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ENG 5020-600: Workshop in Creative Writing

Olga Abella

Eastern Illinois University

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ENGLISH 5020
Summer 2019

ENG 5020.600 Graduate Workshop In Creative Writing (Online; 8 weeks)

Instructor: Dr. Olga Abella

Email: oabella@eiu.edu (intend to respond within 24 hours Monday-Friday);

DO NOT USE D2L email; if Pantermail is unavailable, use olgafox@hotmail.com

Virtual Office Hours: Monday & Tuesday 9-10 AM; or, by appointment

Number of Credit Hours: 3

Class meeting times, days, and place: This 8-week course meets online asynchronously from May 28, 2019 (Tuesday) through July 20, 2019 (Saturday), using the EIU D2L online learning management software.

Catalog Course Description: An advanced workshop in which writers create and revise long-term writing projects. Each semester the course will focus on a different genre (fiction, creative nonfiction, poetry, or drama). Prerequisites: May be repeated once with permission of the Department Chairperson. For SU 2019 this class is a memoir reading and writing workshopping class

Required Texts:

Karr, *The Art of Memoir*

Karr, *The Liar's Club*

Jarrett Krosoczka, *Hey Kiddo*

Rankine, *Citizen*

Slater, *Lying*

Supplementary Readings:

- NPR Interview with Mary Karr (<https://www.npr.org/2015/09/15/440397728/mary-karr-on-writing-memoirs-no-doubt-ive-gotten-a-million-things-wrong>)
- Excerpt from: Why memoir now? By: Gornick, Vivian, Women's Review of Books, 07381433, Jul96, Vol. 13, Issue 10/11
- Article from *The Daily Beast*: <https://www.thedailybeast.com/is-memory-the-memoirists-worst-enemy>
- Irene S. Roth article, *Making Sense of Your Life Through Memoir* <https://savvyauthors.com/making-sense-of-your-life-through-memoir-writing-roth/>

- Article by Eve Makis and Anthony Cropper, *Writing Memoir: Making it Real*
<https://www.writing.ie/resources/the-accidental-memoir-making-it-real-by-eve-makis-and-anthony-cropper/>
- Article about Alexandra Fuller, *Writing the Senses*
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/memoir/draft/pdfs/sensememory.pdf>

COURSE OBJECTIVE:

For the **first 4 weeks** of the class we will read the **4 memoirs** listed in the texts. We will also read *The Art of Memoir* throughout the 8 weeks, with certain chapters assigned each week. Reading these texts will help you develop ideas on how you want to write your own memoir. In addition to these main texts, there are **6 short supplementary articles** and one interview that will also help you think about how you may want to focus and structure your memoir.

For the **last 4 weeks** of class, you will write and workshop your memoir. Each week you will submit **5-7 pages** for workshopping. These can be individual chapters of an intended longer work, or they can be sections that can stand alone. The goal is for you to have a manuscript of 20-28 pages you can continue to develop later, or start submitting to journals for publication.

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. **Memoir**: Beginning with **week 5**, you will submit an essay or chapter of **5-7 pages** that will be workshopped by the class that week. After you revise the essay you will turn in the final draft. Each essay/chapter is worth 10 points. **(40 pts)**
2. **Discussions**: For each text we read for this class, you will be required to engage in discussions of those readings. The focus of your comments on the **4 memoirs** we are reading should be on how the first person point of view affects/shapes the voice in the text, and how this in turn has an effect on the reader. **In your analysis you will include the form or style of the text and how that helps to shape the voice, its delivery, and the purpose in the text (meaning)**. For the other main text, Karr's *The Art of Memoir*, I want you to apply your thoughts on the weekly assigned readings of this book to your discussions of the 4 memoirs, and in the last four weeks of the class apply them to your comments on the essays submitted by your peers. I just want you to write your impressions of what Karr is trying to convey to you about writing

As you discuss the **4 memoirs** (one each week), I expect you to respond to **at least two of your peers' comments, observations and reflections**, in other words, to engage in conversation. I have posted some questions at the beginning of the discussion boards to help you start thinking about the text. I will also join in your discussions to respond to issues you may raise, and for which you may have questions. The point of reading and discussing these texts is for you to think about the different possible ways of writing memoir, and for you to

think about what you like or don't like. That will help you think of how you may want to write your own memoir. **You should read all of the postings for the weekly discussions. Please follow the Discussion Criteria Rubric to earn full points. (20 pts)**

For the **6 supplementary texts** we are reading (interview, online articles), your comments/discussion should concentrate on what you learned, what insight you gained from the material presented. I basically want to see your impressions of Karr's interview and of the online articles, but if you want to discuss them more fully, I am more than happy to do so. **(You should contribute at least 1 time to each article's/interview's discussion) (10 pts)**

The point of all these readings is to help you think about your own writing: how to show rather than tell; how to think and write about details of your experiences; how to think about constructing your voice, etc. The comments I am asking you to write are not very long, but they enable us to engage together in what we are reading. This is a way for us to get to know each other and interact as a community.

GRADING RUBRIC:

Discussions Rubric				
<u>Criteria:</u>	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Close Reading and timely discussion postings	Comments show close reading of all texts and the posts of other participants	Comments show evidence of having read texts and others' posts with clear degree of effort	Comments show superficial engagement with texts and others' posts	Comments convey lack of engagement with texts and others' posts
Responsiveness to discussion and demonstration of knowledge gained from assigned readings	Very clear that readings were understood and incorporated well into responses; replies elaborate on or clarify previous posts	Readings were understood and incorporated into responses; replies may repeat information but keep discussion going or acknowledge helpful points	Replies repeat information without adding to it	Not evident that readings were understood and/or not incorporated into discussion
Daily/Weekly Engagement	Clear engagement with and interest in readings and in interaction and exchange of ideas with other participants	Regularly checks discussion boards but submissions convey minimal engagement with readings and posts are brief or few	Fails to submit posts to all readings; submits posts late.	Low engagement with and submission to discussion boards

3. **Workshopping**: The most important part of this class is **your** writing. In the second half of the course, **you will submit your writing by the date and time specified, at the same time each week to give everyone time to write comments on your work.** Your response to one another's creative prose is a crucial part of the class. As each other's audience, you **must** provide **feedback** for each other's work. Your comments need to be thoughtful and helpful. Always explain your reasons for your comments. If something does not work for you, you cannot simply dismiss it. You must explain why you couldn't connect, what didn't work. Providing feedback means engaging in a conversation about your impressions of the work. You cannot tell someone what to do or not do, but you may make suggestions. The purpose of feedback is to enable the writer to develop a sense of audience, to see how their writing reaches their readers. Remember that the person receiving your message is someone like you, deserving and appreciating courtesy and respect. You are a community of writers whose goal is to help one another grow as writers. Also, **remember to include in your comments points/ideas/insights you gained from *The Art of Memoir*.** Your comments can reflect things you found useful, or even things with which you disagreed about Karr's perspective.

The number of times you provide comments on your classmate's work will depend on the number of people in the class, but you will respond **at least once per person each week** during the last 4 weeks of class. **(30 pts)**

4. **FINAL POINT**: Since this is a graduate class, I am assuming that you are serious writers intending on working on a manuscript of your work. And since the focus of this class is on the first person point of view, all of your writing will be in the first person. The purpose for this focus is for you to develop a better sense of your voice in your work and of its effect on your reader, and for all of us to have a better understanding of the concept of "truth" in what we write.
5. **ATTENDANCE**: You will be required to participate in all discussions. Writing down your thoughts about the texts we are reading, and about the ideas others have, enable you to clarify your own views, and perhaps gain insight and clarity, preparing you more fully for your own personal writing.

Please note that in order for us to feel like and engage as a community, we need to communicate with one another within a reasonable amount of time. Therefore, all readings, responses and writings will have **deadlines**.

LATE WORK: **Once the deadline has passed, you will not be able to make up that specific assignment, and will fail the assignment.** There just simply isn't enough time to go back to previous posts.

EXTRA CREDIT: No extra credit work is allowed

6. **FINAL NOTES: Academic integrity**—Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU’s Code of Conduct. <http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be reported to the Office of Student Standards. **Turnitin:** To encourage original and authentic written work, students may be required to submit their written assignments in this course for review to Turnitin.com, or other systems designed to detect plagiarized material, and those assignments will become a searchable document with the Turnitin (or other system’s) database.

Students with Disabilities:

If you are a student with a documented disability in need of accommodations to fully participate in this class, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (OSDS). All accommodations must be approved through OSDS. Please stop by Ninth Street Hall, Room 2006, or call 217-581-6583 to make an appointment.

Contact info for student services:

Career Services	http://www.eiu.edu/~careers	581-2412
Counseling Center:	http://www.eiu.edu/~counsct	581-3413
Student Success Center:	http://www.eiu.edu/~success	581-6696

Course Calendar:

Week 1(May 28-June 1)

Topic: Introduction to Memoir

Read: *The Liar’s Club*; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapter 1; excerpt from Gomik’s article; and listen to Karr’s Interview on NPR

Post: Responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Initial post** due by 5 pm on Thursday, May 30. **Response post** due by 5 pm Saturday, June 1.

Submit: **Course Integrity Agreement by 5 pm Saturday, June 1.**

Week 2 (June 2-8)

Read: *Lying*; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapter 2; *Memoir: Making It Real* article.

Post: Responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Initial post** due by 5 pm Thursday, June 6. **Response post** due by 5 pm Saturday, June 8.

Week 3 (June 9-15)

Read: *Citizen*; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapter 4; *The Daily Beast* article; Irene Roth article.

Post: Responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Initial post** due by 5 pm on Thursday, June 13. **Response post** due by 5 pm Saturday, June 15.

Week 4 (June 16-22)

Read: *Hey, Kiddo*; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapters 6&7; Alexandra Fuller article.

Start writing first ESSAY/CHAPTER.

Post: Responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Initial post** due by 5 pm on Thursday, June 20. **Response post** due by 5 pm Saturday, June 22.

Week 5 (June 23-29)

- Read:** Peers' essays/chapters, **workshopping begins**; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapters 10&12.
Post: **First Personal Essay/Chapter Post is due by 5 pm Monday, June 24**; Post responses to the readings and engage in discussions. **Response Post due** by 5 pm Thursday, June 27.
Submit: **Revised essay/chapter** must be turned into drop box by 5 pm Saturday, June 29

Week 6 (June 30-July 6)

- Read:** Peers' essays/chapters; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapters 13, 16, 17.
Post: **Second Personal Essay/Chapter Post is due by 5 pm Monday, July 1**. Post responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Response Post due** by 5 pm Thursday, July 4.
Submit: **Revised essay/chapter** must be turned into drop box by 5 pm Saturday, July 6.

Week 7 (July 7-13)

- Read:** Peers' essays/chapters; *The Art of Memoir*, Chapters 18 & 21.
Post: **Third Personal Essay/Chapter Post is due by 5 pm Monday, July 8**; Post responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Response Post due** by 5 pm Thursday, July 11.
Submit: **Revised essay/chapter** must be turned into drop box by 5 pm Saturday, July 13.

Week 8 (July 14-20)

- Read:** Peers' essays/chapters
Post: **Fourth Personal Essay/Chapter Post is due by 5 pm Monday, July 15**. Post responses to all the readings and engage in discussions. **Response Post due** by 5 pm Thursday, July 18.
Submit: **Revised essay/chapter** must be turned into drop box by 5 pm Saturday, July 20.