solitary but community-supported work of the professional writer beyond the creative writing workshop.

HOW THIS COURSE WORKS

Mode of delivery: This course is 100% online. For up to one hour per week, Tuesdays starting at 12:40, we will meet as a class via Zoom. The rest of the course will be delivered via Carmen (osu.instructure.com/courses/81940). There will be additional asynchronous activities built into this course to account for the reduced time in live discussion. Instruction and interactive learning will take place via:

- Instructor-recorded video and instructor-written text
- Craft journals for open-ended reflection and collection of ideas
- Workshop of 1 essay per student via Carmen text-based discussion (this large class will be split into 2 workshop groups)
- Generative prompt-based writing
- Focused revision exercises
- Short-answer quizzes
- Weekly text-based discussions on Carmen
- One-on-one Zoom meetings between student and instructor for additional essay feedback or elaboration on course material and concepts
- A final project detailed at the end of this syllabus

Pace of online activities: This course is divided into **weekly modules** that are released at the beginning of the semester (more detail will be added as the semester progresses). Students are expected to keep pace with weekly deadlines but may complete some assignments early if they choose to.

Credit hours and work expectations: This is a **3-credit-hour course**. According to [Ohio State policy](#), students should expect around 3 hours per week of time spent on direct

instruction (instructor content and Carmen discussions and activities, for example) in addition to 6 hours of homework (reading and assignment preparation, for example) to receive a grade of (C) average.

Attendance and participation requirements: Because this is an online course, your attendance is based on your online activity and participation. The following is a summary of everyone's expected participation:

- **Participating in online activities, including discussion forums: AT LEAST ONCE PER WEEK; MULTIPLE TIMES PER WEEK WHEN WORKSHOPS ARE UNDERWAY**
You are expected to log in to the course in Carmen every week. (During most weeks you will probably log in many times.) Generally, discussion threads will require you to post and to respond substantively to your classmates' posts. During workshop weeks, you will be expected to log in multiple times and add brief comments to several rounds of critique. If doing so may be difficult for you, or you have a situation that might cause you to miss an entire week of class, discuss it with me *as soon as possible*.
- **Individual conferences via Zoom: OPTIONAL, BUT STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**
We will schedule one or two video individual conferences over the course of the semester to discuss your writing and goals. If you cannot video conference or choose not to meet, you must contact me to opt out.
- **Live Zoom meeting of the class: ONCE PER WEEK FOR UP TO AN HOUR; MAKE ALTERNATE ARRANGEMENTS IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND**
You will be expected to briefly share a progress update (for about 2 minutes) on your writing, reading, and understanding of craft. If you are unable to attend because of lack of equipment or connectivity or because of a disability, contact me to make alternate arrangements for your written participation. The Zoom meeting link will be posted to CarmenCanvas.

COURSE MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES

Texts

There is no required textbook to purchase for this class. All readings will be available electronically via Carmen Canvas. If you learn better by reading printed pages rather than screens, I strongly recommend printing out the readings. (By the way, I recommend the free browser extension [Print Friendly & PDF](#) for doing so.)

Course technology

For help with your password, university email, Carmen, or any other technology issues, questions, or requests, contact the Ohio State IT Service Desk. Standard support hours are available at ocio.osu.edu/help/hours, and support for urgent issues is available 24/7.

- **Self-Service and Chat support:** ocio.osu.edu/help
- **Phone:** 614-688-4357(HELP)
- **Email:** servicedesk@osu.edu
- **TDD:** 614-688-8743

BASELINE TECHNICAL SKILLS FOR ONLINE COURSES

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills
- Navigating Carmen: for questions about specific functionality, see the [Canvas Student Guide](#).

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY SKILLS SPECIFIC TO THIS COURSE

- [CarmenZoom virtual meetings](#)

REQUIRED EQUIPMENT

- Computer: current Mac (OS X) or PC (Windows 7+) with high-speed internet connection
- Webcam: built-in or external webcam, fully installed and tested
- Microphone: built-in laptop or tablet mic or external microphone
- Other: a mobile device (smartphone or tablet) or landline to use for BuckeyePass authentication

REQUIRED SOFTWARE

- [Microsoft Office 365](#): All Ohio State students are now eligible for free Microsoft Office 365 ProPlus through Microsoft's Student Advantage program. Full instructions for downloading and installation can be found [at go.osu.edu/office365help](https://go.osu.edu/office365help).

CARMEN ACCESS

You will need to use [BuckeyePass](#) multi-factor authentication to access your courses in Carmen. To ensure that you are able to connect to Carmen at all times, it is recommended that you take the following steps:

- Register multiple devices in case something happens to your primary device. Visit the [BuckeyePass - Adding a Device](#) help article for step-by-step instructions.
- Request passcodes to keep as a backup authentication option. When you see the Duo login screen on your computer, click **Enter a Passcode** and then click the **Text me new codes** button that appears. This will text you ten passcodes good for 365 days that can each be used once.
- Download the [Duo Mobile application](#) to all of your registered devices for the ability to generate one-time codes in the event that you lose cell, data, or Wi-Fi service.

If none of these options will meet the needs of your situation, you can contact the IT Service Desk at 614-688-4357 (HELP) and IT support staff will work out a solution with you.

GRADING AND FACULTY RESPONSE

How your grade is calculated

ASSIGNMENT CATEGORY	POINTS
Workshop essay	20
Final project	25
Participation in online discussions and Zoom meetings	20
Writing/revision exercises and craft journal	30
Quizzes and short responses	5
Total	100

See course schedule below for due dates. Detailed information on assignments and expectations for completion will be available on CarmenCanvas.

Late assignments

Please refer to CarmenCanvas for due dates. Extensions may be granted by request in cases of hardship, emergency, and illness, but barring these unavoidable and unforeseen circumstances, assignments must be completed by the due date. This is important for keeping the class moving as designed.

Grading scale

93–100: A
90–92.9: A-
87–89.9: B+
83–86.9: B
80–82.9: B-
77–79.9: C+
73–76.9: C
70–72.9: C-
67–69.9: D+
60–66.9: D
Below 60: E

Instructor feedback and response time

I am providing the following list to give you an idea of my intended availability throughout the course. (Remember that you can call **614-688-HELP** at any time if you have a technical problem.)

- **Grading and feedback:** For writing and revision exercises, quizzes, and short responses, you can generally expect feedback within **7 days**. You can expect feedback on your workshop essays within 7 days of your workshop date.
- **Email:** I will reply to emails within **24 hours on days when class is in session at the university**.
- **Discussion board:** I will check and reply to messages in the discussion boards every **24 hours on school days**.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Discussion and communication guidelines

The following are my expectations for how we should communicate as a class. Above all, please remember to be respectful and thoughtful. More details will be available on CarmenCanvas in the “Policies and Class Reference Material” module.

- **Writing style:** There is no need to participate in class discussions as if you were writing a research paper, and you will not be graded on grammar or mechanics in your posts. A conversational tone is appropriate for these discussions. I do recommend taking care in

using language, though, because writing with precision can allow you to work through new ideas in a way that thinking alone often can't.

- **Respectful discourse:** It is imperative that we show each other respect. Abusive comments or behavior will not be tolerated. Taking care with one another is necessary in order to allow for amicable disagreement in our discussions, and amicable disagreement is necessary for maintaining creative writing communities in which multiple approaches to craft are valid. A full set of ground rules will be made available on Carmen.
- **Linking to sources:** When referring to essays in discussion posts, except for required reading, please include links to the essays.
- **Backing up your work:** You should compose academic posts in a word processor, where you can save your work and track word counts, and then copy into the Carmen discussion.

Academic integrity policy

POLICIES FOR THIS ONLINE COURSE

- Your written assignments, including discussion posts, must be your own original work.
- You may not turn in work from a past class for this class, except in the case of the revision assignments: for those, you are welcome to perform the assigned revisions on an essay you have workshopped before.
- If you want to submit for workshop an essay that you wrote before the semester began but have not turned in for another class, you must discuss it with me first.
- If you are working in “received forms”/“hermit crab” essays or other experimental forms that include unattributed source material, you must attach a brief statement (a sentence is likely enough) in which you point out your source material. (If you're unfamiliar with this concept, please ask—and we will discuss this approach.)
- Learning the standards of what constitutes plagiarism is your responsibility; you can and should always ask me for help if you don't understand the standards of attribution in creative writing.
- I do not require formatting of citations in accordance with a specific style manual. If you want practice, familiarity with the Chicago Manual of Style will serve you well in the creative writing profession; for the purposes of this class, a simple identification of the author and title along with a link will suffice.

OHIO STATE'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have

read and understand the university's [Code of Student Conduct](#), and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the university's *Code of Student Conduct* and this syllabus may constitute "Academic Misconduct."

The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct* (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: "Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university or subvert the educational process." Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the university's *Code of Student Conduct* is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so I recommend that you review the *Code of Student Conduct* and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct <http://studentlife.osu.edu/csc/>.

If I suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, I am obligated by university rules to report my suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that you have violated the university's *Code of Student Conduct* (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in this course and suspension or dismissal from the university.

If you have any questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, please contact me.

Copyright disclaimer

The materials used in connection with this course may be subject to copyright protection and are only for the use of students officially enrolled in the course for the educational purposes associated with the course. Copyright law must be considered before copying, retaining, or disseminating materials outside of the course. In this course, each student holds the copyright in their own creative and scholarly works, including all assignments; **do not share the work of your peers without the author's explicit permission to do so.**

Statement on Title IX

All students and employees at Ohio State have the right to work and learn in an environment free from harassment and discrimination based on sex or gender, and the university can arrange interim measures, provide support resources, and explain investigation options, including referral to confidential resources.

If you or someone you know has been harassed or discriminated against based on your sex or gender, including sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, or sexual exploitation, you may find information about your rights and options at titleix.osu.edu or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator at titleix@osu.edu. Title IX is part of the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) at Ohio State, which responds to all bias-motivated incidents of harassment and discrimination, such as race, religion, national origin and disability. For more information on OIE, visit equity.osu.edu or email equity@osu.edu.

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role. **I am required to share information disclosed to me regarding sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator.**

Your mental health

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you find yourself feeling isolated, anxious or overwhelmed, please know that there are resources to help: ccs.osu.edu. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at (614) 292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Prevention Hotline at 1-(800)-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org. The Ohio State Wellness app is also a great resource available at go.osu.edu/wellnessapp.

Other sources of support at OSU

Advising is critical to academic success at Ohio State. If you are an English major, our advisers are available to help you create academic plans and connect you with resources. Instructions for getting in touch are available on the English Department's website: english.osu.edu/undergraduate/advising

For more information about academic support and planning at OSU and for scheduling appointments with other advisers, visit advising.osu.edu.

Please see the “Policies and Class Reference Material” module in Carmen for information about student services offered by the university and the English Department.

ACCESSIBILITY ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Requesting accommodations

The university strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions, please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Whether or not you are registered with SLDS, I encourage you to talk with me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them.

Accessibility of course technology

This online course requires use of Carmen (Ohio State's learning management system) and other online communication and multimedia tools. If you need additional services to use these technologies, please request accommodations with your instructor.

- [CarmenCanvas accessibility](#)
- Streaming audio and video
- [CarmenZoom accessibility](#)

- Collaborative course tools

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is meant to serve as a broad, at-a-glance overview of the semester. For complete and current details, see Carmen. Each week's module will have additional videos and text to watch and read. There is also the expectation of participation in weekly online discussions, weekly Zoom meetings (Tuesdays at 12:40), a craft journal, and regular progress made on the workshop essay and final assignment.

Before the course starts + August 25 - WEEK 1

An introduction to the course, a reintroduction to creative nonfiction, a recommitment to studying and writing it, and a refresher on attention to craft.

Readings: "Living Like Weasels" by Annie Dillard, "The Fencing Master" by David Treuer, "The Three Words That Almost Ruined Me As a Writer: 'Show, Don't Tell'" by Sonya Huber

Assignments: essay questions about your writing and goals, quiz on CNF terms

September 1 - WEEK 2

Finding and re-finding your subject matter; getting to the stakes in what seems low-stakes; using research, cultural criticism, reportage, and other outward-looking investigations to get to the interior.
Readings: "Rivering" by Dinty W. Moore, "Perdition Days" by Esmé Weijung Wang, "Notes on Pop" column by Hanif Abdurraqib, "How to Stop Crying" by Heather Christle

Assignments: Library digital research activity/quiz, writing exercise

September 8 - WEEK 3

The daunting work of writing about unmanageable pains and unruly traumas; creating your narrator, your essay-self

Readings: "Intrusions" and "The Heart-Work: Writing About Trauma as a Subversive Act" by Melissa Febos, "One Nation Under the Weather" by Lauren Slater, "Mess of Color" by Sung Yim, and "The Origin of My Laugh" by Danielle Geller

Assignment: writing exercise

September 15 - WEEK 4

Narrative time, narrative shape

Readings: "Bald in Back with Three Heads: Wrestling with Time in Narrative Nonfiction" by Nancer Ballard, "Picturing the Personal Essay: A Visual Guide" by Tim Bascom, prologue of *Men We Reaped* by Jesmyn Ward

Assignment: shape analysis of an essay

September 22 - WEEK 5

Scenes and non-scene entities, dramatizing, summarizing, saying some things and not saying others, subtext (not obfuscation)

Readings: “The Fourth State of Matter” by Jo Ann Beard, “The Problem with Writing about Florida” by Kristen Arnett, “Girls, Monsters” by Jaquira Díaz, excerpt from *The Scene Book* by Sandra Scofield

Assignments: scene analysis of an essay, writing exercise

September 29 - WEEK 6

Experimentation and how to pull it off: the lyric essay, received forms or “hermit crabs,” and other hacks to the essay

Readings: “Essay as Hack” by Ander Monson, “Bodies of Text: On the Lyric Essay” by Amy Bonnaffons, “Thoughts on My Ancestry.com DNA Results” by Tyrese L. Coleman, “Pain Scale Treaties” by Laura Da’, “Critical Poly 100s” by Kim TallBear, excerpts from *The Shell Game*

Assignment: Hermit crab essay planning activity, writing exercise

October 6 - WEEK 7

Revision: being your own best first reader

Readings: Revision piece by Matt Salesses and Vanessa Blakeslee, “The Writing Process and Revision” from *Tell It Slant* by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola, “On Revision” from *The Portable Writer’s Mentor* by Priscilla Long

Assignments (due in 2 weeks): Set of revision exercises

October 13 - WEEK 8

Giving and receiving feedback

Readings and videos: “Unsilencing the Writing Workshop” by Beth Nguyen, “Toward Changing the Language of Creative Writing Classrooms” by Helen Betya Rubinstein, material on Liz Lerman’s critical response process

Assignment: Participate in practice workshop, complete reflection prompts on goals for your work and what you’re seeking from feedback

WORKSHOP ESSAYS DUE

For weeks 9 - 13, the schedule will remain the same: each group will workshop two essays. Each student will be responsible for preparing for and participating in those workshops on Carmen in accordance with guidelines that will be posted there. Each student is also responsible for writing and posting a reflection on an essay of their choosing and for engaging with other students’ reflections.

October 20 - WEEK 9

October 27 - WEEK 10

November 3 - WEEK 11

November 10 - WEEK 12

November 17 - WEEK 13

November 24 - WEEK 14

About a sustained writing life, patience, and stresses & joys of having writing out in the world

Readings: “Maybe the Secret to Writing is Not Writing?” by Kate Angus, “A book I can’t defend, a book I can’t renounce” by Eula Biss, interview with Kristen Arnett by Victoria Brown for *Guernica*

☆ This week we will have a Zoom visit from the New York Times Bestselling writer Kristen Arnett! ☆

Assignment: Twitter activity, prepare for Kristen’s visit

December 1 - WEEK 15

Activities TBD based on needs and opportunities that become apparent during the semester

December 7 - FINAL PROJECT DUE

Details will be available on Carmen. For this assignment, you will have the option of turning in one of the following:

1. A new essay with a detailed statement about what you learned this semester that will be apparent in the craft choices made in this essay;
2. A self-guiding statement on who you are as a writer, who you want to be, what you hope to achieve through your writing, and the literary tenets you value;
3. A revision plan for your workshop essay, a major revision, and annotations explaining what you changed and what craft principles informed these changes;
4. An extended study of an element of craft and its appearance in several works—this must *not* be a literary analysis similar to one you’d perform in a literature class, but instead must be an examination of the writer’s craft choices, their effects, and your vision for incorporation of these tools into your own writing.

ENGLISH 4568: ADVANCED CREATIVE NONFICTION WRITING

[Semester] 20xx

Tuesdays 4:20 – 7:20 PM, Denney 268

INSTRUCTOR: Professor Elissa Washuta
washuta.2@osu.edu
Pronouns: she/her

OFFICE: Denney 466
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 2-3 or by appointment

PHONE: (614) 292-6935 (email preferred)

Introduction

This course is devoted to furthering your development of the craft of creative nonfiction. Through the study of published nonfiction pieces and craft texts, development of new work, manuscript responses, and revision, you will continue to refine your individual approach and further your understanding of how to most effectively use craft elements to shape your work.

The structure of this course is reflective of my belief that the semester's most significant possible outcome is not that you will produce publishable work—although that is certainly a fine objective—but that you will develop tools, skills, and processes that you can employ long after the semester ends. You will write, read, respond, listen, and discuss, and through fully engaging in this work, you will become a stronger creative nonfiction writer.

Learning Objectives

- By studying examples and craft texts, you will learn to identify elements of nonfiction craft and their effectiveness.
- By studying and discussing example texts, and through the workshop process, you'll develop tools for reading, analyzing, and critiquing essays.
- Practicing generating new work will allow you to apply what you learned from the study of example texts.
- Receiving feedback in workshop and using it during the revision process will allow you to become stronger, more discerning editors.

Texts

Readings will be made available via Carmen or distributed in class. Bring them (in hard copy or electronic form—whatever works best for your reading and notation) to class on the discussion date.

Optional text: *Tell It Slant*, 3rd edition (2019), by Brenda Miller and Suzanne Paola; *The Nonfictionist's Guide* by Robert Root. We will not be discussing these books in class, but you may find them useful to supplement our discussions and your previous instruction.

Assignments and Grading

You will receive a letter grade at the end of this course, determined using the [grade scale](#) available on Carmen.

Essays, 50%: You will present two essays, each between 2500 and 4000 words, for workshop. You will perform one significant revision (details to follow) to be submitted at the end of the semester.

One week before your workshop date, email your essay as a Word document (preferred) or PDF to [the class list](#). Seriously, please use this list. If you reply-all to previous emails, you need to check to make sure everyone is on the list.

At the time of submission, you'll share a brief statement (about 1-3 paragraphs) about the work, which may include notes on what the essay is about, what you hope it will do, how you intend for it to work, what you want the reader to experience, what questions you have for the class, what you think may not be working, etc. I will leave this open-ended—the purpose is to give you a chance to convey your goals for the essay, so that we can help you achieve them.

Your submission date will be one week before your workshop date.

Your two workshop essays must be original drafts written recently and never workshopped in a previous class.

You will receive grades on individual essays, but your grade in this category will reflect my assessment of the development of your work over the course of the semester (meaning, it could be higher than the sum of your individual essay grades if I see you working diligently to improve your craft and incorporate critical feedback). Excellent work will show your curiosity, strength of voice, deep inquiry, and attention to language at the sentence level. I'll provide feedback on each of your essays.

If you want change the date of your workshop session, you may try to arrange with another student to do so and send me an email update with the new workshop dates.

In-class participation, 25%: You will be expected to actively participate in class discussions and contribute to workshops. Our discussions will be centered upon assigned readings and workshop essays. Showing up prepared is mandatory. Take notes on the readings: come prepared with something you'd say to start the discussion if called on first—something you're curious about, concerned about, unsure about, excited about, upset about.

If you are shy, introverted, or anxious about speaking in class, contact me to discuss ways that you can participate in the discussion. (I mean it—it's important to me that we talk about this at the beginning of the semester. If I don't hear from you, I won't know how to work with you on this.)

You will receive prompts for in-class writing in order to help you generate new work and apply concepts learned in class. You will be expected to write for the entirety of the time allotted.

Responses, 25%: You will provide a written response of at least 250 words to each workshopped essay, along with in-line comments on the workshop copies. These responses should not be reiterations of specific line-by-line comments you made on the manuscript; they must speak to qualities and concerns beyond the level of the sentence or paragraph, such as overall character development, narrative stakes, structure, resolution, overall approach to dialogue/description, etc.

Providing thoughtful commentary on the work of your peers will help them in revision and will deepen your understanding of craft and will help you arrive prepared to discuss the work in class. Via email, submit a copy of your written response to the writer and a copy to me. You'll hear from me if your responses are not adequate.

Attendance Policy

This class and your individual experience of it depend upon your attendance and punctuality. You will be expected to attend class, arriving on time and staying until the end. If you anticipate an absence, you must inform me via email. Legitimate reasons for an excused absence include, but are not limited to, illness and injury, disability-related concerns, military service, death in the family, religious observance, academic field trips, participation in an approved concert or athletic event, and direct participation in university disciplinary hearings.

Each **unexcused** absence will lower your final grade by 5 points. Arriving late or leaving early, except in situations that would qualify an absence as excused, will impact your grade.

It is your responsibility to request that an absence be excused, to talk to classmates about what you missed, and to talk to me about whether it would be possible to complete missed assignments and class material. I cannot waive fundamental academic requirements,

including the expectation of participation, in order to accommodate absences. Multiple absences, even if excused, may impact your grade, as this class relies on regular in-person work in the classroom. If you recognize, at any point, that you will not be able to attend class regularly, please let me know right away so that we can discuss your options and potentially bring your adviser and disability services, if applicable, into our conversation in order to get a plan in place for your continued presence in the class.

Disability Services

The University strives to make all learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on your disability (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please let me know immediately so that we can privately discuss options. To establish reasonable accommodations, I may request that you register with Student Life Disability Services. After registration, make arrangements with me as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that they may be implemented in a timely fashion. **SLDS contact information:** slds@osu.edu; 614-292-3307; slds.osu.edu; 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue.

Whether or not you are registered with SLDS, I encourage you to talk with me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs and how this course can best accommodate them.

Content and Triggers

Because we are writing and reading about real life, some contents of this course may be triggering to some students due to descriptions of and/or scenes depicting acts of violence, acts of war, sexual violence, or other traumatic experiences. If needed, please take care of yourself while reading/discussing this material (leaving classroom to take a water/bathroom break, debriefing with a friend, contacting a Sexual Violence Support Coordinator at 614-292-1111 or Counseling and Consultation Services at 614-292-5766, or contacting me). Expectations are that we all will be respectful of our classmates and that we will create a safe space for each other. Failure to show respect to each other may result in dismissal from the class.

Electronic Devices

You are welcome to use laptops and other devices during class to access course materials, take notes, complete writing exercises, and engage in other class-related activities. Use of electronic devices for other purposes (such as texting, email, video, and work for other classes) is not permitted; if you engage in this during class time, you will be considered absent.

Mental Health Services

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing. If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting ccs.osu.edu or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th Floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th Floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24 hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 National Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-TALK or at suicidepreventionlifeline.org.

Plagiarism

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term 'academic misconduct' includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed, illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

Learning the standards of what constitutes plagiarism is your responsibility; you can and should always ask me for help if you don't understand the standards of attribution in creative writing.

Title IX

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support

applied to offenses against other protected categories (e.g., race). If you or someone you know has been sexually harassed or assaulted, you may find the appropriate resources at <http://titleix.osu.edu> or by contacting the Ohio State Title IX Coordinator, Kellie Brennan, at titleix@osu.edu.

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility related to my role. I am required to share information disclosed to me regarding sexual misconduct with the Title IX Coordinator.

Class Cancellation Policy

In the unlikely event of class cancellation due to emergency, I will contact you via e-mail and will also request that a note be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

Communication

Outside of class, I am best reached by email, and I will sometimes email you with important updates. I strongly recommend that you make a habit of checking your university email at least daily, Monday through Friday. Email, as an asynchronous communication tool, allows us to read and respond to messages when we are available to do so. We should not expect immediate email responses from one another when corresponding this semester.

As university faculty, I maintain a flexible daily and weekly schedule, working not strictly according to business hours but instead scheduling work, non-work appointments, travel, and daily breaks in a way that works for me. I also travel frequently for readings and conferences, often in different time zones. This means that sometimes, you might receive emails from me late in the evening. (This doesn't mean I'm *always* reachable in the evening. I try to make that my off time. You can expect to hear back from me within 24 hours, excluding weekends.) I strongly encourage you to respond during your own working hours rather than feeling any pressure to work during your down time. It's important that each of us creates a sustainable schedule.

I do sometimes check/send email on the weekends, but generally, do not expect me to respond to emails on Saturdays or Sundays, and I will not expect weekend responses from you, either.

Don't hesitate to request meetings with me, either via email or by talking to me after class. Please take care to put scheduled meetings into your calendar and avoid no-shows.

SCHEDULE

(subject to change if needed)

Before the semester: [optional prompts](#)

1/7

Introduction to the class; discussion about your writing and goals, defining your subject matter, and locating the stakes in your work

Readings discussed:

Sonya Huber (she/her), [“The Three Words That Almost Ruined Me As a Writer: ‘Show, Don’t Tell’”](#)

Kristen Arnett (she/her), [“The Problem with Writing About Florida”](#)

Plans for class:

Syllabus review and introductions

In-class reflective writing

Discussion of goals for writing and for this class

Discussion of readings

Assignment for next week:

Bring in an essay (or other prose piece) you have written in the past

1/14

Essay structure and shape; dramatic structure and plot; tracking an essay’s moves

Readings:

Tim Bascom (he/him), “Picturing the Personal Essay”

In-class reading: Annie Dillard (she/her), [“Living Like Weasels”](#)

Plans for class:

Lecture on dramatic structure

Discussion of readings

Activity: describing the shape of your essays

Small group discussions

In-class writing from a prompt

Assignment:

Continue working on writing

1/21

Revision; detail in service of story

Readings:

Mary Karr (she/her), [“Sacred Carnality” \[pdf\]](#)

Laura Da’ (she/her), [“Pain Scale Treaties”](#)

Sung Yim (they/them), [“Mess of Color”](#)

Plans for class:

Discuss last week’s generative writing activity

Lecture on revision

Discussion of readings

Small group discussions

Overview of expectations and best practices for workshop

In-class writing from a prompt

For the remainder of the semester, the class will proceed as follows: we will workshop three essays, and remaining time may be devoted to assigned reading, prompt-based writing, or short craft lectures. These will be determined based on the needs and opportunities that become apparent as the semester progresses.

1/28

Workshops (3):

1. [name]
2. [name]
3. [name]

2/4

Workshops (3):

1. [name]
2. [name]
3. [name]

2/11

Workshops (3):

4. [name]
5. [name]
6. [name]

2/18

Workshops (3):

7. [name]
8. [name]
9. [name]

2/25

Workshops (3)

10. [name]
11. [name]
12. [name]

3/3

Workshops (3):

1. [name]
2. [name]
3. [name]

3/10 NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

3/17

Workshops (3):

4. [name]
5. [name]
6. [name]

3/24

Workshops (3):

7. [name]
8. [name]
9. [name]

3/31

Workshops (3):

10. [name]
11. [name]
12. [name]

4/7

Workshops (3):

13. [name]
14. [name]
15. [name]

4/14

Workshops (2):

16. [name]
17. [name]

Evaluations

Wrap-up

Ground Rules – Accepted in class 1/7/20

I offer this list of ground rules for our discussions so that we might, as a group, adopt a set of policies to shape our discussions. Setting clear expectations for how we approach discussions, in my experience, always improves the quality of the class.

Listen actively and attentively.

Ask for clarification if you are confused.

Do not interrupt one another.

Present your ideas, critiques, and points of disagreement respectfully.

Critique ideas, not people.

Avoid put-downs, even humorous ones; this includes self-deprecation.

Build on one another's comments; work toward shared understanding.

Do not monopolize the discussion.

If you are offended/troubled by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.

Do not share your peers' work without their permission.

When your essay is being workshopped, refrain from joining the discussion unless asked to provide a brief clarifying comment.

Be a respectful listener when peers are commenting on your work, even when it's difficult to do so.

Comments on the work of others must be respectful.

We will evaluate writing and will not judge lived experiences.

We will approach the people in the works as characters, addressing comments and questions to the author as "the protagonist" or "the narrator" rather than "you."

Our questions about the work will be craft-driven, not curiosity-driven. This means that we will consider what we need to know about a character for the sake of the essay's betterment, not just because we're curious to know more about a classmate.

You will have time to ask questions or request more feedback on specific points near the end of the workshop; do not use that time to argue, defend, or apologize.

Non-negotiable rules: Do not submit work intended to malign, hurt, or intimidate those in the classroom. Weaponized essays will not be useful. Essays, responses, or discussion remarks that attack or discriminate against people or groups based on who they are (including race, gender, sexuality, disability, and other identity factors) constitute disruptions to the learning environment and therefore will not be permitted.

EXCELLENT ESSAYS

In this class, as we explore the vast, varied, and thrilling craft possibilities available to us in writing creative nonfiction, it will be clear that standards of excellence can be hard to pin down. It is important to me that you feel free to experiment with approaches that are unconventional and not (yet) widely accepted by mainstream publishers.

This doesn't mean that we will completely abandon notions of what makes an essay work (though we will likely question them). I consider a few things to be generally important in crafting a piece of literary nonfiction.

A strong essay (almost?) always:

- Explores a question. In the words of John D'Agata from *The Next American Essay*, "Why bother conducting an experiment at all if you know what results it will yield? Maybe every essay automatically is in some way experimental—not an outline traveling toward a foregone conclusion but an unmapped quest that has sprung from the word question. I don't know where the journey ends; otherwise, why call this action journey?"
- Features a protagonist with something at stake. Why do you care to write about this? What will happen if you don't? Are there risks involved in executing this exploration? Will it change you? Mary Karr, *The Art of Memoir*: "In some ways, writing a memoir is knocking yourself out with your own fist, if it's done right."
- Is about something deeper and more significant than the scenario introduced on the first page. As Vivian Gornick writes in *The Situation and the Story*:

"Every work of literature has both a situation and a story. The situation is the context of circumstance, sometimes the plot; the story is the emotional experience that preoccupies the writer: the insight, the wisdom, the thing one has come to say."

and

"A memoir is a work of sustained narrative prose controlled by an idea of the self under obligation to lift from the raw material of life a tale that will shape experience, transform event, deliver wisdom. Truth in a memoir is achieved not through a recital of actual events; it is achieved when the reader comes to believe that the writer is working hard to engage with the experience at hand. What happened to the writer is not what matters; what matters is the large sense that the writer is able to make of what happened. For that the power of writing imagination is required. As V. S. Pritchett once said of the genre, 'It's all in the art. You get no credit for living.'"

- Employs an authentic, effective voice. This is one of the most difficult elements of craft to get right, and it's also one of the most important. In *The Art of Memoir*, Mary

Karr writes, "Voice isn't just a manner of talking. It's an operative mindset and way of perceiving that naturally stems from feeling oneself alive inside the past."

Although the experience of reading and analyzing an essay is highly subjective, it is certainly possible to gauge an essay's effectiveness, based not only on our individual experience but on our shared experience of language and usage. This is an advanced class, and you will be asked to draw upon previous knowledge of creative writing craft standards and the assigned readings. Discussions must center upon craft; if you talk about what you like and dislike in an essay, you *will* be pushed to explain why and identify the elements of craft that shape your experience.

Arts and Sciences Distance Learning Course Component Technical Review Checklist

Course: ENG 4568

Instructor: Elissa Washuta

Summary: Advanced Creative Nonfiction Writing

Standard - Course Technology	Yes	Yes with Revisions	No	Feedback/ Recomm.
6.1 The tools used in the course support the learning objectives and competencies.	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carmen • Office 365
6.2 Course tools promote learner engagement and active learning.	X			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CarmenWiki • Carmen Message Boards • Zoom
6.3 Technologies required in the course are readily obtainable.	X			All are available for free
6.4 The course technologies are current.	X			All are updated regularly
6.5 Links are provided to privacy policies for all external tools required in the course.	X			No external tools are used.
Standard - Learner Support				
7.1 The course instructions articulate or link to a clear description of the technical support offered and how to access it.	X			Links to 8HELP are provided
7.2 Course instructions articulate or link to the institution's accessibility policies and services.	X			a
7.3 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's academic support services and resources can help learners succeed in the course and how learners can obtain them.		X		b
7.4 Course instructions articulate or link to an explanation of how the institution's student services and resources can help learners succeed and how learners can obtain them.	X			c
Standard – Accessibility and Usability				
8.1 Course navigation facilitates ease of use.	X			Recommend using the Carmen Distance Learning "Master Course" template developed by ODEE and available in the Canvas Commons to provide student-users with a consistent user experience in terms of navigation and access to course content.
8.2 Information is provided about the accessibility of all technologies required in the course.	X			OSU accessibility policy is included
8.3 The course provides alternative means of access to course materials in formats that meet the needs of diverse learners.	X			OSU policy on obtaining these materials is included
8.4 The course design facilitates readability	X			
8.5 Course multimedia facilitate ease of use.	X			All assignments and activities that use the Carmen LMS with embedded multimedia facilitates ease of use. All other multimedia resources facilitate ease of use by being available through a standard web browser

Reviewer Information

- Date reviewed: 7/8/20
- Reviewed by: Ian Anderson

Notes: Add statement b and this is good to go!

^aThe following statement about disability services (recommended 16 point font):
Students with disabilities (including mental health, chronic or temporary medical conditions) that have been certified by the Office of Student Life Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Student Life Disability Services is located in 098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Avenue; telephone 614- 292-3307, slds@osu.edu; slds.osu.edu.

^bAdd to the syllabus this link with an overview and contact information for the student academic services offered on the OSU main campus.
<http://advising.osu.edu/welcome.shtml>

^cAdd to the syllabus this link with an overview and contact information for student services offered on the OSU main campus. <http://ssc.osu.edu>. Also, consider including this link in the “Other Course Policies” section of the syllabus.